



## Transformational Leadership & Service Podcast

### Episode 12 Transcript

#### *Transitioning to Lead*

One of the most difficult aspects of becoming a leader is the personal transition required along the way. The transition itself often arrives unannounced and unheralded. Not expecting it, many of us are woefully unprepared for its professional reality and personal impact. Consider the following five points of transition all leaders must be aware of and prepared to act upon.

#### Transition Point 1: Performance

Most of earned our various formal leadership positions based on our past performance records. Simply stated, we were expert technicians, highly skilled in managing and manipulating resources (i.e., money, material and/or machinery) for the good of the organization. Our reward? The responsibility to lead others.

However, upon accepting the mantle of leadership, we quickly learned our ability to manage resources wasn't as important as before. Now we must lead people. We learned the key to leadership is not the ability to do everything ourselves, but rather the ability to get things done through other people. The transition begins.

#### Transition Point 2: Exposure

Before becoming an acknowledged leader, most would agree it was fairly easy to blend into the crowd. Now the crowd follows you, seeking direction as to what to do and occasionally, what to think. From this point forward, the leader's attitude and actions are continuously in the spotlight. And make no mistake about it, the spotlight can be bright, hot and unyielding. Leaders are role models. Like it or not, leaders should be aware that the attitude and behavior of their followers, good or bad, is usually a mirror image of their own attitude and behavior.

#### Transition Point 3: Attitude

Webster defines attitude as "a mental position with regard to a fact..." The fact is, as leaders, we are ultimately responsible for the performance of our followers. Now what's your mental position? Allow me to suggest one. Try thinking of leadership not as a position, but rather as an opportunity to serve the needs of your followers, much like you would a customer. Your service to them offers a model of what they should do for their customers. In every instance consciously work to meet and exceed your followers' expectations of you.

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#### Transition Point 4: Knowledge

The most effective leaders are the one who realize diplomas, certificates, or years of service don't mean much when it comes to leading. Followers don't really care how much their leader knows; they care about how much their leader understands relative to their wants and needs. Work to understand your followers and the act of leading becomes much more obvious.

#### Transition Point 5: Skills

Skills differ from knowledge. The focus shifts from understanding to application. Here are three specific skills today's leaders need to develop and apply: coaching, counseling and empowering. Coaching – to train intensively. Counseling – to provide professional advice. Empowering – to grant official power. If you have these skills now, use them. If you don't have these skills, for the sake of your followers and yourself, begin now to develop them.

Transition is not always easy. But the positions of leadership we occupy require us to do all we can to adequately prepare ourselves for this awesome responsibility. Your followers are wondering, "Are you willing to work to become what we need you to be?" They do so and so do I.