

“Dare to be...the 13 rules of leadership”

The vast majority of my clients are successful business people who seek to be even better at what they do. They are confident enough to be open to working with someone who provides them with new insights and new alternatives. Someone who challenges them, tells them the truth (even if they don't want to hear it) and at the same time helps them to address their weaknesses and leverage their strengths.

To support the coaching process I am always interested in articles about success, motivation, and leadership and I recently came across Colin Powell's **Thirteen Rules of Leadership** and just had to share them with you.

The 13 rules he outlines are a great reminder of some simple truisms all leaders and managers should adopt in their working lives.

(They will also be a great discussion point for my clients.....)

RULE #1

“It ain't as bad as you think. It will look better in the morning.”

Coaching sessions are sometimes based on helping executives who have made a mistake, who are agonizing over a poor decision, who are having to deal with a poor result or just having a “bad day at the office”. But Powell is right to highlight that in many instances the morning light will usher in new opportunities and challenges. The next morning will usually provide a more objective outlook and the confidence to make better choices. Indeed a failing is often the prelude to achieving even greater success - the biographies of many great business leaders are littered with anecdotes

about how they used adversity as a spring board for future improvement and business triumph.

RULE #2

“Get mad, then get over it.”

When we get upset, it is because we care about something. But we should not dwell on a negative experience too long. We are likely to find one loss turning into two or more... So, get upset, reprimand if need be. But then forget about it and move on, making sure to treat any people involved in a failure the same as we did before the errant incident.

RULE #3

“Avoid having your ego so close to your position that when your position falls, your ego goes with it.”

Your position is what you do to live, it is not who you are. Leaders that have “their egos in check” can lead from wherever they are. For them, the position was just a means to an end—not the end itself. You can always lead!

RULE #4

“It can be done.”

Leaders are about making things happen. They continually ask, “Why Not?”, when faced with difficulties. While one approach may not work, it can be done another way. All progress is based on man's capability to innovate and do things differently.... the job of coach and client is to find the new way!!

RULE #5

“Be careful whom you choose.”

The people you choose represent you and have to carry-out your instructions. Choose them carefully or they will be your undoing!

RULE #6

“Don't let adverse facts stand in the way of a good decision”.

Leaders sometimes have to stand alone (or with the support of only a few) on what they know to be right despite what statistics or data may show us – remember people don't know what they don't know and many business “facts” have to be based on backward-looking historical data/trends rather than future-looking uncertainty. Make the right decision, take the heat, and let time and good results prove you right!

RULE #7

“You can't make someone else's decisions. You shouldn't let someone else make yours.”

While good leaders listen and consider all perspectives, they ultimately make their own decisions and take responsibility for their choices. Working with a coach is often about helping a leader think through an issue.... there is nothing wrong with getting input.... but it is ultimately the role of leader to make their own decisions and be decisive about them. Accept your good decisions. Learn from your mistakes.

RULE #8

“Check small things.”

While leaders live in the “big picture” world they should never forget the importance of the details and ensure they are attended to. It is often the small things that ruin the best laid plans. Never forget the “devil” is in the detail!

RULE #9

“Share credit.”

Nothing will discourage a person more than working very hard, achieving a worthwhile goal, and then having someone else (especially the leader) take all the credit. While leaders are indispensable to success, the truth is that a leader needs the talents of the women and men working with him to achieve the results achieved. Without them, there would be no success. So, share the credit with others! In reality much of it will probably belong to them anyway.

RULE #10

“Remain calm. Be kind.”

It is hard for a leader to inspire confidence and resilience in others if they cannot keep their composure in times of difficulty. It is hard for a leader to garner loyalty from others if he treats them badly. Remain calm and be kind and your team will climb mountains for you!

RULE #11

“Have a vision. Be demanding.”

Lost sometimes in the language of inclusion, employee participation, servant leadership, motivation, etc. is the fact that leaders are demanding when it comes to fulfilling a vision. Effective leaders do not accept poor performance and mediocre results. They hold people accountable for their performance. It is talented people

working diligently that achieve success. Be clear about what needs to be done and hold people accountable for fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.

RULE #12

“Don't take counsel of your fears or naysayers.”

Be aware of your personal gremlin – the middle icon in my logo (see above) is of a gremlin for good reason – as a coach I recognise that the greatest blocker to business and personal improvement is the little voice in our head that says things like “you can't do it”, “do it tomorrow”, “look at the downside” . Tune out your gremlin and the uninformed naysayers. You will be more successful.

RULE #13

“Perpetual optimism is a force multiplier.”

Enthusiasm is contagious. There is something to be said for the leader who refuses to accept defeat and continues to adapt as necessary until they are successful. They are a force to be reckoned with and will positively impact others. Remain optimistic and your leadership effectiveness will multiply.

Colin Powell's short rules are full of wisdom and application. They remain powerful lessons for any leader. These rules encourage leaders to manage their emotions effectively, have a realistic sense of who they are as a person, model the behavior they want from others, take tough stands as appropriate, and treat their teams with respect.

We can all do well with these 13 rules!

These 13 rules, compliments of General Colin Powell, offer a great place to start any coaching session, so if you'd like to discover how we empower individuals to achieve their goals, be more effective, be more efficient and be even more successful – **“to be the best that they can be!”** - Please contact me for a free 'no-strings' Business Coaching taster session on 07768 290694