In order to effectively lead people you have to care about them. Successful leaders recognize the importance of developing positive relationships with their team members. Many positive things happen when people work with leaders who feel they care about them.

Group members feel better about themselves, and individuals are able to accomplish more than they ever thought possible. It is also important for leaders to recognize and acknowledge the contributions of others. People want to feel appreciated, informed about what is happening in the organization, and listened to.

Below are selected strategies and reflections from “Encouraging the Heart: A Leaders Guide to Rewarding and Recognizing Others” (Kouzes & Posner) to assist leaders with leading from the heart and putting people first.

**Strategies for Leading from the Heart**

1. **Set Clear Standards**- a team needs to develop clear goals and standards that everyone buys into. It’s important for members to feel part of the organization and to have a specific job or function. Members need to have a clear understanding of their role in the group and know what is expected of them. (Remember that people are motivated by different things. Team productivity on various tasks will increase when individuals are given tasks that utilize their talents and challenge them. Members should also receive timely feedback on their progress. Positive feedback tells us we’re living up to the standards, making progress, and we’re on the right track).

2. **Expect the Best**- Leaders believe that team members can achieve high standards. If you expect people to achieve—they will. People tend to act consistently with our expectations. Leaders with positive expectations set a climate that motivates people. They offer positive reinforcement, ask for input, and provide others with the information and resources needed to do the job. People must believe they are capable of solving a problem or finding a better solution or they won’t.

**Reflections for leaders…(page 60)**
- What values are the most important to you? How do you communicate those beliefs to others?
- How do you know success when it happens? How does your team know success when it happens?
- Are you getting feedback about how you’re doing as a leader? Who is holding you accountable?

**Putting this strategy into action…(pgs 152-154)**
- Engage in an activity that allows members to identify values that are important to them.
- Post your organizations values statement in a visible place such as a meeting agenda.
- Every time your team starts a new project make sure expectations are clear, goals have been established, time-lines are developed, and budgets created.
- Make sure there is a system in place for members to get feedback on their progress.
- Plan a retreat at the beginning of each semester and take the time to establish goals and priorities.
How are you communicating your ideas about where the organization is headed?

**Putting this strategy into action…**(pgs155-158)

- Practice Smiling. It can be contagious.
- Assign members tasks, that aren’t part of their job but will allow them to exhibit their strengths. Let them know you assigned the talk because you believe in them.
- If a team member appears to be struggling with a task, work with them individually, and encourage them.
- Add inspirational quotes to your agenda’s.
- Start thinking about developing leaders for next year’s executive board. Invite team members to shadow you.

3. Pay Attention – Watch, listen, and understand the significance of team member’s actions. If we feel we’re being watched by someone looking for faults, we act differently then when we do in a supportive environment. A caring leader expresses joy in seeing others success, offers coaching, and serves as a cheerleader. Learning to understand and see things from another perspective is crucial to building trusting relationships. Once the leader takes the risk of being open, others are more likely to take a similar risk.

**Reflections for leaders…**(page 87)

- What do you notice when you pay attention to team member’s behavior at meetings?
- How well do your team members really know you and how well do you know them?
- Have you asked for feedback?
- Who in your organizations exemplifies the standards that have been set?
- How well do you listen?

**Putting this strategy into action…**(pgs 158-162)

- Take time each week to find ways to get to know your team members. *Example, invite a different member to join you for lunch once a week.*
- Have a notebook where you can record positive things you notice about team members.
- Start a list of recognition ideas.
- Put the birthday’s of your team members on a calendar.

- At your next meeting share a piece of information about yourself that the team may not know. This doesn’t have to be anything too personal, just something to help them get to know you better.

4. Personalize Recognition- Customize an award to make it special, fun, and dramatic – not routine. The best leaders get to know people personally so they know how to make the recognition special and unique. Failure to learn about your team members can result in recognizing them in a way that has no meaning. Ask team members how they like to be recognized (publicly, privately). Ask yourself what you could do to make it special for that person.

**Reflections for leaders…**(page 97)

- What do you know about your team members? Do you know what would really honor them?
- What have you done recently to recognize someone?

**Putting this strategy into action…**(pgs 162-165)

- Think about a time when someone encouraged you in a meaningful way. What made it special and memorable?
- Ask team members to share special moments when they were recognized.
- Give team members “coupons” that they can use to recognize each other’s special accomplishments.
- Invite team member’s family to special recognition ceremonies or send family a letter acknowledging recognition.
- Before recognizing a team member, ask friends of that individual about their interests to help you create something special.
- Publish photos in newsletters, websites, and bulletin boards of team members you recognize.

5. Tell the Story- Good stories move us, inspire us, teach us, and cause us to remember important events and make connections. Storytelling is how we pass along information about the organizations history from one year to the next. Information is more quickly and accurately remembered when it is presented in the form of a story. Stories speak to both reason and emotion.
Reflections for leaders…(pgs110-111)

- How comfortable are you telling stories in public? Think about a time you told a story that motivated people. What made it effective?
- Who is the best storyteller you know personally? How can you learn from this person?

Putting this strategy into action…(165-167)

- When planning a way to recognize someone, figure out a creative way to reenact the incident.
- If possible, recognize an individual in the place where the accomplishment occurred.
- Utilize voice-mail and email to tell stories.
- Practice storytelling when you’re out to dinner with family and friends. Describe your day or an event in rich detail.

6. Celebrate Together- Sometimes we hesitate to publicly recognize people because we fear it will build jealousy or resentment from other team players. If the leader is genuine, these uncomfortable dynamics won’t occur. Our need to belong to something that has purpose and meaning is what motivates us to celebrate. The best leaders want to get to know others.

Reflections for leaders…(pgs126-127)

- How does your organization celebrate accomplishments?
- Is there opportunity in your organization for members to get to know each other?

Putting this strategy into action…(pgs167-171)

- Visit a local party supplies store to get ideas on how to make something more festive.
- Give every celebration a theme.
- Get people involved in planning the celebration.
- Bring special treats to your meeting.
- Bring a bag of fun trinkets (key chains, pens, candy) to your meeting if you want to spontaneously recognize someone.
- Pick a day every month when you celebrate all the team members who have birthdays in that month.
- When possible, plan a celebration off-campus. A change of scenery is always fun.

7. Set the Example- Practice what you preach and model the behavior you want from others. People will first listen to your words, then watch your actions. Credibility is the foundation of leadership. If team members hear their leader thanking people and sharing stories of team member’s accomplishments then chances are they will do the same.

Food for thought for leaders…(pgs141-142)

- Think about one thing you’ve done this week to encourage the heart.
- How many special ways can you demonstrate your appreciation of others?
- Who is a credible member of your team? What attributes does this person have?

Putting this strategy into action…(pgs171-175)

- Record your values in a notebook or journal. List the things you do regularly to live out those values.
- Think about how your organization is living out their values. What areas need improvement? How can they be improved?
- Be a visible leader. “Walk the Walk”.
- Be involved in as many of your organizations recognition events as possible.

NOTES:

MISSION STATEMENT

To create a vibrant campus environment by educating and empowering student leaders through implementation of campus programs and the celebration of Ursuline Traditions.