

## *Building Trust as a Leader*



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Today's broadcast is part of our ongoing series called Ultimate Leadership. Today we're going to be talking about building trust as a leader. Our speaker is Dr. Henry Cloud. Let me tell you a little bit about Henry. He's a clinical psychologist. He's the author of numerous books, including *Boundaries*, *Changes That Heal*, *How People Grow*, and one of his newest books, *9 Things You Simply Must Do*. Would you please welcome Dr. Henry Cloud?

This Ultimate Leadership is based on something that you and your partner John Townsend are doing. For those people who did not watch last month's broadcast that are watching now, tell us a little bit about Ultimate Leadership and how this whole thing began.

I'll tell you, as we get into the content a little bit, how I got into the whole field of leadership. The long and short of it is, I've been working with leaders for about twenty-two or twenty-four years now, and what I find over and over and over is leaders need space to come away from everything with other leaders in a protective environment where they can do the surgery they need to do on their lives or their hearts and on their relational ways and on reaching their potential. And so we started a one-week leadership experience. We take about forty leaders at a time and we put them through a blender, a process of lots of groups. We do the teaching and we have facilitators we've worked with a long time and we take them through a process and it's just a really cool thing.

I know we are going to talk a little bit more at the end of the show about how people can actually attend that.

"Well, I have a television question for you. What do you do when you're on camera and you're, like, in front of an audience, and you have, like, a bug or something in your eye? Do you fake it or just stand up here?"

“I would take it out.”

“Do you see anything?”

“No. Are you going to be okay?”

“I don’t know. I’m sitting here kind of going . . . Anyway, if I’m going like this the whole broadcast, I think I have a thing. I’m ready.”

“Okay, we’re going to turn it over to Henry and he’s going to talk about Building Trust with Leaders.”

It’s good to be with you all again. For those of you who have been following our series, this is an ongoing series where we look at leadership from a lot of different perspectives. To help you get a feel of the perspective we’re coming from, I want to go back to some things I said in the first broadcast about the big picture, and here we’re going to narrow it down to today’s topic, which is “Building Trust as a Leader.”

Let me wind the clock back a little bit and tell you about how I, as a shrink, ended up in the field of leadership. In 1981, when I first went into practice, I went into a practice that mainly did organizational consulting. I was a clinician. My specialty was working with individuals. I didn’t know anything about leadership. I worked with individuals in their growth path. But because this organization did a lot of work with leaders in secular companies, in Christian organizations, well, what happened would be what invariably happens. Leaders hit a ceiling.

Leaders hit various kinds of ceilings. Some of those are cultural ceilings in an organization. Some of those ceilings that are imposed upon them are from the leaders that they actually work under. Oftentimes the ceilings that leaders hit are their own internal ceilings. They are false ceilings. They are not ceilings that they were designed to operate under, but they were ceilings that were supposed to be removed, to grow past, to accomplish what God has designed them to do. Ephesians 2 tells us that we’re God’s workmanship, that each of us is like a piece of equipment that God has made. It says to go out and walk in the good works that had been laid down beforehand. The whole process of sanctification is the process of becoming who you’re created to be, not only in His image, but also in your uniqueness of what you are designed to do and to deliver through.

What I've found early on, not going into leadership but in working with individuals who were in leadership—that's a different slant. Because we're not just talking about the field of leadership, but the focus in this series is that there's a person who has to do the task of leadership. Whether you're in business or in a church, you've got something you've got to accomplish (number one), and number two, you've got people that you have to accomplish that with. What we find is, you are the machine, the equipment that has to do this. To the degree to which we are glued together in ways that can deliver, what I call the equivalent of our character equals the ability to meet the demands of reality. That's the way we defined it last time.

Here's why I start here today. In the beginning, working with leaders, is that our makeup always gets in the way to some kind of reality demand that's placed upon the leader. Now, generally speaking, those fall into two areas. I talked about a boat that goes across the ocean and it leaves a wake behind it. The wake is always in two areas. There's a task or mission we're going to talk about in the upcoming months. But there's something you have to accomplish as a leader. But also, to do that, there is the relationship dimension. When a leader moves through time across the ocean, they leave a wake of either mission accomplished or not, and a wake of people behind them who are better off having worked with the leader or out there bobbing like shark bait, bleeding in the water.

Hopefully that's not what's going to happen with you. Today what we're going to see is this: These are not two distinct, unrelated wakes. When you talk about this wake as a leader, it's kind of a circle. Some people talk about leadership like you get the mission done through people. Sort of like people are the tool by which you sort of do something, but the circular part of that is—and the part we are going to see today is—you also get people done through the mission.

