

By *KIMBERLY ALYN*

Cultural Power Vs. REAL Leadership

Whose Side Are YOU On?

New recruits need strong leadership models, outstanding training and the real truth about leadership if they ever hope to emerge as effective leaders.

Be prepared for a new generation that will be entering the fire service in the next five to 10 years. This generation is inundated with music, movies and television that all send mixed messages about what it means to gain power and position. New recruits need strong leadership models, outstanding training and the real truth about leadership if they ever hope to emerge as effective leaders.

Robert Greene wrote a book called *48 Laws of Power*. This book has made it to best-seller status, is huge in the hip-hop industry and is making its way into mainstream. In his book, Greene outlines the “laws” of increasing your power in life. I call these “Temporary Power Principles” because while they do increase your power in the short run, they will short-circuit your effectiveness as a real leader in the long run. Unfortunately, these Temporary Power Principles are gaining momentum in our increasingly self-centered society.

The truth is if you embrace and apply the laws in Greene’s book, you will gain power. But it’s the kind of power that breeds hate and mistrust. It’s the kind of power that makes people want to bow to your power and position while in your presence and undermine your authority when you are not around. It’s the kind of power that creates a cult-like following, but eventually blows up in your face. It’s the kind of power many supervisors use in the fire service as well as many other organizations across the United States.

Below are just five of the 48 Laws of Power (or more accurately titled the Temporary Power Principles) that are perpetuated by this book with my corresponding “Real Leadership Principles.”

Temporary Power Principle 1: Conceal Your Intentions

The idea here is to keep people wondering about your intentions, your vision and where you plan to take your followers. This helps cultivate an atmosphere of fear where people will feel more dependent upon you. This concept, in theory, gives the leader the upper hand as no one can prepare themselves for what the leader might choose to do next if the leader doesn’t tell anyone.

The Real Leadership Principle: Reveal Your Intentions

When you are open and honest with people, they feel safe. When you hoard information, people feel unsure of themselves and what they should be doing. By creating a free flow of information, followers feel empowered to do their jobs and do it right! Real leaders let people know what their intentions are. This creates trust, and trust is imperative with real leadership. If you conceal your intentions, you risk breaking trust. An old Chinese proverb helps explain why that’s dangerous: “Trust, like fine china, once broken can be repaired, but it is never quite the same.” When you break trust with followers, it takes a very long time to rebuild that trust, and often times things are never quite the same.

Temporary Power Principle 2: Get Others to Do the Work for You, But Always Take the Credit

This law convinces people of the need to be in the spotlight. The idea is to get others to get all of the work done, but your name should be all over it. You will increase your power and position by taking credit for things you didn’t actually do. Once the person manipulates others to accomplish the tasks, when it comes time for glory, the leader takes it. People who practice this principle are usually first to throw blame on the followers who did the work if something goes wrong.

KIMBERLY ALYN is a best-selling author and a professional speaker and trainer. She is the owner of Fire Presentations (www.FirePresentations.com), a company dedicated to training workshops for the fire service. Alyn offers instruction on leadership, conflict prevention and resolution, discipline in the fire service, promotional process, command presence, communication skills, presentations skills, writing skills and sexual harassment. She is the author of eight books and five CD/DVD productions. Alyn holds a bachelor’s degree in management and a master’s degree in organizational management. She can be reached at 800-821-8116 or e-mail Kim@FirePresentations.com.

TOP 10 SIGNS OF A BAD SUPERVISOR

Everyone has had to work for a bad supervisor at one point or another. The fire service is no exception. Some people mistake leadership for supervisory or management positions. Anyone who supervises another employee is a supervisor, but that doesn't make that person a leader.

A leader is someone who positively influences others to want to follow. Good supervisors should also be good leaders. Bad supervisors usually lack leadership skills, ability or training. They may think they are doing a great job, but everyone around them knows they stink at it!

