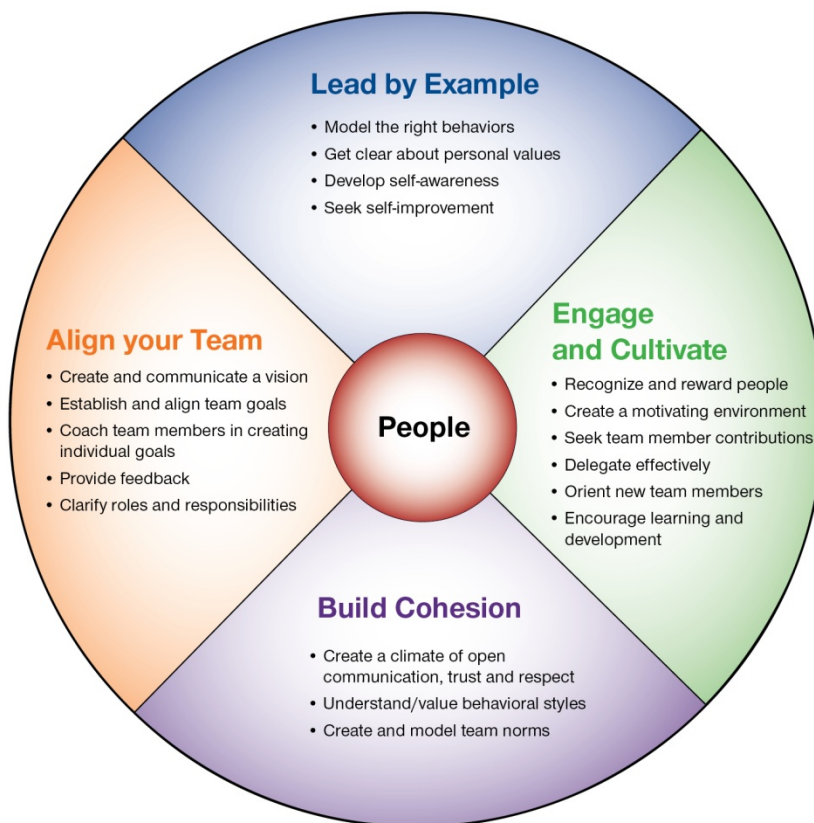



Lead by Example



Reluctant Communication

New leaders are often reluctant for fear of losing control or for fear of not being accepted. Ben represented a leader who was initially reluctant due to a fear of loss of control. Darryl, on the other hand, represented a leader who was overly concerned about being accepted. Behaviors on either extreme of the spectrum can result in a loss of credibility and trust.

Activity Part 1: Check the items that may describe you below.

Fear of Loss of Control	Fear of Not Being Accepted
	
<input type="checkbox"/> Micromanages tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> Vague about what you are requesting
<input type="checkbox"/> Communicates aggressively	<input type="checkbox"/> Hands-off for fear of imposing
<input type="checkbox"/> Withholds relevant information	<input type="checkbox"/> Worrying too much about what others will think
<input type="checkbox"/> Overly focused on tasks and results	<input type="checkbox"/> Putting your own needs last
<input type="checkbox"/> Tries to maintain superiority	<input type="checkbox"/> Avoids conflict and having difficult conversations
<input type="checkbox"/> Uses exaggerated words such as “always” and “never”	<input type="checkbox"/> Uses imposter qualifiers such as “this probably isn’t very good”
<input type="checkbox"/> Jumps to conclusions without giving a benefit of the doubt	<input type="checkbox"/> Uses wishy washy qualifiers like “kinda,” “sorta”, “um”

Assertiveness Quiz: How Assertive are You?*

Activity Part 2: Respond to the statements below by assigning a score of 1-5 next to each item, where 1 = Never and 5 = Always.

- ☐ I ask others to do things without feeling guilty or anxious.
- ☐ When someone asks me to do something I don't want to do, I say no without feeling anxious or guilty.
- ☐ I am comfortable when speaking to a large group of people.
- ☐ I confidently express my honest opinions to authority figures (such as my manager).
- ☐ When I experience powerful feelings (anger, frustration, disappointment, and so on), I verbalize them easily.
- ☐ When I express anger, I do so without blaming others for "making me mad."
- ☐ I am comfortable speaking up in a group situation.
- ☐ If I disagree with the majority opinion in a meeting, I can "stick to my guns" without feeling uncomfortable or being abrasive.
- ☐ When I make a mistake, I acknowledge it.
- ☐ I tell others when their behavior creates a problem for me.
- ☐ Meeting new people in social situations is something I do with ease and comfort.
- ☐ When discussing my beliefs, I do so without labeling the opinions of others as "crazy," "stupid," "ridiculous," or "irrational."
- ☐ I assume that most people are competent and trustworthy and do not have difficulty delegating tasks to others.
- ☐ When considering doing something I have never done, I feel confident I can learn to do it.
- ☐ I believe that my needs are as important as those of others, and I am entitled to have my needs satisfied.

- ☐ TOTAL SCORE (sum of 15 numbers)

*Modified from *Developing Positive Assertiveness*, Sam R. Lloyd

Aligning Your Words Through Assertive Communication

How Assertive Are You?

45 – 60: You have a fairly assertive outlook. You are probably naturally assertive in some situations.

30-44: You may be assertive in some situations, but your natural response is either nonassertive or aggressive.

15 – 29: You have considerable difficulty being assertive.

Principles to Communicate Assertively

Principle 1: Do not avoid the difficult conversations.

Principle 2: Maintain or enhance your team member's self-esteem.

Principle 3: Focus on behavior, rather than attitude. Describe the behavior you see and its impact on you and/or the team.

Principle 4: Own your feedback.* Instead of saying “we” think, believe, or feel...state:

- Your opinions by *“I believe...”*
- Your feelings with *“I feel...(mad, glad, sad)”*
- Your thoughts with *“I think...”*

Principle 5: Use “I” statements. “You” language raises defensiveness and comes across as accusatory.

- I: “I would like to discuss the way you talk to customers on the phone.”*
- You: “You have a problem talking to customers on the phone and we need to talk.”*

Stop doing the following*

- Using exaggerated words: “obviously”, “always”, “never”
- Saying, “You know”, “maybe”, “kinda”, “sorta”, “I guess”. Restate in a more clear, direct, and confident manner without wishy-washy qualifiers.
- Asking, “can you”, “could you”, “would you”, “why don't you”, “would you mind”, “Do you think”. The only true way to ask for commitment and action is, “Will you please....”

*Modified from *Developing Positive Assertiveness*, Sam R. Lloyd

Aligning Your Words Through Assertive Communication

Assertive behavior is active, direct, and honest. It communicates an impression of self-respect and respect for others. We view our wants, needs, and rights as equal to those of others. We work toward win-win outcomes. An assertive person wins by influence, listening, and negotiating so that others choose to cooperate willingly. This behavior leads to success without retaliation, and encourages open, honest relationships.

- *Developing Positive Assertiveness*, Sam R. Lloyd

Activity: Reflect on the following.

Do you tend to communicate aggressively, passively, or assertively?

How does your assertiveness level impact your leadership style (how you establish performance expectations, provide performance feedback, resolve conflict, discipline, etc.)?

How will you modify your communication style to lead by example and communicate assertively with your people?