What I found about the best leaders is it's not an either/or—nor is it a one-way street, but it's a circular kind of process that happens as they are using the various projects, tasks (whatever we're doing this year) actually to grow their people, and you're using the mission to get people done. As you begin to see as part of leadership that your capital is your people, and as you're focusing on that, that circles around to whatever next year, to whatever the task is going to be, and the year after that and the decades after that where everything grows. You're involved in an organic way

both on the people side and the task side. Today what we're going to talk about is one of the chief components of making all of this work.

One of the chief components of making all of this work is the character ability and the steps and the kind of things the leader has got to do to build the kind of trust so that both the tasks can get done in a good way. What we're going to see is this relational dimension is not just a bunch of psychobabble, not just where you're the warm, fuzzy leader where everybody in your organization is happy. What we're going to see is the relational dimension actually has real nuts-and-bolts components to it. If it's not there in a good way, the task can't get done at all and bad things happen. This isn't just sitting around a hot tub in the 1960s saying, "Isn't it all fun to be together? We've got to be relational and build trust and 'Kumbaya.'" What we find is that armies accomplish their task where the relational dimension and the trust are strong. There is a mission component to this as well. So that's a little bit about where we're heading.

Let me ask you a question. I want you to kind of tune into yourself as a leader. Some of you lead a lot of big, awful, scary things. Not that they're bad, but that they would scare a lot of us to death. Some of you lead smaller things, like one department. Some of you lead one ministry. Some of you lead a small group of people. Let me ask you a question, because it's the same for all people at all levels. As a leader, what do you want to worry about?

Now think about that for a second. As a leader you have a certain amount of space in your head, and that space has stuff going through it. (If there's nothing going on up there, we have medication to fix that. There should be activity. We should be able to hook up electrodes to you and see some things happening.) Now here's my question to you: In your moments when you're driving in your car, or you're in the shower where the great ideas come from, or when you're just walking out, or you're on your silent retreat, or you're at your desk, wherever it is that you leaders think (you know, [where] you do your thinking about leading or thinking about what you're doing), let me ask you this: What do you want to be worrying about in that time? What do you want to be worrying about?

Leaders worry, hopefully. I mean worry in a good sense. Worry in this sense is the attending to not that "Thou shalt not worry," but the attending to with your focused energy, with all that you are as

God's instrument. What do you want to be worried about in those moments? Let me give you some good things that you might want to worry about with that energy. You might want to be worried about your mission. Not negatively, I mean, but attending to and thinking about, giving energy to. It would be good to have that time to worry about your mission. It would be good to have that time to worry about hearing God and seeking Him and His ways and trying to figure out, *How is what I'm doing matching up to what I'm hearing Him say that He wants me to do?* That would be a good thing to be able to focus on.

Let me give you another one. To be able to focus on the needs that are before you and the needs of the community and the needs that you were put on earth to meet. It would be good to focus on, *What can I do to be developing myself? What can I be doing to be growing to whatever the next level is that I'm to be growing into? What can I be doing to grow my people and my organization?* When you've got mental space and energy, it's pretty cool to be focused on those kinds of things. Everything that I've just given you is something that produces life, and it produces growth, and it's called positive stress or positive energy.

Okay, we're going in a good direction. Let me tell you what I don't think you want to be worried about, but if we're honest we find ourselves worrying about to some degree or another. Let me give you some examples. Worrying about where that key person has been disappearing to for an hour or two, and it seems like a couple of times a week. *I wonder if they're interviewing.* Ever have that kind of feeling? You're in an organization and you have a key person and you notice you sense a little bit of an unplug in some way. Or worrying, *Why do I feel the distance with part of the team that I didn't once feel?*

Have you ever had the experience where you walk up to the watercooler, coffeepot, or into a room and there's a conversation going on and all of a sudden it stops? You go back to your desk and you start to worry or attend to, because you say, *I wonder what that was all about, because I said, "What are you all up to?" And they say, "Oh nothing, nothing at all."*

Sort of reminds me, one time I was visiting a friend who had a five-year-old and a seven- or eight-year-old. The seven-year-old had this big wall full of model airplanes he had poured his life into building and the five-year-old was not supposed to go in there. I was sleeping in the seven-year-old's room and they stuck

him somewhere else. That morning the five-year-old came up to play with the airplanes and he wasn't supposed to be there. He pulls the whole thing down and crashes all of them. I woke up and he's trying to sneak out. I say, "Hudson, what are you doing?" And he goes, "Nothing, nothing at all." You knew that he knew that you knew, but nobody's really . . . Well, I hear leaders get worried. A lot of times when they come talk to me, they talk to me about how we've got a disconnect; and I don't know what it is and I don't know how it happened. Another thing you don't want to be worried about is the emerging church split. Where you sense that half of the board is disconnecting and they're talking to somebody else and it's going in a different way. We're going to talk about that in a moment.