Here are the top 10 signs of a bad supervisor:

1. Bad supervisors lead and manage by intimidation. These types of supervisors tend to use force and threats to get things done. They try to intimidate others with their tone of voice, body language and harsh words. They are abrasive, harsh and severe.
2. Bad supervisors do not produce results. They often talk about what needs to be done, complain about what's not getting done and demand that someone else do it. They rarely ever produce real results themselves and they lack initiative in getting things accomplished.
3. Bad supervisors lack honesty and integrity. Character is a vital part of being a great leader, and this is a non-negotiable leadership principle that has been around since the beginning of time. Bad supervisors are dishonest and tend to make unethical decisions. They justify these decisions with excuses like "Everyone else does it" or "No one is going to know" or "It won't hurt anyone."
4. Bad supervisors do not learn from mistakes. They rarely, if ever, admit they are wrong and their subordinates would faint and fall over if the words "I'm sorry" were ever uttered from their mouths! Bad supervisors tend to deny their mistakes, making it impossible to learn from those mistakes and become better as a leader or supervisor. As a result, there is a lack of respect among followers.
5. Bad supervisors lack openness to new ideas or suggestions. These supervisors do not want suggestions or input from others. They take any form of

THE TOP 10

Bad supervisors:

1. Lead and manage by intimidation.
2. Do not produce results.
3. Lack honesty and integrity.
4. Do not learn from mistakes.
5. Lack openness to new ideas or suggestions.
6. Become threatened by people who pursue learning and self-development.
7. Criticize others.
8. Do not make themselves accountable up or down the chain.
9. Exhibit poor communication skills.
10. Exhibit high confidence, but low competence.

suggestion or input as negative criticism instead of positive ideas. They say things like "If it's not broke, don't fix it" or "That's the way we've always done it around here" or "We've tried that before and it didn't work."

6. Bad supervisors become threatened by people who pursue learning and self-development. Real leaders support their followers in pursuing continual learning and self-development. Bad supervisors become threatened by subordinates who may get a higher education than the supervisor or who may attend some leadership training that the supervisor doesn't want to attend. As a result, the bad supervisor will often put down college degrees, leadership classes or any form of continuing education.
7. Bad supervisors criticize others. When supervisors are insecure, they tend to overcompensate by putting other people down, especially in public. They tend to talk down to people to make themselves appear more powerful. They find things to criticize about anyone who is getting positive attention. When they need to reprimand a subordinate, they will often do it in front of other people because they think it makes them look powerful. If they only knew how horrible it makes them look!
8. Bad supervisors do not make themselves accountable up or down the chain. A bad supervisor will make

decisions without thinking about the consequences or how the decisions may affect others. Additionally, there is no accountability, especially down the chain. Bad supervisors say things like "I'm the boss – I don't owe an explanation to THEM!" or "If they don't like it, too bad." Real leaders understand that they are accountable to their followers as well as their supervisors to make principle-based decisions.

9. Bad supervisors exhibit poor communication skills. Too many people think communicating is talking. Well, it is, but it's also listening. The reason God gave you two ears and only one mouth was so you would learn to listen twice as much as you talked! Bad supervisors spew their thoughts and opinions on others without really listening to what others want to say. If they do shut up long enough to listen, they are not really listening – they are formulating their response or argument in their head. They often interrupt or interject when people are trying to talk, and they don't take the time to validate others in the communication process.

10. Bad supervisors exhibit high confidence, but low competence. This is by far the worst type of supervisor. They tend to show a very high level of confidence, but they have a very low level of competence. Subordinates find it very difficult to follow this type of supervisor. These supervisors come off as cocky, arrogant know-it-alls, but everyone around them knows they are full of it. Unfortunately, the only one who doesn't know it is the supervisor, which amplifies their incompetence. Since we now have syndromes for just about everything, I call this one the HCLC syndrome (high confidence/low competence). Don't be one of the supervisors who end up dubbed with this syndrome!

It takes a lot to be considered a great leader. There are actions and behaviors you must exhibit on a daily basis. If you are exhibiting any of the actions above, chances are, people will find it very difficult to follow you. If you want to find out how good of a leader you really are, take my Leadership Assessment. It's online and it's free. Just log on to www.FirePresentations.com/FreelInfo.htm.

—Kimberly Alyn

The Real Leadership Principle: Share in the Work, Accept Blame and Give Away Credit

Real leaders understand the need to build competent teams. To do that, you need to share in the work as a leader. Real leaders will actually accept blame for team failures (since they are the one leading the team), and they will give away credit for team successes (since it really takes the whole team to succeed). By empowering others to succeed, you will succeed as well. When you make others look good, you look good.

