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MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP

# Inspiring people to make successful choices

Are you inspiring people to make choices that enable them to think, feel and behave in ways that allow them and your team to be their best?



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Most leaders I meet understand they need to inspire people to get the best from them. Many of them, however, don't feel that they are particularly inspiring.

In fact, most believe that to be inspiring they need to be charismatic and something of a showman. Having achieved phenomenal feats is often seen as a prerequisite to earning the depth of respect that leads to people to being inspired by a leader.

In reality, inspiration comes not from the strength of our personality or achievements alone, but rather from the depth of our character and actions we take.

Some of the most inspiring people I have met have been quietly confident and reserved in nature. While they are all well respected for their capabilities, the strength of their vision, passion, integrity, courage and choices is what makes them inspiring.

According to the [Oxford English Dictionary](#), to be inspiring is to "fill (someone) with the urge or ability to do or feel something". Among the most important steps you can take to fill someone with the urge to make choices that lead to not only their own success, but the success of your team as a whole, include the following:

**Build trust.** The simple truth is, your ability to influence — let alone inspire — anyone comes down to their willingness to let you do so. If people don't trust your character or competence, they are unlikely to give your point of view any credibility.

Trust is the foundation of any successful relationship and the starting point for anyone who wants to be an inspiring leader. Lead by example and demonstrate what it takes to be successful by making the right choices.

**Understand each person you lead.** Get to know the people on your team. What they aspire to be, how their health and happiness is influencing their performance. What their priorities are at work and in life. Understand what gives them energy and what zaps them of the fuel they need to thrive. Human beings make choices for a myriad of reasons: to be inspiring we need to understand their beliefs, values and drivers.

**Recognise fear and passion.** The most common reason people fail fulfil their potential is that they are afraid to. [Fear of failure](#), of ridicule, of not being good enough, of not being able to find the way to juggle multiple demands, are just some of the reasons people use when they hesitate to step forward when they should.

Fear and love are powerful influences of behavioural choice: understand what people hate and love and you're a long way towards inspiring people's choices.

**Be the bearer of good news and hope.** Irrespective of how tough times get, look for what is working or can work if the right decisions are made. Connect people with an optimistic view of what you know about them, yourself, or the future. Helping people to see and believe in what is possible is essential to inspiring them to think, feel and act in ways that enable success.

**Have honest conversations that build awareness and confidence.** Serve people faithfully by having honest conversations about how their mindset, emotions or behaviours are either enabling or undermining success. Challenge people to be the best possible version of themselves and help them to get there by regularly holding up the mirror of truth. Help them to see what's working and what's not.

**Guide people to see the influence their choices are having on their health, happiness and success.** Key to delivering constructive feedback, is your ability to deliver the truth with respect and sensitivity. Avoid hitting people with a sledgehammer, but never hesitate to share the truth. Focus on the natural consequences of choices being made, rather than the consequences you will impose if they fail to comply.

**Guide people to find and do what they are passionate about at work.** The role of a leader is made immeasurably easier when people are doing the work that they love with people who they respect. Look for opportunities to align people with roles they will not only enjoy but be willing to invest their full potential in.

The opportunity to participate in a project, [benefit from the support of a mentor](#) or attend an important meeting may go some way towards inspiring people to make choices that allow them to be their best.