Now, all of the things that I just told you about on the negative side—all of those symptoms of church split—you don't want to be worried about. Let me give you another one. You don't want to be worried about, when you give something to somebody, whether or not they're following through or getting it done. The Bible calls that faithfulness. You don't want to be worried about whether things are being carried through, to think about what other people are doing and not think about what you're supposed to be doing.

Every one of those symptoms that I just gave you at some level is a breakdown of trust. In my however-many miles of not knowing a lot about leadership, I couldn't tell you how to cast vision or build critical mass or all that sort of stuff, but I can tell you a lot about the individual leader's needs to grow in this area of doing the things that enable and build and submit trust among the team, and among the organization, and even out to the constituency which the leader speaks to, ministers to, sells to, or whatever it is you do. So that's our focus today.

Now, how do we do that? How do you as a leader focus on putting yourself to the task that actually builds what we call trust?

Let's start with this. What is trust? Let me give you three things when you're talking about building trust as a leader.

Number one . . . (You know how to do the timing of these things. You're not supposed to get to your point before you erase the board. So I could give you a recipe for lasagna, but I can't cook.)

Now back to the topic. Number one, when we talk about trust, what is it? The first thing that I like to think about is actually



what one of the words that's translated "trust" in the Bible means, and it means this: carelessness. Trust is carelessness.

Now, that's kind of a funny word, but I want you to think about it. How many of you in the last ten minutes since we've been talking have been obsessing about . . . Is your money safe in your checking account? Is anybody worried about that? No, you might be worried about how much or little is there, but we don't worry about if it's going to be there tomorrow. Why? Because you have put it in a financial institution that has a lot of trust, a track record, policies, the government probably backs it up, etc. And when you deposit it there, you place it there, you forget about it. That's trust. You trust them that nobody is running away with it, that nobody is ignoring it, etc. In other words, like a good relationship, when you share things or when you invest yourself or expose yourself or give something for someone to do, etc., you forget about it and you're not obsessively worried.

Now a good organization, good management team, leadership team, they have this level of trust where they can be careless with each other. Now not irresponsible, but in other words, when we are in this together, that we are not watching our backs, that we're not guarding our hearts, that we're not guarding our minds. You know if you go to the Bible, you see the areas that are worth guarding are your heart, your mind, your soul, and your strength. Do you know that in some organizations people can't entrust their hearts, minds, souls, and strengths, which would be energy and passion? That they have to guard those because they feel like they're always at risk? *My mind is at risk because somebody doesn't like what I think or it's going to be shot down. Or, My heart or my soul or even my energy and the amount of life force that's in me.* So one of these things is that we can be careless and also careless in trusting things to people.

You, as a leader . . . it's not your job to do everything. Your job is to see that everything gets done. To see that everything gets done means that you can't do everything or you could never get it all done. It means that you have to delegate and let go and entrust to faithful people, and to do that you have to have enough trust that you don't have to watch over their shoulder. Big deal.

Number two, in terms of what it is . . . it is an investment. When people trust each other they give it all. What you want as a leader is you want people throwing themselves on the boat. "We're going to go with you; we're going to go with this organization. I'm going to take all my heart, my mind, my soul, and strengths, and I'm putting

it all with you. I'm going your way." See, that's really throwing in as opposed to . . . I was just consulting with an organization a few weeks back, and, basically, the whole thing is falling apart. They've lost millions of dollars and it was basically because one of the three principals had a partial investment, not only in the way they structured in terms of time and resources, but of the heart as well.

You know what the Bible says—where your treasures are there your heart will be also. There's a oneness, a wholeheartedness that the Bible talks about in making things happen, and if people don't trust you as a leader, they're going to hold back. They are going to hold back something. For some it's material. For some it's quantitative time and energy. For others it's their heart or their effort, but you don't want any reason for anybody to hold back. You want them to be giving their all, and that only comes when they trust you.

The third thing is if people are going to trust you, then there not only has to be a sense of carelessness and investment, but you want vulnerability. We are going to talk a little bit more about this in a minute. But here's the way I want you to think about trust as a leader. This is the kind of vulnerability you want. Vulnerability equals placing myself and someone else in a position. Now what do you think of when you think of vulnerable? You can be hurt. If I'm vulnerable with you, I can be hurt. Why would I want to do that? Let's get rid of that definition. That's a stupid definition, although it's true. But the only reason I would ever want to be hurt or be in a position to be hurt is if there's some way that you can help me. Right? Why do I want to go lie down under the surgeon's knife and be vulnerable to being hurt if it doesn't put me in a position where I'm able to be helped?

