

The Wisdom of *Caring Leaders*

with Donald Van de Mark

a film by Success Television

The Wisdom of *Caring* Leaders

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Welcome to

The Wisdom of *Caring Leaders*

with Donald Van de Mark

Thank you for your interest in The Wisdom of *Caring Leaders*.

In this video, I share insights and lessons on leadership that I've learned from interviewing some of the best business leaders of our time. I hope that sharing these leadership lessons will help all of us to make the wise choices and actions to succeed personally and professionally.

The Wisdom of *Caring Leaders* enables us to see how our choices about people, reactions to events and risk can widen our options for success and how we can take action and lead with purpose, passion and compassion. All the while, we are not doing this alone but with our team. The burden and the rewards are shared.

Problems will arise with a product launch, sales may not come in as expected or personality conflicts may arise. These are "the hills" or "battles" many leaders face. Now we have the wisdom to figure out what we can do to overcome these inevitable challenges.

It is my sincere hope that you take on one or more of these leadership stories and make it your own.

Sincerely,

Donald Van de Mark

The Wisdom of Caring Leaders

Key Concept 1: Choice

From the video: "Most people tend to become deterministic that they are a captive of their past. You're a product of choice. The question I often ask is, 'Are you a product of nature or nurture?' And, almost everyone says it's nurture or a combination and I try to make a point that it's neither. It's a product of choice. You have the power to reinvent yourself. That's not so with animals. The space between stimulus and response is the freedom to choose your response."



Donald: "Let's stop for a second and focus on the space between the stimulus, if you will, or whatever happens to you in your life and then your response. Is that a minute second in most instances? Is it something we can expand?"

Covey: Absolutely, we can expand it. But, with some people that have been, say, powerfully deprived or rejected, maybe there's very little space. With others that have had very affirming, unconditional love growing up and so forth, they can have a very large space. The point is, however small or large the space is, it can get larger if you will take responsibility and initiative and focus on it and use it. Little by little, it gets larger and larger until eventually your response changes the very stimulus of your life. That's why I say that leaders are not born or made, they are self-made."

Program insight:

When we become aware that we can constantly choose our behavior and character, we become more responsible for our actions and what happens in our lives. We feel the power of choice.

For example, if we decide we want to be more receptive to new ideas, be more open, then when a colleague or friend comes up to us with an idea, we're more likely to listen. We might even solicit more input from others and signal to others that we're receptive to their thoughts. At first, this can be difficult. We might find our moods, stresses, deadlines, need for approval stand in our way. We push aside this new "choice" and go back to the old grooves. This is what Covey refers to when he says, "most people become deterministic that they are a captive of their past."

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Your colleagues, friends or family may think of you one way and be used to your behavior. They've come to expect you to act a certain way. When you change, you may find resistance, questions, or skepticism. This is when Covey says, you need to stay strong and understand that "you have the power to reinvent yourself."

To find acceptance with your new way of being, will take communication; asking for feedback and listening. As you solicit and receive new ideas, you'll find people will open up. Your staff and colleagues will come up with creative ideas on how to solve a problem at work or create a new product. You can see how "your response changes the very stimulus of your life." In this case, being receptive to new ideas starts a cycle of people wanting to contribute and share their ideas for solving problems and creating new products and services.

Questions:

- I can recall when I decided I wanted to change something about myself.
- I remember a situation where I saw someone react to a situation where all involved were surprised with the outcome and everything fell into place. I don't know why.
- I not sure how to change or reinvent myself.

Given what Covey said about how we can reinvent ourselves, what character traits or behaviors would you choose to improve or change and why?

What stands in the way of you changing?

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Activity:

Ask the team to think of an example in their lives where they remember facing a choice of how to respond to a situation. Tell them to think of a behavior or way of being that they aspired to. What did they do? What happened? What could they have done? What do they think would have happened? How did people respond as a result?

Example: A response could be to argue or lose your temper when someone disagrees with you. You decide you don't want to do that. You decide that you're now going to listen to the other person and respectfully, "agree to disagree." As a result, you start realizing you're having fewer arguments. People respect your point of view, even though they may disagree. You're at peace.

