

Edgar Hernandez Busting 5 Leadership Myths

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By Edgar Hernandez

Edgar Hernandez 00:14

This video is for underrepresented young talent that aspires to be a leader in their organization, whether it's credit union, or otherwise.

Edgar Hernandez 00:25

Think about that. Who comes to mind? What are the attributes that you think about?

Edgar Hernandez 00:31

Now, you probably had an individual that perhaps displayed either some intelligence, some kindness, some decisiveness, integrity, perseverance, humor, generosity, you name it, there's a lot of different attributes they think about. And you know, what I think is important is for us to understand that yeah, leaders come in all shapes or forms, right? There's not just one flavor to leadership. And I think if you think about who do you look up to, it may be a peer, it may be not necessarily somebody that is older. But it's somebody that is like you. And that, to me is somebody that if I can tell you about my own personal experience, when I came to college, when I went to college, excuse me, I saw somebody that was a Hispanic, young man that got involved in some leadership opportunities, and he encouraged me to participate in, try it out. And at first, I was reluctant; I was more shy than I am now. And once I did, I realized that if he could do it, I could do it as well. So there was that sort of peer-to-peer comparison. And that I thank him for that.

Edgar Hernandez 02:36

However, I do believe that when it comes to leadership, you want to follow somebody because you want to not because you have to, right. And then at the same time, there's five myths or mistakes that we could fall under. And the first one being titles does not equal influence. And what I mean by that is, oftentimes we see somebody that has a title. And because we don't have that title, we may underestimate the power that we may have to influence or change the trajectory of a project, or a program or a decision. And so I would like you to think about the difference between a thermostat and a thermometer, right? A thermometer absorbs the temperature of a room. It does not dictate the temperature of a room like a thermostat does. So a thermostat is a device that that sets the temperature sets the climate, and I think that's what a leader does. When you're in a room, ask yourself, "Does my presence change the trajectory of the conversation?" How can I influence the decision that is taking place. So that's the one first thing is that don't be misled by titles. Understand that you if you're a young person early in your career, then by virtue of speaking out, sharing your opinion, sharing your diverse thoughts and perspectives will enrich the conversation and many times will change the trajectory.

Edgar Hernandez 04:09

No. 2, high IQ does not mean high EQ. So high intelligence quotient does not necessarily mean high emotional quotient. I've had people that are just very, very smart and very, very nice. But oftentimes, you know, you are not able to find one or the other necessarily. Those strengths are hard to come by. Sometimes I've had people who are very intelligent and not very kind. And, you know, that is a big a big miss, a big misunderstanding. I think, you know, we underestimate the power of empathy sometimes. We don't give it enough credit. And I think you can have very intelligent leaders with very high empathy and that allows that leader to be able to read and understand a room and where their organization wants to go. So I personally appreciate somebody that has their antennas up, that understands that there's different perspectives, and values those perspectives.

Edgar Hernandez 05:12

No. 3, praise that praise equals good, or praise is good. And that criticism is bad. I think that is often a myth, right? Obviously, Praise is great, who doesn't like to be praised. But oftentimes, we can fall into the trap of thinking that we have no blind spots. And I think that's where a good leader comes in, that can, in private, can tell you, hey, you know, maybe there's a way to tweak or refine some of those talents that you have, maybe there's some, you know, rough edges that need to be worked on. And again, not all criticism is bad, if it was given out of care, out of respect, out of love, you know, that leader can definitely change, you know, somebody's development and growth, professional growth.

Edgar Hernandez 05:58

No. 4, acting versus being. So the myth of, you know, if you act as a leader, you are a leader. Well, that's not necessarily true, right? Oftentimes, we can find individuals that are acting in a certain way. But then in other situations, they may not be that individual that you admire or appreciate. And so I think the point behind this is that you want to have as much congruence and as much harmony in your own identity, right. We all bring something new to the table. And I think it's important to highlight that right, this expression that says, you know, bring your full self to work. So if you're quirky, if you're creative, if you're decisive, why not bring that full self to work? I think people appreciate that humanity, versus wearing a role, wearing a hat that does not really correspond to who you are to with who you are. And so I think it's important to have the full self and acting as who you are, and being that leader that that you are inside.

Edgar Hernandez 07:03

And then five, failure does not equal bad. And so that myth about failure, I think, is one that needs to be changed. The narrative needs to be changed. Because what happens is oftentimes, as you're making decisions, not all decisions are going to turn out to be good outcomes. And I think, I think it's important to recognize the difference between those two. So a good decision may not necessarily do good may not necessarily lead to a good outcome, much like a good outcome was not necessarily preceded by a good decision. So I'll give me an example. If you decide to go to a party, have a few drinks, more drinks than necessary, and you drive home, and you make it home safely. Well, it was a good outcome, you made it home safely, but it was not a good decision. So conversely, the other decision versus outcome scenario is when you've made a good decision, but he had a bad outcome. For example, in the sports world, oftentimes coaches are making having to make calls. In other words, should they go for the punt, should they, you know, put this player in, and sometimes this are very good decisions. But it doesn't

mean necessarily, they will have a good outcome, right? Oftentimes, probabilities do not play in our favor. And therefore, a good decision might not lead to a good outcome. Now, the mistake is thinking, Well, you know, something a project fails. So therefore, it was not a good decision. If we have documented, if we have been rigorous about experimenting, there's the importance of learning along the way. And so I would say that failure is when you're not able to learn from those mistakes, especially if you have not documented because the next time that you do them, you're able to overcome those, those mistakes.

Edgar Hernandez 08:57

So with that, I'd just like to ask and leave you with three sets of questions. No. 1, where do you want to go? As the leader, as a young leader, you will be asked, you'll be faced with that question. Where do you want to go in your career? Where do you want to help your organization go? No. 2, who do you want to follow? It's important that you align yourself with people that you trust that you admire, that you respect. But No. 3, and perhaps more importantly, once you get there, who do you want to take along? Who do you want to mentor? Who do you want to inspire yourself? Because again, we're all leaders, somebody's looking at us, whether we're new in the organization or we've been there for decades.

Edgar Hernandez 09:35

So thank you very much for the opportunity, and hope you have a good day.