Now this goes both ways. You as a leader, you need help. You need for people "under your leadership" to help you get it done. To do that, you've got to make yourself vulnerable to them. If you can't make yourself appropriately vulnerable to being helped and you wall yourself off, then you don't have an organic team to build something large. What you have is a little. You've become sort of a paranoid fort where you're protecting yourself and you're protecting the goods, but nothing can grow. Likewise, if there's a great deal of trust, your people make themselves vulnerable to you and that's where they can be helped. The best thing that you could want is for your people to be helped, because if they're getting helped, they are getting better and you have better people and everything grows. That only comes when people trust each



other. What we are looking at here is we are looking at building an organization where there is a great degree of not having to guard myself and protect myself. There is a great degree of my trusting the leadership so much that I am willing to throw it all onto this ship, and third, that I am going to throw it all, not in a guarding-my-piece-of-it way, but in opening myself up wherein you can make me better and where I can make you better. The only way we do that is when we trust. Okay? That's what it is.

Now having said that, what are some components of it? The next thing you see on your outline . . . (And this is how it starts. Some of you are saying, "What outline? We don't have an outline." They should have given you an outline, but I'm putting it up here. You can just write.)

The next one is that this is done heart-to-heart. Now I want to talk a little bit about this. I want to talk a little bit about why leadership is not just about message, even though message is important, and why it's not just about policy, and why it's not just about vision, and why it's not just about structure. It is also—as we are talking about trust and as Paul says in the New Testament—the knitting of hearts together. Where hearts are actually knitted together. The human heart is designed where we actually make an investment in each other that is invisible. But that investment, as Ecclesiastes tells us, you know, you're the one that walks alone and the return for the labor is better when you have two or more. It says a strand of three can't be broken apart easily. When you have a team or an organization where the hearts are knitted together, then from that strength of fiber flows everything else.

So then we have to ask, how does this heart-to-heart thing happen? How does it happen? What does it look like?

Let me give you an example of the downside that you could have read about in the *Harvard Business Review* or in *Businessweek* magazine last year. Great example, great sign of leadership for what happens when you find something out, as we are going to see later. It was the story of Michael Dell and Dell computers. What it was, was a very fascinating article, because as we think about this connectedness thing, about heart-to-heart connections, we tend to think about that as sort of, like I said earlier, the "Kumbaya," your spiritual psychobabble, soft-side experience. Not the hard number. Let me tell you how it relates to the mission of an organization. I think it was a couple of years ago, an outside consulting agency came to Dell computer, and what they did was,

they did this anonymous sort of survey that finds out how people are doing, etc., how's the culture, etc. They find that—I don't know the exact number; you'd have to go back to the article—it was something like a big number, like 60 or 70 percent of the employees of the organization, on an anonymous survey, that given the right offer they would leave tomorrow. *Tomorrow*.

Now I want you to think about your organization. What you have at risk. Or an organization like that—you know, this is a fifty-, sixty-billion-dollar company—what they have at risk. What if you should get up one day as a leader on a Wednesday and 70 percent of your people were gone? Everything they were working on, everything you'd invested in, everything they were supposed to deliver, everything they were supposed to make happen . . . gone, gone, not home, desk cleared off, out the door, gone. We're not talking about psychobabble anymore. We're talking about things that can actually bring down the brick and mortar. We're talking about things that can sink the ship, right?

When they got into that, you know what they found? Was what they talked about was one of *the* big problems? What they felt like was that the leader, Michael himself, was cold and aloof and that they didn't feel connected with him. There was a lack of connection that created a vacuum. Then in this vacuum of a lack of connection they also had something else that was called high expectations and a lot of other dynamics. One of the things they said, incidentally, was a lack of celebration of victory. Like it happened for a nanosecond and then you're off to the next goal. That was one of the cultural things they talked about, in that, the high expectations and no connection with the leader. And he finds out about this. And in this vacuum a lot of bad things are growing.

Now this is to his credit. He finds out about this, and you know what he does? He goes in front of all the top management and he confesses and he repents. What he says is, "Look, I'm painfully shy." He got vulnerable. "I'm painfully shy and understand that that comes off as cold and aloof and that I don't care; and I'm going to commit to you to do better." What they did was, they built in all these funny little games and stuff where it increased the connectedness, and then they took the DVD of that talk and sent it around the world to every employee. Now that in and of itself started to build connection.

