

The Lasting Impact of Leading Up

I am fortunate in that I serve on a high performance team (auxano.com). I would go a step further and say that I've had the good pleasure of serving on a number of high performance teams throughout my life. At the same time there have been occasions and seasons when the senior leader was absent or distracted from providing the leadership the team needed and desired (sometimes I was that leader). Perhaps you can relate! As a consultant it is not unusual for me to be approached by someone who is frustrated or struggling with the senior leader. At the same time let's face it, we are all human and regardless where we are in the leadership pipeline, we can fail at leading those below us.

If you are in a situation where you are not being led well, what you may not know is, you can and should do something about it. I would go one step further and say you are part of the problem. That's right! We all are responsible for helping lead those above us!

When it comes to leadership it's important that we lead in all directions, or what Bill Hybels refers to in this [short video](#) teaching as 360 degree leadership. By 360 degree leadership he's referring to our need as a leader not to simply to lead those below us, but to lead those on the same level and above as well. What you may or may not realize is that when it comes to leading, an effective leader spends more time leading up than he does leading down. An effective leader leads from the center.

Which leads me to the question I want to address. How do you lead up when your leader is not doing an effective job at leading below him or her? Let me suggest three things I want my leader to know:

- **What I need to be successful at my job.** I want to make sure my leader knows what tools I need to be most effective. This could include training, people, resources, technology, job description, clarity, time, and a whole host of other things.
- **What I can excel at and make my greatest contribution.** I also want my leader to know how I can make my best and ultimate contribution. I'm not helping the team achieve our overall vision if I spend my time on meaningless tasks or responsibilities. I want my leader to know what I can do best and add the most value to our organization by doing.
- **What I need help with.** I want my leader to help me problem solve. Maybe I'm doing a task I need to be doing, but I'm stuck. I want him to know it long before it becomes the organization's problem.

?

All this starts with good communication. I'm going to do everything within my power to make sure I have a relational connect with him/her and that we meet on a regular bases. The last thing I want is for my leader to only see me coming only when I have a laundry list of problems, complaints, or needs. I understand that over time, if we don't connect or meet regularly, we are going to suffer from distant decay, which simply means our relationship is going to deteriorate, no matter how well things are going.

Yes it is true everything rises and falls on leadership. The question is whose leadership? I think we all know the answer. Take responsibility now. Regardless of where you are in the leadership pipeline, lead well! You won't regret it.

Learn more about the impact of leading up - [connect with an Auxano Navigator](#).

> [Read more from David](#).