

The par excellence Leadership Style - Empathetic Leadership

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Being empathetic is a life skill that is necessary for any successful human being. We model it for our children and nurture our relationships through having the ability to see the perspective of others. We place ourselves in someone else's shoes to understand. As a leader, I watch for signs of anxiety and strive to see how certain tasks or situations are difficult for some and not for others, so I can provide the proper supports.

Here's the thing though. There is such a thing as being overly empathetic. And overly empathetic leads to enabling and overly emotional, which in turn leads to stagnation or lack of growth. Balancing this out as an administrator is a tough task. Bosses want their managers, staffs and customers to be happy, but we also need to push people out of their comfort zones so we can bring the best out of every one.

Fact is, empathy can be a leader's greatest asset and equally their greatest liability. I believe the heart of leadership is to be strong enough to continue to be empathetic, but wise enough to make the tough decisions when an individual or situation is pulling on our heartstrings. If we see the history we get mostly inspired and energized on hearing the names of leaders who followed empathetic style, be it Mahatma Gandhi or Nelson Mandela.

For some leaders perhaps, may not struggle with this balance and their growth lies elsewhere. We all have strengths and weaknesses. For me, I was finding this area as one of the most challenging aspects of my job, with little experience in dealing with 100's of people now it is my strongest Forte !! I realized the power of empathetic leadership when I saw my colleagues shedding tears on my departure. I was very fortunate to witness the power of empathetic leadership. Each day I'm a little wiser and a little better than the day before.