But what we're talking about here—and I see this in churches, I see this in secular companies, I see it in Christian organizations

all the time—is that where we don't have a heart-to-heart kind of connectedness, people don't throw in their all. They hold back because they think they're doing a job or think they're living up to a to-do list. They are not with the leader at a deep level. Lots of times that comes from the failure, and this is what builds it. You might have seen me talk about this before. There is a basic law in the universe that God designed us with—because we are built in His image and this is how He is—that the basic, bottom line of the human heart is that the human heart seeks to be known. Seeks to be known. What we're made to do.

Now here's what happens a lot of times. The leader is not doing anything that crosses that gap. Like listening and understanding, empathizing with, validating the team's experience. Instead of telling them when they're wrong, or shooting down the feedback, or not even listening to or soliciting or going on a hunt for their perspective and their feedback. Then what happens is this gap starts to happen, and sometimes it can be not even the character makeup of the leader but just the business of the task. Where you're no longer listening. People feel listened to even when we don't agree. They feel known. And they might have a difference or disagreement—and we have to bring people to different opinions sometimes—but they no longer feel alone. When they are no longer alone, they are not closing off the heart. Because if they are closing off the heart, what you've lost is you've lost the connection and you've lost the knitting together.

Now do you know what a cancer cell is? A cancer cell is a cell that breaks off and has a life of its own apart from health. So this is where this gets dangerous. We just talked about how 60 percent of the cells could have been cancerous because they weren't known and understood and listened to. So what they were going to do is break off.

Let me give you a classic church example. I see this all the time. You get a leader who gets a disconnect with one key person. Well, the human heart's going to seek to be known. That person is trying to get a hearing, trying to get understood—even if they're wacko, psycho, and wrong. The leader needs to try and understand and try and bridge this gap and try to win that heart back. But here's what happens instead. Oftentimes the leader is not listening. This breaks down, and this heart goes to seek and seeks to be known somewhere, and they go find a board member to listen. Or they find two or three other people on the team who will listen. Now you have a new church down the street. There's a split. Worse than

that, you have a split within the organization, or a split within the team. So this is serious stuff.

So the first part of this is to make sure that you always are knowing to some degree where your people are. And not only that you're knowing, but that they know that you know. Because that's when you really know, and that's when somebody's connected. That does huge, huge things to build trust. So I want you to look at what kind of efforts you're putting into this. Basically, you know what would do enormous things.

I'll tell you a story. I was speaking at a leadership organization a couple of months ago, and I talked about the value of the leader just listening and knowing where the people are. I talked to this man—he came to me later at dinner—and he said, “I’ve got to tell you what happened after your talk today.”

I said, “What?”

He said, “Well, I own a large trucking company in the northeast, and actually my father started it. I’m the president now and he’s the chairman and we have been in the process of buying a huge company and our entire management team is against the merger. But we’re going forward with it because we think it’s the right thing to do. The management team has been fighting us and they are not really into it, this, that, and the other.”

“But,” he said, “we know it’s right, so we’re going to do it.”

Then he said, “I listened to your talk today. After the talk, I walked out, I got on the phone, and I called our COO. What I said to him was, ‘Look, you know what I know. You have some feelings and some thoughts about this proposed merger. When I get back I want us to take a day and I want us to go off somewhere, just you and me for the whole day, and I just want to sit and I want to listen, really listen, and try to understand what your concerns are. I don’t think I’ve done that.’”

He said the phone was silent for a second, and then the guy goes, “You will?”

He said, “Yeah, I want to do this.”

The guy said, “You will?”

He said you could feel the life come back even in the phone call, that he was willing to listen. He could feel the life come back that he hadn't felt, because he was probably getting this kind of shutdown and he didn't know it, and he could feel it coming back. And something good was going to happen. Small thing, huge results, because even if they go ahead with it, now the guy knows at least he's listened to. This is a big deal.

So the next thing after this heart-to-heart thing happens is you've got vulnerability and repentance. Vulnerability and repentance. Now, vulnerability is kind of a psychological term, right? Not a psychological process. It's a biblical process because vulnerability is exactly what God does with us. He says to Israel, for example, "You have wounded Me with your transgressions." God as the leader puts Himself in such a position—of such entrusting His mission, His life, everything to those He is leading—that He can actually be wounded in the process. He puts Himself in a position where He can be hurt.