Donald's Take:

Instead, of focusing on the end result; that is getting the story to air, I often focused on the most immediate circumstances. My first reaction, in what Covey calls that space between stimulus and response, was to look for blame. Today I know I can make a better choice. Focus on the end result. Focus on getting the story on the air. I can choose to do this.

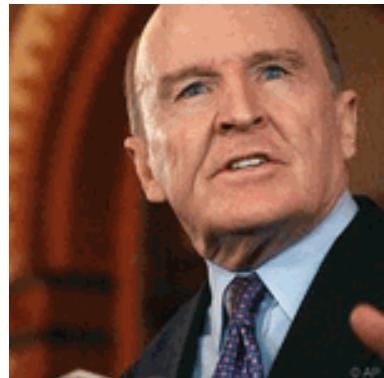
Covey taught me that if I can control my response, I'll actually expand my ability to handle whatever is thrown my way. Covey says, "It's *your response*, not the actual deed that upsets you, that makes all the difference in being a leader."

It is worth repeating what Covey says: "Leaders are not born or made, they are self-made".

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Concept 2: Courage & Compassion

From the video: “His nickname was Neutron Jack, probably because he laid off 150,000 GE employees in the 1980s. He could just as easily be nicknamed, ‘Mr. Candor.’ Jack Welch’s lesson for leaders? Be courageous, make the tough decisions.”



Noel Tichy, professor and author: “In 1981, he inherited the quintessential Alfred Sloan bureaucracy, bureaucracy in its worst sense. High bound, all that stuff and Welch basically blew all that up.”

Jack Welch: “Your job as a leader is to go around with a pump and pump self confidence into people so they can be the best they can be. When we talk to a manager four levels down or three levels down, we tell them that’s your job. Your job is to make everyone feel 6 feet tall with hair!”

Program insight:

Jack Welch, who led General Electric for nearly 20 years as its CEO is considered one of the pre-eminent businessmen in this century. He is also known for destroying the nine-layer management hierarchy and bringing a sense of informality to the company.

He was tough with his management team, religiously laying off 10 percent of the bottom performers each year. But, he rewarded the high achievers in management and down the line with stock options and bonuses. When Jack Welch left GE, the company had gone from a market value of \$14 billion to \$410 billion at the end of 2004, making it then the most valuable and largest company in the world.

Welch used candor, high energy and informality to motivate people. He recognized that an engaged empowered workforce creates excellent products and services. Welch believed in walking around and talking to the staff, instead of being walled off and getting his information from managers only. Welch liked to say, “Informality is a key value in a company; when everyone can speak out and have voice, when the quality of an idea is not measured by the level in an organization box.”

Welch believes in celebrating, recognizing and rewarding individual excellence. He says this sets the bar for great performance among the team. Also, he’s a big believer in “rolling out the keg” or celebrating a win. It keeps the team motivated.

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Questions:

- I can recall when I felt appreciated for my contribution.
- I remember when a boss was very frank with me and told me what I was doing well and not so well.
- I remember being surprised and grateful that a colleague gave me the honest scoop. I would have never known if I hadn't been casually asking questions.

Given what Welch said about how we self confidence and boosting your team, how are you acknowledging those around you?

How can you make sure you're getting all the information from your team? How do you find the blind spots or the bad news?

Activity:

There's a product launch in one month. The boss and the management team are very excited. This product is guaranteed to generate strong sales. The problem is the engineer down the hall has found a glitch or defect in the product. The engineer is focused on trying to fix it but hasn't told his immediate boss about the problem.

Each member of the team is about 3 management layers above this engineer. They don't normally interact with him. In fact, they don't know him at all. How would they go about finding out or "surfacing" this problem? If they find out the problem this month, they'll be able to fix it. After this month, they'll have a crisis on their hands. Costly production will start, sales brochures printed and a whole nasty chain of events will begin.

