



Top Ten Tips for Managing Communication, Conflict & Negotiation

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10. Be nice. There is no excuse for being mean and inconsiderate to people. I have terminated people for performance and hugged them on their way out the door more than once.
9. Control the time and place. Remember that you don't have to make a decision to engage any one right now. Ask to talk tomorrow or next week or when ever you think you can bring your best. Especially as a manager, you pick the time.
8. Use your boss. It's not a sign of weakness to engage your boss to help deal with a tough situation. Communicate up before you get into a scrape. Limited authority is a great tactic in negotiation that can buy you some time when you're under pressure.
7. Cover your back. Always get as much consensus on a decision as you can before you make it. As a leader you can make unilateral decisions if you want to, but they always come with a price. In the end you're responsible anyway, right? Socialize decisions and telegraph big changes.
6. Find a way to win. The greatest fighters are not the ones that win every round, they're the ones that win every fight...sometimes in the last seconds of the last round after getting beaten up for the entire rest of the fight. You have to believe in yourself at the deepest level. Never forget that all weapons are forged in the armory of the mind.
5. Remain in the awkward moments. Most people cannot handle awkward situations. Remember, awkward moments happen and they can really work in your favor. Next time you're in a really awkward management situation, try to recognize it and don't try to move away from it. Just watch it work.
4. Give a little extra when you're negotiating with your people. Although my Dad used to tell me to always insult the seller with my first bid (which I still do occasionally when making deals), I have found better outcomes await managers that always go better than half way toward their staff in personal related negotiations.
3. Get help. Leadership, and life, can be difficult. The most effective, compassionate, and enduring people I know have someone in their life that they can talk to where nothing is off the table. Be certain that there is no difficulty that you will face in life that there isn't someone to coach you through...but you have to be willing to ask for help.

2. Be prepared. Be absolutely relentless is your preparation. In all things, the better you plan the better your outcomes will be. The rigor that goes in our preparations at the Foodbank is incredible. We spend far more time planning than we spend doing...so when we do, we do well. It takes a lot longer to scrape and tape a room than it does to paint it. The chicken's break-out moment only comes after the real work of formation in the egg is complete.
1. Run toward your fear. I've already spoken about this...but it's so important that it deserves mention at the top of list. Leadership is scary work. That's why leaders make more money, because it's risky business. If you are held back by fear, if you find yourself avoiding people, places, and things that make you nervous...see #3 and get some help because you are being held back from realizing your true potential. Fear is a friend you misunderstand.

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