Well, the other side, repentance—that doesn't sound like a psychological term but a spiritual term. But you know what repentance actually means, what repentance literally means. We think it means "I'll do better." What it really means is to fully comprehend or get it. That's what repentance means. It means to fully . . . to ponder, to get it, to hear it. And when I hear it I get it. When you get it, you get it; you don't have to go and figure out, "Okay, well, I'm going to make myself." No. No, you get it. You're going that way and you make a shift. But it comes from getting it. Trust comes from when your people that you are leading sense that you are making yourself vulnerable in the areas where you don't get it. What you do—the best way to model that, and then you're going to get it back—the best way to model it is when you are aware that you're not getting it and you're telling them, "You know, I didn't get it." Or "I don't get it," or "I don't understand," or "I screwed this up or I made a mistake."

One of the best things you can do as a leader is to model for people how to confess and to repent. Unless you've had some kind of hiring practices that no leadership classes in the world knows, and that's how to hire perfect people. I doubt it. First, you'd have to be on another planet because this one has imperfect people. But given if you start with, "Okay, I'm going to be leading imperfect people," then what's one of the most important processes that we can have going? Confession and repentance.

I don't mean it in some weird religious sense. Confession—all that means is that I agree with reality. I agree. “Gosh, you know what? This was a dumb idea that I had” or “That was a dumb execution of a plan.” Or “We really blew it when we went down this way.” What we see is if leaders—sort of like what the Bible says—if we say we're without sin, then we deceive ourselves. There's no verse there that says that if we say that we're without sin, then we deceive everybody else. They're already talking about it. Everybody knows when something's not right. When the leader comes and says, “You know what I'm really seeing about me?” (or about what we've done or about that decision) or “I blew it and I need your help kind of to get it right,” then they really get it and they hear. When you're modeling how to be imperfect, they begin to believe you, because they experienced the gap. The vulnerability of that is huge.

Now the other kind of vulnerability that is huge is expressing your need. You're putting yourself in a vulnerable position to be helped. There's a huge difference in the leader that says to the team, “You've got to do this and you've got to do this to make the goal. You've got to do this and you've got to do this and that, that, and that.” There's a huge difference in that leader and the leader who comes and says, “You know what? Our vision is big (or our need is big or our task is big)” or “What the board just sent to me that they want done is big, and I'm telling you I cannot do this without you guys. Suzie, I'm going to need from you the ability that you have that we don't have anybody else who can do what you can do. That ability to get out there and really sense from the people where they are and what's going to meet their needs and how we need to address this and announce this, all that stuff that I'm clueless with. I really need you to do that for me here.” Where he or she goes around the table or where they talk about what they've been under and how they can't do this or whatever without their help.

When people begin to feel needed by the leader, that pulls in some of the greatest aspects of human performance. People will give themselves to tasks larger than themselves when the object receiving their abilities is other than themselves. We give the most when it's not for us and there's a transcendent cause. In the beginning of that is when a leader places him- or herself in a position where people feel needed. When people feel needed, they do much more than when they feel like they're required. To do that has got to be genuine. If the leader is not humble to know that they can't do it without them, they don't get it done.



I had an interesting experience in my own organization not too long ago, where because I'm in a couple of locations, I got in a place where I was managing too many projects myself that only I was involved in. But I was managing them all. I've got a good support staff, but somehow I got in a position that not only was I kind of doing these things but managing the projects as well. And I had like, you know, they were mounting up, and there was a zillion of them, and they all had deadlines, and everybody needed this, that, and the other. All I was getting was I would get the messages that, you know, so-and-so needs this, this organization needs that, and this organization needs this plan and that outline, etc., etc.

Finally it dawned on me. *I'm going to shoot myself because I can't do this, I can't make all the pieces of this work.* I had been sort of telling [my staff] to do A, B, C, or D, parts of this at various points, and they had plenty to do. They didn't need to help me, right? So finally I sent out an email to everybody and I said, "Okay, guys, I'm dying, I can't do this." I listed everything that I had to do that had pieces of it—that I was doing everybody's pieces—and I started to express to them what it was doing to me. I can't tell you the flurry of activity that happened, and in the ensuing weeks.

I just sat down with the key person two days ago and I said, "I don't know how to tell you the difference in my ability to do the things that I've got to do now. Because I don't know what happened, but it is different around here. Now all of these things are working."

You know what she said to me? She said, "Well, you know, we had a meeting."

I said, "What meeting?"

She said, "We had a meeting to figure out how to make all of your pieces go better."

I didn't even know about that meeting. It didn't come from my harping on people; it came from my true vulnerability of "Look, I'm dying over here and I need for you guys to join me in this." There's just a totally different feel and there's a difference in the way the leader feels, etc., etc., etc. It's a bonding experience.