Have the team brainstorm on ways to get communication flowing. Ask them, "What would Jack Welch do?" What would he expect of his executive team? Ask them, "What would you do to make sure you know what is going on, good or bad?"

After they have given many suggestions, ask them where they can apply this in their job today.

Donald's Take:

If your team seems to be floundering, ask them if they're clear on their goals. As a leader, straightforward conversations and feedback will also help you attract the right employees, clients and customers. As Welch says, "Formality is the killer of business. Informality is what makes a company work. Informality is a key value in a company, when everyone can speak out and have a voice; when the quality of an idea is not measured by the level in an organization box. This is not about first name stuff; this is about being able to try things and wing things."

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Concept 3: Different Perspectives

From the video: “I certainly believe in community and I believe in the power of individuals working together to create an effective community to work on the problems addressing that community.”

Donald: “eBay founder Pierre Omidyar is of Iranian descent. Born in Paris and raised outside Washington, DC. He has had to see the similarities as well as the differences among people.”



Pierre Omidyar: “It’s definitely part of my point of view that we’re all kind of the same. Regardless of the culture you come from, we all are humans sharing similar motivations.”

Program insight:

Each of us comes from a different racial, gender, sexual, religious, even geographic background. We have customs and beliefs ingrained into us since birth from our family, faith and country. If you are a baby boomer living in an Irish Catholic neighborhood in Boston you’re going to view the world very differently from a 20 year old born and raised in an Hispanic neighborhood in San Antonio, Texas. Add being from a different country and race and our differences multiply.

We all see the world through our own prism of experience and value system. It’s easy to assume others will share our same beliefs. The key is to realize the differences and be sensitive to them. The differences are what make us as a group stronger. As a whole, we’re like a diamond with many facets. We have the ability to gain greater perspective and nuance that in turn helps us to creatively solve problems or come up with new ideas, products or services.

If we’re not careful and just assume everyone thinks like us and shares our values, we can make other people and their ideas feel unwelcome. It can seem as harmless as making fun of the “strange” food our colleague eats or the music s/he enjoys. If you are a manager or in a position of power, people different from you may feel that they can’t speak up or share their ideas for fear of looking foolish.

That’s a very expensive proposition. That’s like walking around with one-tenth of your vision and hearing. You can imagine how the quality of your ideas will diminish.

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Question:

- I can remember feeling uncomfortable and not belonging.
 - I remember feeling defensive and that I couldn't speak up.
 - Based on what Pierre Omidyar said, how are you reaching out to those different from you to get their point of view?
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Activity:

You're going to throw a party at work. You want to include everybody and you want them contributing their ideas. This is a big celebration because the company has just hit a milestone in sales and products launched.

Get the participants to share how they would celebrate to include all the different people at work. Get everyone to share their ideas so the more silent speak up and feel they are heard. If your group is large enough, you could have a competition on who comes up with the most creative ideas that are inclusive of all groups. Some ways of welcoming the differences in people: multi-ethnic music, art, food, entertainment, costumes, readings, photos.

Donald's Take:

When you are called to lead your organization to find answers to your toughest problems, where will you get your best ideas?

If I want to get the best, most creative ideas, I'll surround myself with a diverse group of people. We did this at CNN. We were having a brainstorming session to create new television shows. We made sure to invite all kinds of people within the company. We found the ideas and creativity were extraordinary.

Think about it. People who come from different cultures, races, men and women; they all have a *different perspective*. You can get a different approach to solving problems; new ideas and opportunities surface. As a leader your role is to invite them and listen. Really listen.

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Concept 4: Passion to Make Change

From the video: "She was one of the richest women in the United Kingdom. She was the founder of her own company. She made it her business to mix profits with helping the environment and the less fortunate; in this case, children in Nicaragua.

Anita Roddick, the founder of the Body Shop, believed you can do good while still doing well."



Anita Roddick at a Nicaragua garbage dump: "THIS is an example of where the global economy does not work. This is rare to find people from business to come and stand here and not only to absorb and to take back their experience but to damn well do something! I believe you have to have a bottom line that incorporates human rights, incorporates social justice and you have a real protection for that silent group, the environment."

