

My Top 5 Tips for Emerging Leaders

Stepping into leadership is one thing. Growing into it is another. This is where the growth begins.



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It is not about you anymore

Transitioning from an individual contributor role to a leadership position can be challenging. Research suggests that such transition is even more difficult for technically skilled individuals like engineers.

Suddenly team members become your subordinates. That impacts relationships. No longer the focus is on the success of your work. **It's about the team's success now.**

You will have your first tough decisions, your first hires, fires, failures, and successes. How to get things right?

I give you my top five tips that make a real difference.

Top Tip 1

Practice self-care

You will have to balance many challenges. The most important one is to balance the challenges at work with self-care. **It's one of the most important leadership qualities.** I've learned this the hard way in my own leadership journey and hear it from so many of my clients.

In fact, self-care is about loving yourself. It's about taking your wellness and happiness seriously. Looking after yourself.

Building healthy habits and routines are key. Also, a healthier mindset increases the quality of your decision making and makes you a nicer person to be with.

Another bonus is that you become an example for others.

Top Tip 2

Build strong relationships

If you want people to thrive in your team, it starts with building good relationships with them. You don't need to become friends.

Good relationships rely on good communications. It also means you:

- Give trust upfront
- Demonstrate care
- Listen actively
- Show empathy
- Deliver on your promises
- Are sensitive to cultural differences

Remember, continue building strong relationships with peers, colleagues and your own boss of course!

Top Tip 3

Manage conflict

Conflicts will arise. Address them promptly and constructively. Do this well prepared:

- Think it over with an open mind
- Figure out what you want to say and how to say it
- Don't blame others
- Really listen
- Ask clarifying questions
- Work towards understanding

Encourage open dialogue in your team to resolve issues, agree to disagree and find compromises when necessary.

Conflict is easier to deal with when everyone understands that it's part of working together. **Make it a healthy conflict.**

Top Tip 4

Be strategic

Know where you are going. The day-to-day activities may take up lots of your attention. Be aware not to fall into the trap of being too operational and tactic. You need to be strategic.

That means to **develop a long-term vision for your team** and communicate it clearly. This can provide motivation and direction for your team's efforts.

It also means, that you need to boil it down to **clear goals and expectations** for your team. Create a roadmap for projects and tasks to ensure everyone understands their role in achieving these goals.

A positive side effect is that it gives focus.

Top Tip 5

Focus on learning

Good leaders are good learners. Full stop.

It starts with a fair amount of self-awareness and self-reflection. Ideally, combined with gathering feedback from others. Reflect about:

- What am I really good at?
- What do I need to learn?
- What do I need to un-learn or re-learn?
- What does this team or organization require from me that I don't know yet?

Invest time in developing your leadership skills through books, courses, workshops, and by seeking mentorship from experienced leaders or coaching.

Above all, leadership is learned from experience. Keep yourself in learning mode.



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Leadership is a skill. And leading teams can be learned.

In essence, it is about moving your team towards achieving shared goals while fostering an environment of trust, respect, and collaboration. It requires a combination of interpersonal skills, strategic thinking, and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

Remember, today's pressures are enormous. You may not always get it right. You are a human being. Be gentle with yourself.