

## Who's Your Role Model?

Think about it. If you had to pick **one individual** who has shaped you most at work into the person you are today, who would that be?

Throughout our working lives we encounter a multitude of management styles. I remember starting out as a graduate trainee in banking, and being terrified of the Principal Manager of the first branch I worked in. My fear gradually subsided as I experienced working for other managers who were more visible, approachable and inclusive. I learnt from them and whilst none were 'perfect', they were inspirational in certain ways e.g. the 'go-getter', the motivator, the wise counsellor, the team-builder. Collectively, their outstanding attributes formed a picture of what I aspired to be like, and behave like, at work.

When we ask participants on our **Half-day Introduction to Coaching Workshop** to come up with examples of superb and abysmal leadership from their own experience, the ink starts flowing, unfortunately quicker in the latter category than the former! We've gathered examples from hundreds of people over the years and here is a flavour of their responses. Do you agree?

Common examples of **abysmal leadership** tend to be:

- Lack of direction
- Poor communication
- Bullying
- Favouritism
- Taking the credit
- Blaming
- Lack of staff development
- Lack of support
- Unapproachability
- Being unavailable
- Micro-managing

Whereas, **superb leadership** manifests itself through:

- Having a vision and inspiring others to be part of it
- Helping people understand the bigger picture and how they fit in
- Agreeing clear goals and objectives at organisational, team and individual levels
- Involving people in planning and decision-making
- Seeking others' opinion
- Listening
- Effective two-way communication

- Ability to relate to others
- Actively developing people and giving them opportunities to learn
- Trust
- Ability to make tough decisions when necessary
- Fairness
- Knowledge
- A consistent approach
- Expecting the best from people

In considering these lists, **think honestly about how you fare.** What feedback have you had from others? It's very easy to criticise and not recognise that we might be guilty of displaying the negative characteristics ourselves. We've often met people on our workshops who are astonished at feedback they've had from their staff revealing them to be 'demanding' or 'bossy' or 'unapproachable'. Yet, within twenty minutes of meeting them, we could concur absolutely.

**Self-awareness** is a core element of coaching. We need to be self-aware as coaches, and also have the ability to help our coachees increase their self-awareness as they examine how they can achieve their goals and become more responsible for their actions.

Indeed, each time that I do this 'superb/abysmal leadership' exercise on the **Introduction to Coaching Workshop**, I see the direct overlap between the characteristics of a superb leader and those of a skilled coach. It is clear to me that if you lead and manage people using a coaching style of leadership, you will display the superb traits that people are crying out for in the leaders. Wouldn't it be thrilling to know that someone considers **you** to be their greatest role model?

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