Donald: "Why are you so energized by injustice?"

Anita Roddick: "Number one, the alternative is death. Number two..."

Donald: "Death to you, your spirit?"

Anita Roddick: "Yeah, Yeah. Undoubtedly. Number two, is I have enormous resources and influence so I'm a great believer that, you know, with the influence I have and the distribution network I have, I have the power to change."

Program insight:

Anita Roddick was a passionate leader who rallied her workers around the concept of helping the less fortunate and the environment through her trade practices. As a result her business has prospered:

"The Body Shop and I have always been closely identified in the public mind. Today, it is impossible to separate the company values from the issues that I care passionately about – social responsibility, respect for human rights, the environment and animal protection, and an absolute belief in Community Trade. But The Body Shop is not, and nor was ever, a one-woman-show – it's a global operation with thousands of people working towards common goals and sharing common values. *That's what has given it a campaigning and commercial strength and continues to set it apart from mainstream business.*"

AnitaRoddick.com

Authentic, passionate leaders tap into our energy. They hit a chord. It's what makes us want to take the hill with them, no matter how difficult. We know they care.

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Question:

- I remember being in a group and around a leader I thought was so empowering, I really wanted to contribute my help. I could feel I'd make a difference.
 - I can think of my own ambition to succeed and the goals I have in mind.
 - Given what Anita Roddick said, do you know what excites and motivates your team?
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Donald's Take:

From this extraordinary leader I learned that leaders must be passionate. Passion doesn't have to be about a cause though. It really is about what motivates us. It's where we get our energy. Leadership is about showing how much we care about the project and the people who are working on it.

As the saying goes, they will never care about how much we know, until they know how much we care.

Does your team know you care? Have you thanked them? Have you asked them for their input?

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Concept 5: Risks & Learn

From the video:

Donald: "This next and final lesson is about taking risks, putting it out there, and possibly failing but always learning. I learned all of this from Richard Branson. Let me correct myself, Sir Richard Branson.

And as long as consumers are willing to try, Branson is willing to experiment: retail, hotels, movie theatres, tour packages, mobile phones, internet service, Vodka, trains, to name just a few." Branson, of course, sees the business as he sees life, an endless education and interaction with others."

Richard Branson: "I'm just living my life and enjoying learning. And the best way I find I can learn is by learning about every aspect of life. And, the way to learn about every aspect of life is to challenge people in lots of different sectors of life."



Program insight:

Being challenged to excel, create a great product or service, build a well functioning team, empowering others is what makes our work lives and spirit thrive. As a leader, the challenge is to open up the opportunity for your team to take risks and win.

Informed, intuitive decision-making leads to taking risks. The mere fact of a choice is a risk. Do we launch an imperfect product today or do we wait? Do I tell my boss this great idea I have as a result of talking to customers or do I figure it won't make a difference?

Success in any of these endeavors takes risk. It could be that you fail or your idea is criticized or rejected. It could be a risk of being embarrassed because you speak up for a project or against unfair, rude or unethical behavior. As painful as any of these scenarios can be, is avoiding that risk of not reaching your goals or living up to your personal character worth it?

Know whatever that decision is that even standing still is a risk. You may be outflanked by your competition that took a risk and created a better widget. Your customers may be looking for something new, different, a better mousetrap. Will you and your team be ready?

Remember, nothing, alive, stays still. Doing nothing is still a risk.

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Question:

- I remember taking a risk and the great feeling when I succeeded.
 - I also remember the difficulty of learning something new but also feeling by expanded by it.
 - Given what Richard Branson said are you pushing yourself to learn, innovate and take risks? Where are you doing this?
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Donald's Take:

It is human nature to shout about new ideas and products that have succeeded, while failure is only discussed in hushed whispers, if at all. This is not what I learned from Sir Richard. If we want to encourage others to find new ideas and challenge conventional wisdom, we need to create a climate where risk is embraced and failure tolerated.

Leaders learn from these failures, dust themselves off and try again. By taking risks and constantly learning, you will create your own success.

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