Then the other side, on the repentance. This is kind of an atmosphere thing. You've got to ask yourself, *What am I doing as a leader to make repentance, in other words getting it? What am I*

*doing to make the atmosphere and the culture one where that's an empowering experience for people? For people to actually learn to say they get it, they made a mistake, and to make a different change. What am I doing both to make that safe—number one—and also to reward it when it happens?*

When you begin to reward in various ways through praise or acknowledgment or resourcing more or extra attention or whatever it is when somebody makes a shift . . . You know the old saying, "Catch somebody doing something right"? Well, this time catch somebody making something right that was wrong and reward that and acknowledge that and see learning as something as valued as knowing. We tend to go, "Great idea. How did you know that? You're so brilliant." That's a cool thing, but sometimes it needs to be a cool thing for somebody to shift from getting it wrong to getting it right. When we've done that, what we've done is make the trust level so much that people can be on a learning curve. When you have what's called a learning team or a learning organization, then because of that atmosphere people value having it wrong. If I come in and say, "I don't really get this. I don't understand it; I screwed it up," that gives me an opportunity to be praised when I say, "Oh, I get it." And I take that and I make a shift and now I am seen as a grower. That's a different kind of a cultural norm in an organization.

Now the next one. (The leader who builds trust before they erase the blackboard because they just told you they would. Now they're like filling the air with dead words that don't mean anything like I'm doing now. You guys are going, "That wasn't even funny.") Here it is.

Tell the truth. You've heard the whole truth, nothing but the truth, the whole truth . . . and what's the other one? The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. I would say the truth and nothing but the truth. Maybe not the whole truth, because various amounts of information are needed at various levels. I'm going to tell you something that you need to worry about for trust. This is what you need to worry about for trust. People have an experience, okay? They have an experience of what it's like, what's going on in the organization, what's happening with the mission, what's happening with the culture, what's happening in the relationships. Then they hear a message. If these two are congruent, then you have trust. They don't have to be totally unpacked, every nuance. But if there's a disconnect between what I'm experiencing in this organization and what I'm being told,

then you have a breakdown in trust.

If they're experiencing something that's kind of goofy and leadership is saying, "You know, we're going through some goofy times here, folks. You probably feel it and there's . . . you know, we're going through some things. Can't go into all of it. Nobody needs to worry. Nothing's going to fall apart, but it is kind of weird right now and we're arguing at good levels with the board about some things. You'll notice a lot of meetings are going on, so if you sense something's wrong, it is, but it's not fatal."

Everybody can go, "Oh good, I'm not crazy." But there's not "Oh, yay, things are fine." Everybody's going like, "This should be the no-spin zone. Come on, we're getting spun here."

So it's not like everything has to be fully disclosed. It's not appropriate at various levels. Board meetings have things that don't even get to upper management at times. But there shouldn't be such a disconnect that there's a breakdown in trust. So think about it. Does your message jell with the experience that people are getting in the walls and in the relationships day to day? Same thing you do with children. Children don't have access at the parental level, but they know when something is wrong. When you tell them that everything is happy, then they have to have two parts to their head; and that is why there are psychologists in the world to treat them later. So they tell the truth with no spin.

Let me give you a couple more.

We talk about this word a lot. They have an atmosphere of *grace*. Let me give you a bigger meaning of grace than normally we think about. Sometimes we think about grace as kind of the absence of condemnation. Grace equals forgiveness—very, very, very shallow definition of grace. Forgiveness . . . You know, if you ask the question, sort of the Jay Leno thing on the street, you know, "What is grace?" They'll say, "God accepts me." Well, that's not right. That's an expression of God's grace. Forgiveness is an expression of His grace, but what grace means is unmerited favor.

Now, unmerited favor means, basically, that God is for us and not against us. You don't have to just accept everything that your people do. In fact, as we're going to see in a moment, that's one of the worst things you can do to build trust. But they have to know that even when you're not accepting or approving something that, basically, you are for them and not against them. So you want the

person who is disciplined to feel like, “You know what? That was hard and I didn’t want that, but as I look back on it, one of the things about my leadership is that I always knew at some level they wanted the best for me. They wanted me to grow as a person, they wanted me to stretch, they were demanding and they were hard, they had expectations, but I never felt like the organization was against me. Or working against me or trying to do something other than what was for my own good.”

When you can get the good of a mission—the good of an organization also being what’s good for the people—that’s when you’re hitting on hyperdrive and the sweet spot. When people are going to lose trust is when you as the leader or when the leadership has decided what’s good for the organization is really not good for the people. That can’t last long. You might do that in a crisis. We pull all-nighters sometimes. But that’s not developing and being for people. At some point people begin to realize that *the mission is against me or he or she as a leader is against me. When he or she as a leader is for me, I’m on a totally different level of being careless, invested, and vulnerable.*

Real quickly, two more points which I’ve kind of talked about, but I want to sort for you to take away on your outline, at least.

