

Don't Leave Your Leadership to Luck

July 2020 | LinkedIn Article by Wendy Berenson



St. Patrick's Day is almost here, which means parades, leprechauns, four leaf clovers, lots of green and the luck of the Irish! Some people are luckier than others, however we can't be wishing on the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow to be better leaders.

Leadership skills can be taught and learned. At InnerWill, we believe all leaders have been greatly led. How are you leading? What are you teaching? Great leaders don't just teach about work. They offer life lessons and wisdom around topics like empathy, emotional intelligence, courage, and purpose. It's imperative that you give people the right experiences to grow and learn. Sometimes team members may struggle, but it's okay to push them to figure out what they need on their own.

Earlier in my career, I was working with a leader in an organization on a project I was so excited about. After learning about this project, I immediately called my co-worker and starting sharing and listing off what I was excited about and how we should get started. Instantly, my co-worker cut me off and asked me to never do that again. He followed that statement up by saying, "Let me share with you what is really helpful in how to present your case." After this conversation, he took the time to teach me how to have a business plan and how to collect data to influence the leader the way I wanted to. He taught me the value of doing my research, why it is important and what impact it could have on the organization. This leader made the choice to take the time to coach me and he taught me a valuable lesson that has influenced my career even since.

We don't know everything and in many cases, we need someone to teach us. **Let's focus on being intentional about teaching and mentoring, so we're not leaving leadership to luck.** We must teach and mentor others

to help them find their passions and build their leadership toolbox and skill sets. Here are some tips and reminders to keep in mind:

- **Remember, we can mentor anyone at any age.** Talk about an article or a book that impacted you and be intentional about scheduling a time to get together and share what you have learned.
- **Don't stop mentoring no matter your age.** We don't stop being mentors so don't stop being mentees. Regardless of where we are in our careers or even if you're a retiree, it is important to be intentional about continuing to learn each day.
- **Sometimes we have to experience things and learn from those lessons.** We also need people to push us out of our comfort zones.
- **Mentoring works both ways.** When we come together, mentor to mentee, the way we blend our skills together can be complementary and we learn from each other. Being a mentor can be immensely satisfying. When we are teaching, we are learning. Continue to learn from others!
- **Be intentional about asking for advice and feedback.**
- **Make choices around growing relationships.** Leverage your relationships to teach and help people grow. Walk alongside technology and use it to your benefit.
- **Learn** the best approach of what to teach, the timing of when to teach, and how to make your lessons stick.

How are you making the choice to mentor and teach others? I'd love to hear from you. Comment below or send me an email at wendy.berenson@innerwill.org.

Learn more about InnerWill Leadership Institute at innerwill.org.

