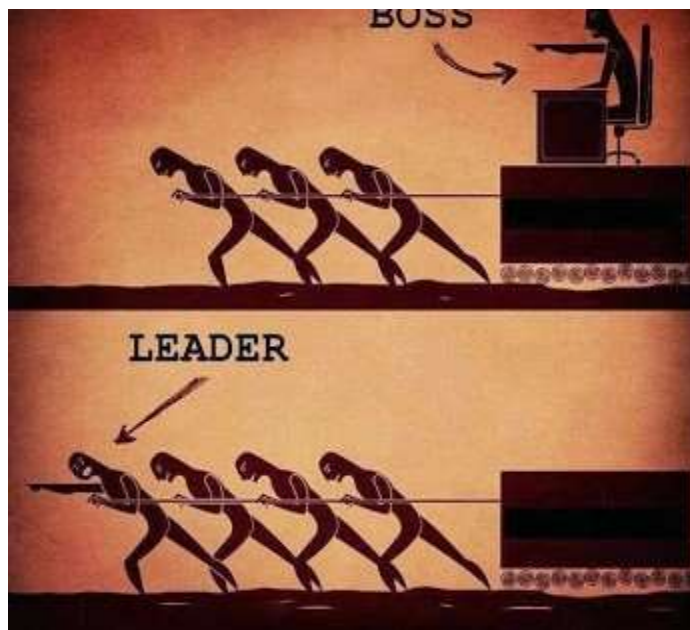# Draper Notes

September 29, 2015

The 4 Biggest Differences Between Leaders and Bosses

by Adam Smith

We have all worked for people who are leaders, and those who are bosses. We learn what we should do by looking at the lives of leaders, and we learn what not to do by looking at the actions of bosses. Maybe you are wondering if you work for a leader or a boss, or you may need to know if you are a leader or a boss yourself.

Here are the four main differences between the two, and they are anything but subtle:

1. **Leaders inspire others to act by being out front, and bosses expect everyone else to do all the work.**

As the picture shows above, leaders aren't afraid to go first. They realize that it is difficult to go first sometimes, so they will lead in order to release the tension for others. Going first allows others to go next with less hesitation and more boldness. You can lead by testing the waters and telling others if it is okay for them to dive in.

Leaders also don't expect others to do all the work. In fact, I would say that one of the most important attributes for a leader to possess is the willingness to work hard. Things will never just happen on their own, but with hard work over time, positive results can take place. But before the work takes place, leaders realize the importance of giving motivation to the entire team. Employees need to know the *why* behind the necessity of moving ahead. Giving employees the reason behind the reason of doing things is important, so a better work environment can be created. Employees must believe that their work makes a meaningful contribution to make the biggest possible impact through their work. When leaders paint this picture well, their company will thrive. When bosses don't do this, all motivation will be lost.

2. **Leaders have vision for the future and are proactive, but bosses only maintain what they already have and are reactive to situations.**

When you or who you work for can see out ahead before problems happen, the entire team gets to enjoy the benefits. This is leading at its finest. Taking care of issues so others don't have to deal with them shows employees that those around them care about their well-being.

This concept not only applies to dealing with problems, but having this visionary mentality will create tremendous growth. If systems can be set in place now that can make the future better, then by all means please begin this necessary conversation now within your company, whether you have a leadership title or not. (You don't need a title

to lead; you just need a voice.) Having visionaries in leadership is a necessity for your company to be relevant twenty years from now, and being proactive ensures that your entire team will head in the right direction over time.

Leaders are creative with the plan when they need to be, and bosses only know one plan. When a plan doesn't work out, is your company paralyzed, or is a new plan quickly formed and executed? Leaders are great at this, but bosses are not.

3. Leaders care about relationships, whereas bosses care about their title.

If you look after your staff, they'll look after your customers. It's that simple. -
Sir Richard Branson

Of course, businesses won't be around for long without making money, but that is a byproduct of creating an environment where people want to be, employees and customers alike. A team whose leadership cares about them as individuals will produce more benefits than teams who don't have a leadership team who builds relationships with them.

Bosses who solely focus on the bottom line, pushing all focus on relationships aside to command orders from their team just because they have a management title, will cause burnout in employees. In doing this, they won't be left with anyone who wants to work for them. What these bosses don't realize is that added revenue is always a byproduct of happy employees interacting with customers on a daily basis. People want to buy from companies who offer great service and a remarkable guest experience, and building relationships with your team is a great place to start leading right away.

As Patrick Lencioni points out in his book, *3 Signs of a Miserable Job*, to keep good employees, you need to help them be happy and fulfilled. Business success actually depends on it. One of the signs of a miserable job that he mentions in his book is when employees feel that they are anonymous. This is why I have spoken before on

why creating relationships with employees is so important. When staff feels unappreciated, unimportant, and ignored, the feeling of discontentment within your staff will grow. In short, leaders display empathy within relationships, whereas bosses display apathy. Leaders seek to understand how their employees are feeling, and bosses don't care.

4. **Leaders allow others to learn from their mistakes as well. Bosses humiliate others when they miss the mark.**

I have never met a leader who was a micromanager for each stage of the creation process. Never. Leaders produce other leaders who can think for themselves. Bosses create robots who need to be told what to do. Leaders know the power of coaching employees, and then releasing their team to make a difference. Bosses on the other hand, can't wait until you mess up so they can pounce on your mistakes, making you feel inadequate. But, leaders see mistakes as more than opportunities to belittle you. Leaders see the bigger picture. They take any mistake, and turn it into opportunities to help direct others, so employees can gain the full power found in the process of learning. Within the process of learning, patience is taught, knowledge is given, and confidence is built. This process allows people to become the best possible employees they can be.

Mistakes found through experimentation are necessary lessons that will eventually give you the outcome you are looking for. Hear me when I say that making mistakes doesn't make you a failure. In fact, I don't believe that leaders should use the word "failure", because errors can be fixed. Sure it may take some time, but with persistence, the teaching moments found in making mistakes will turn into more experience, and experience turns into maturity, and maturity turns into making better decisions.

This being said, the only way to fight the perfectionism that has been plaguing you for far too long is to go and try something different. What is it that you have been afraid of doing? Whatever it is, it may be time to finally experiment with it. And when you make the decision to attempt new things, you may even make a few mistakes, but that's not

failure, it's learning.

Now that you know the differences, find leaders, not bosses, that you can learn more from. Surrounding yourself with people who have the attributes you desire can only make you better. And if you lean more towards being a boss yourself, then right now is the best time to make a change.