Temporary Power Principle 3: Keep Others in Suspended Terror – Cultivate an Air of Unpredictability

The concept here is to never allow people to become comfortable with anticipating your moods or actions. If you are calm and controlled at one time and raging out of control another, people will live in fear of you. They will never know what to expect

and will therefore walk on eggshells around you. Followers tend to be extra accommodating for fear they may be the catalyst for the next bad mood. It puts the leader in a more powerful position over the follower.

The Real Leadership Principle: Keep Others Trusting You – Cultivate an Air of Consistent Predictability

Over the long term, effective leadership requires integrity. Many people define integrity as "doing the right thing when no one is looking." I agree with that. I also believe that integrity is doing what you said you would do, when you said you would do it, and how you said it would be done. Being unpredictable does not fit that definition, and therefore lacks integrity. Real leaders show consistency in their behavior. They are predictable when it comes to their values, beliefs and vision. They show congruency between their actions and values and people see them as authentic.

Temporary Power Principle 4: Be Royal in Your Own Fashion – Act Like a King to be Treated Like One

This law perpetuates the concept of “fake it ’til you make it.” If you want people to treat you like royalty, then you had better start acting like it. If you want people to treat you like you are powerful, then you need to act powerful and show others that you are the one in power.

The Real Leadership Principle: Be a Servant to Others and They Will Treat You Like a King

This is one of the hardest concepts for some supervisors to comprehend and embrace. Many managers and supervisors think that their subordinates or followers exist to serve them. Real leaders understand that they exist to serve their followers, and by doing so, everyone wins. Real leaders don't have to flex their power at others. Margaret Thatcher put it succinctly when she said, “Being in power is a lot like being a lady – if you have to tell people you are, then you aren't.” Real leaders positively influence others and serve others. As a result, people want to follow. When you exalt yourself, people tend to want to humble you. When you humble yourself, people tend to want to exalt you.

Temporary Power Principle 5: Play on People's Need to Believe to Create a Cult-Like Following

The idea here is people need to believe in something. If you practice this law and play on this need in people, you can get them under your thumb in a cult-like following, especially if you can be persuasive enough. People who practice this law of gaining power try to prey on the weak first and then work their way to the stronger people in the group. Once they have their following, they can keep people under that thumb.

The Real Leadership Principle: Be the Role Model Leader that People Can Believe In

The fact is, people do want to believe. They want to believe in other people. They want to believe in leaders. They want to believe in the vision and direction of the leader. Real leaders give people positive things to believe in. Instead of preying on the need to believe, real leaders fill that need. They serve as role model examples of honesty, integrity and trust and followers believe in their leadership abilities.

What's YOUR Choice?

Take a look at your own leadership style. Do you practice some of the Temporary Power Principles instead of Real Leadership Principles? Maybe some of the things you do are more subtle than what I am listing here, but may still be pushing people away from your leadership style. If you want to be a more effective leader, you need to focus on positively influencing others by consistently practicing Real Leadership Principles.

...

25th ANNIVERSARY
Firehouse Expo
FIRE • RESCUE • EMS

July 22-27, 2008
BALTIMORE, MD

Kimberly Alyn will present “How to Conquer Subordinate Counseling” and “Real Leadership in the Fire Service Is Not for Wimps!” at Firehouse Expo 2008.

For more free information on real leadership in the fire service, log on to: www.FirePresentations.com/FreeInfo.htm.

Portable Hot Shower



Made in USA. Made in USA.



- Supports up to 2 shower heads
- 70,000 BTU of instant heat
- Works with all decon shelters
- Mill-Spec stainless steel
- No power needed

Visit us at Firehouse Expo, Booth # 3111
800-589-2849 ext 524
www.HazMatShower.com

Indicate 173 on Reader Service Card

When LIVES are on The LINE!

CRITICAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS & SOLUTIONS

rescom
sales inc.

Confined Spaces
 USAR/HUSAR
 HAZMAT
 Fire & Rescue
 Tactical
 Industrial
 and other High Noise
 & Challenging Environments



www.rescom.us 1-800-665-2740

Indicate 174 on Reader Service Card