

The Greatest Value You Can Add to Your Team is Theirs

Unless you are a robotic leader without any heart, you want your team to know you care for them. More specifically, you want each person on the team to know he or she is valued. When there is a healthy relationship between team member and supervisor, work is much more enjoyable and rewarding. When trust is high, team members operate with confidence and freedom. When the relationships are not strong, work is stifled and the joy of the job can be lost.

So how can a leader let each person on the team know they are valued? Harry Reis, a researcher and social psychologist, has invested decades studying what makes a relationship strong, and according to the [research](#), the guiding principle of all healthy relationship is responsiveness. This makes sense when we think about the example of bad customer experience we have endured in our lives. When we are ignored, we feel undervalued. The reason we are so deeply frustrated with bad customer service is we feel we are not being responded to.

But when people feel they are being responded to, their connection with the other person increases significantly. When people you serve sense that you are responding specifically to them they know they are valued. Here are four ways leaders should respond to each person on the team.

1. Respond to their victories.

When those you lead meet a goal, solve a significant problem, or make an impact, respond to them and their victory. If they never hear from you in those moments, they likely wonder if you notice or care. When you recognize people on your team for their wins, you show you value their contribution.

2. Respond to their roadblocks.

Part of a leader's role is to remove roadblocks that get in the way of each person on the team. If someone on your team knows you are making things easier for them to be successful, they know you care.

3. Respond to their struggles.

If you played sports in high school, you may have heard your coach yell, "Don't worry if I am yelling at you. Worry if I stop yelling at you." And while we may not have appreciated the yelling, the message was clear—if the coach was still exhorting you, the coach still believed in you. If he stopped, his belief in you had already stopped. If you ignore the problems with people on your team, they will assume you don't care as much as you once did.

4. Respond to their lives.

The people on your team are real people (not merely folks who crank out work) with lives,

hopes, dreams, and pain. When you respond to the lives of those you lead, you show that you value the person, not just what the person does.

Read more from Eric.
