

7 Ways Leaders Destroy Their Teams

Often times when it comes to “leadership” we hear the warm and fuzzies or the great success stories. There are so many great books and tools at the disposal of leaders that growth, competency and effective leadership should be inevitable. The challenge with that theory is it’s rendered “not always true” because of the simple fact that leadership deals with human beings and human beings are rather complex creatures. **Anytime you are dealing with people things are never that simplistic.**

Another reason being an effective leader is not that simple is that fact that book knowledge doesn’t always translate to street knowledge {{translation – just because you can read it and talk it, deosn’t mean that you can effectively apply it}}.

A key understanding to leadership how ineffective and incapable individuals find themselves in key leadership roles is this: people hire people, who hire people, who hire people. Somewhere within those three generations of hiring, there are people placed in roles of leadership that they are not capable of handling. In my tenure working as a Deputy Prison Warden, before being promoted to Warden, I worked for a leader that definitely should not have been in her role. She literally destroyed her staff and destroyed her team. Not only did she destroy them, she didn’t have the self-awareness to make the necessary adjustments. She was a “Leadership Destroyer.” In consulting over the last 14 years, I have seen and heard about these “Leadership Destroyers” more often than I’d like to admit.

Unfortunately the “Leadership Destroyers” are not isolated to my experiences, if you live long enough and work for enough people, there is a good chance that you will work for one of these destroyers. To help identify how these leaders managers destroy their teams, I have identified 7 ways.

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1. My Way Or The Highway (MWOH): Everyone has an opinion and often times people have thoughts, ideas and suggestions that can be helpful to those that are in charge. **MWOH** is fueled by the insecurity of the Leadership Destroyer. **MWOH** can create an environment of control, but not an environment of healthy success. Listen to your team, involve your team, learn from your team and embrace the reality that the collective sum is much better than the **Big-Headed MWOH Leader**.

2. All About The Numbers: The numbers do matter, the bottom line is important and if it doesn’t make dolla\$ it doesn’t make sense. In business, ministry or non-profit work, it’s important to measure things as it’s a great barometer for success. Where numbers become a problem is when the Leadership Destroyer focuses on the numbers, bottom line and measurables so much that they forget about their team of people who are making those numbers happen. They lose sight of the “how” because they are so focused on the “what.” Number matter, but people matter more. Focus on creating a healthy team and healthy numbers

will be a natural bi-product.

3. Talk But Don't Listen: No one can get a word in or have an opinion because the Leadership Destroyer is always talking. Not only are they always talking, they never listen. If people are not heard, they will cease to say the things that matter. Shh (be quiet) Listen!

4. Change Things For The Sake Of Changing Things: Change is good and sometimes necessary to create forward momentum. The Leadership Destroyer takes this to another level by changing things just to let you know that they're the boss. They are unwilling to receive feedback or go back to what worked, even if their change isn't working. I heard a great thought from OSU Football Coach Mike Gundy from his press conference during OSU's great season last year. OSU was ranked #2 and they were rolling like a well-oiled machine. Mike Gundy said, (paraphrasing) "I try to change things up a bit, just to justify my existence. My team will come to me and say I think we need to stick to XYZ and this is why. Often times what they are saying makes perfect sense and I change it back." It's important to survey the impact, timing and necessity of change.

5. They Just Don't Care: The quickest way to destroy a team is to not care about the players on the team. Team members know the difference between the fake stuff and the genuine care and concern for the individual players and the collective team. Leadership Destroyers care more about their title, role, corner office and the fact that they have arrived than they do their team. One of the things that the inmates used to say when I was a Warden in regards to leadership and life is this, "It's All About Missouri!" In other words, Missouri is the Show-Me State. I'll close with the words of John Maxwell, "*People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care.*"

6. Focused On Pleasing The Boss – It's okay to want to perform for your supervisor and help you organization be successful. Leadership Destroyers take it to a whole-nutha-level. The Leadership Destroyer will do anything and everything to look good, rather than doing any and everything right. The all-consuming thoughts of wondering what the boss thinks will lead these destroyers to destroy their team, chunk team members under the bus and not give proper credit where proper credit is due.

7. Unwilling To Receive Candid Feedback – When an individual is unwilling to listen to feedback because "It may hurt" or "It isn't what they want to hear," they are in trouble. You can't win with thin skin. Once team members realize the Leadership Destroyer is unwilling to receive feedback, they will stop giving feedback. Once team members stop giving feedback, the Leadership Destroyers find themselves on an island. Islands are great places to vacation, but horrible places to find yourself when you are trying to lead a team.

Leadership Destroyers destroy everything.

Read more from Scott [here](#).