

# INSPIRE

## On Leadership

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### Missed Opportunities of Leaders

Most leaders are very busy with their own stuff. They have tasks to accomplish, projects to complete, and meetings to attend. And, they miss opportunities to lead people.

I have been coaching and training leaders for years. In our organization, it is what we do. And, in fairness, we know leaders do not intend to miss opportunities for leadership. It happens when they are not choosing intentional leadership. They schedule meetings, they track deadlines, and they do not DESIGN leadership. More than that, employees are sometimes handled as a nuisance. You've seen it: An employee knocks on the door and says, "Hey do you have a moment?" The leader says, "Sure, come on in." Their eyes say, "I wonder how long this will take." Sometimes, that part of it is even more blatant, as they continue to type on their keyboard, saying, "Go ahead, I'm listening."

So where are leaders missing opportunities to maximize productivity and engagement. Below is a short list of what we've seen:

Leaders do not have a tough conversation, many times because of fear of offending someone. The missed opportunity is in making a difference in this employee's life. Ten years from now when someone asks this person who contributed to their success, let it be you. Ensure that they will say, "I had a boss who sometimes told me things I did not want to hear. And, now I'm so glad. I'm better because of it!"

Leaders do not manage their volume of negative feedback. The missed opportunity is in helping to keep people motivated and feeling positive about what they're contributing.

Leaders do not provide enough positive feedback. The missed opportunity: "What gets rewarded gets repeated."

Some leaders do not treat people with respect. The missed opportunity is reflected in this employee's comments:

"What I really like about my boss is that he treats me like he would want to be treated. I have a lot of respect for him and will do anything to make sure we accomplish what we need to."



These are not the only missed opportunities. I encourage you to think through these and add more of your own. Keep in mind that the employees you lead are human beings. They deserve to be valued, supported and appreciated, while being held accountable. Do not miss this opportunity!

*Aleta Norris provides an ongoing column on developing better leadership skills. She is a leadership expert and Principal at Living as a Leader LLC.*