I’ve said this before to you, that models who are followed, that research shows [are] the kind of models that are followed, have four qualities:

1. *They are warm.* Don’t yell at people. Be nice.
2. *They are more like the people than unlike them.* So you have to find . . . To develop trust, you have to find connection points where they feel like you’re more like them than unlike them. This is why leadership that just stays in the ivory tower and has all the offices and the perks and this, that, and the other get so disconnected from the people who are doing the work, that there’s no longer any trust. Then we have a big problem in American business. You know this has been going on over the past how many years, where the CEOs and everybody have been villainized because they’re so unlike the rest of the organization as opposed to way back when, when they were seen as the heroes of the organization. They poured out their heart and soul. You can find ways to do this through finding touch

points and finding places to identify. There's a million ways to do that.

3. *The models are imperfect models.* Not perfect models, but imperfect coping models. Paul says to all of us in the New Testament, we despaired, or we were upside down, and we despaired of life, etc. etc., but we pressed on. And he was showing his struggles in all of that.
4. *Then they have a sense of power.* Basically, the power to have is not yelling at people but being an expert. That's the kind of power there is; it's expertise. People will follow a leader who knows what he or she is doing.
5. Finally, the last thing that I want you to remember about developing trust. This comes out of what Paul says in Galatians about parenting. He says that when we were under parents we were under guardians and managers. Guardians and managers, meaning that's what parents do. This is what leadership does as well. Your people need to know that you're going to guard the organization from toxicity.

I was working with an organization not too long ago where the CEO ... There was a split at the VP level and the reason is there was one VP who was toxic. But the CEO needed that person's performance so much that they kind of idealized their performance. But that person was hurting other people. The other VPs did not feel like the organization was being guarded and protected from some toxicity that was going on there, and they were about ready to leave.

So what you are as leadership is you're guardian of the spiritual process, the culture, the policies, the implementation of all of that. You make sure, like a good parent—not wanting to stretch that analogy too far because it breaks down—but you are the one who holds the resources. The resources should be used in part to guard people from things that break down their experience of life in the organization.

Second, that you manage the process. The last thing people want, no matter how much they scream, is to be thrown at the walls with something to do, never to hear from you again. There needs to be ... You can do this in structured ways, in feedback, in time, in just checking in. And you don't need to micromanage. Nobody likes that. But nobody likes to be ignored either. One of the worst

kinds of management styles is what we called “ignore and zap.” So you’re not there in the process to manage it, you ignore them, come back, and find something wrong and blow up at everybody. Nobody thrives under that. That doesn’t build trust. They want to know that you’re managing the process, and whatever way you do that, whatever fits your organization and your mission. So we could go on and on. There’s a lot about this.

What I want you to understand is leadership is not about saying, “Here’s where we’re going, you guys. Go do it.” Leadership is about taking your heart and opening it and doing things that cause others to voluntarily open their heart. Then you build a bridge where the two of you can walk back and forth. When you do that with your organization, there’s a level of hearts knitted together where people are together, and together, unity as Jesus prayed for in the upper room, that the Twelve could become one and know the oneness that He had with the Father. That Twelve, that He led, built for the next two thousand years. What we have is an entire church today. It started with the first thing, and that was unity. Unity comes in the context of trust.

**Great stuff, Henry. Great stuff. Everybody who’s watching this around the country does have an outline, and one of the things on the last page is a resource that talks about the Ultimate Leadership and if they want to attend it. So could you talk a little bit more about it and what’s going to happen if they come out to sunny California?**

It’s just a . . . If you go to our website, [cloudtownsend.com](http://cloudtownsend.com), we have a section on there of testimonials from the Ultimate Leadership, and you’ll see testimonials from pastors, pastors and their spouses, and from executives from Fortune 25 companies and people who run major businesses. What they say is, the reason it is a unique experience is it’s not leadership training. It’s you as an individual, personal development where you sit in and we have . . . during the week you will be in . . . well, it’s five days of multiple group sessions per day where John and I will teach something and then you’ll go into a group to process it with a skilled facilitator that we’ve worked with for . . . some of them for twenty years. You’re going to process with other leaders the personal issues, maybe even going back several years to your history or family of origin issues, or the relationship issues that are going on in your life now. Or the personal issues that have to do with you and your calling and fears and brokenness and lots of stuff. So it’s more of a healing place and a building place for people of all levels of



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