TWO THINGS EVERY LEADER NEEDS TO BE ABLE TO DO BUT MANY DON'T KNOW HOW TO DO OR DON'T WANT TO DO!

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At times you just gotta do it, tough as it may be! There are many things excellent leaders do and do well. Here are two that I believe every leader needs to be able and willing to do, but many are neither willing nor able.

1. EFFECTIVE, GOD-HONORING LEADERS ARE WILLING, AND KNOW HOW, TO HAVE THE TOUGH CONVERSATIONS WHEN NECESSARY

Part of leadership is doing certain things which are not pleasant or easy to do. Ongoing conversations with team members are absolutely critical to fruitfulness and solid productivity. Team members need to have clarity on what they have been tasked to do, need to hear when they are doing well and also need to hear when they are not doing well.

As Ken Blanchard says in his classic book *The One Minute Manager*, we need to have one-minute affirmation conversations and one-minute coaching/confrontation conversations. People want (and need) to know how they are doing in their supervisor's estimation. My experience has taught me that many get no conversations whatsoever because their "boss" is super slammed most of the time and/or has too many direct reports to get regular time with team members to affirm/encourage by dishing out attaboys.

But there is also the need to be honest and courageous enough to have the tough conversation when things are not going well in such areas as:

1. Work performance is not up to expected standards
2. Bad attitudes are negatively impacting the rest of the team
3. Corporate values are being regularly violated
4. Tardiness or lack of punctuality is affecting the team

2. EFFECTIVE, GOD-HONORING LEADERS ARE WILLING AND KNOW HOW TO MAKE THE TOUGH DECISIONS WHEN NECESSARY

The goal of all good leadership is to do what is best for the organization; and what's best for the organization may not always be what's best or pleasing to some who work for the organization.

"The leader has a responsibility to do the right thing for the organization, regardless of whether it brings instant popularity." Ron Edmondson

Leaders make decisions...that is what leaders do. As leaders our motivation should be to make timely decisions that we deem to be the best at the time. We do not always have the prerogative of waiting until everyone is totally sold on it or is enthusiastic about a decision we want and need to make.

Trust is the glue that holds a team together. The rest of the team needs to trust you to lead and make good decisions, and you need to trust your team to be honest and courageous enough to offer good critique and feedback on potential decisions. Create a safe culture where it is okay to speak out and speak up!

As a leader, you will want to pray, do your homework, get solid input from the team, weigh all the options, and then make a decision. You should want to do what's right, not what is necessarily popular. You might have to live with being unpopular for a while.

If it turns out you made the wrong decision, own it and do what's necessary to correct it. Do not blame others or make excuses for yourself. Leaders make decisions, some of which are right.

Only Jesus made perfect decisions every time.

"If your goal in life is to keep everybody happy, don't be a leader, sell ice-cream." Eric Geiger.

The greater the responsibility you carry the harder some of these decisions can be.
Here are some thoughts on decision-making adapted from Ted Engstrom:

> *Readiness to risk failure is probably the one quality that best characterizes the effective leader. Never vacillate in making a decision. Indecision at the top breeds lack of confidence and hesitancy throughout an organization.*

- Do not make decisions under stress. Do not make major decisions when you are angry, tired, or frustrated. Get quiet inside and lean into the Holy Spirit for the wisdom and courage you need to pull the trigger at the appropriate time
- Do not make snap decision, but do not drag your feet either. Set a deadline which is reasonable and make a decision
- Consult other people. Get feedback from your team. Ask for pushback and problems with a decision you are about to make.
- Do not try to anticipate everything. You may never have all the information you would like to have, but you probably have enough.
- Do not be afraid of making a wrong decision. Making bad decisions and learning from them is what develops us as leaders. Show me a person who never made a mistake and I will show you a person who never made anything
- Once the decision is made, go on to something else. Do not waste emotional energy going over and over the decision.