

Creating Magic

10 Common Sense Leadership Strategies from a Life at Disney

Adapted from Creating Magic by Lee Cockerell

“One of the great misconceptions about leadership is that it’s an innate gift that can’t be taught. People assume that leaders are born, not made. Another misconception is that leadership is synonymous with titles, job descriptions, and salary grades. It’s not. Leadership is more than a role; it’s a responsibility. A big one. Being a leader means doing what has to be done, when it has to be done, in the way it should be done, whether you like it or not, and whether they like it or not. It means making the right things happen by bringing out the best in others. I like to say that good leaders are environmentalists. Their responsibility is to create a sustainable business environment - calm, clear, crisp, and clean, with no pollution, no toxins, no waste - in which everyone flourishes.”

1. Remember, Everyone is Important - *B’tzelem Elohim*, All People are Created in the Image of God & *Chaveirut*, Friendship

- Make sure everyone matters, and that everyone knows it.
- Reach out to everyone on your team.
- Make yourself available.
- Listen to understand.
- Communicate clearly, directly, and honestly.
- Stand up for the excluded.
- Design your culture.
- Make me feel special.

Treat me as an individual.

Respect me.

Make me knowledgeable.

2. Break the Mold - *Achrayut*, Responsibility

- Be clear about who’s responsible for what.
- Remember that responsibility and authority go hand in hand.
- Anyone can take responsibility for change.
- Expect resistance.
- Don’t try to win every battle.
- You’re never really done.

3. Make Your Campers Your Brand

4. Create Magic Through Camp - *Model L’chikui*, Role Model

- Give campers a purpose, not just instructions.
- Take your role as a teacher seriously.
- Teach by Example
- Teach the Principles of Great Service
 - Make eye contact and smile.

- Greet and welcome each and every camper.
- Display appropriate body language at all times.
- Preserve the “magical” camper experience.
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- Give feedback immediately and effectively.
- Prepare for the unexpected.

5. Eliminate Hassles - *Tishm'u L'Kulam*, Listen to Everyone

- Ask **what** rather than **who**.
- Listen to your campers.
- Learn firsthand what's working and what's not.
- Think ahead.

6. Learn the Truth - Be Present

- Get out and about routinely.
- Get a ground-level view. (What do campers want/need from TLV's?)
- Make them feel safe.
- Probe for the whole story.
- Answer the tough questions. (Or say, “I don't know, but I'll get back to you.”)
- Spend meaningful time with campers.
- Recognize all by name.
- Catch them doing something right.
- Make it public.
- Recognize and encourage good ideas.
- Make ARE a natural part of your routine.

7. Stay Ahead of the Pack - *Da'at*, Knowledge

- Be a knowledge sponge.
- Learn from the best.

8. Be Careful What You Say and Do

- Demonstrate a passionate commitment to your role.
- Do what it takes to get the job done.
- Set high standards.
- Have a positive attitude.
- Look and carry yourself like a professional.
- Be a full-time professional, even when the curtain is down.
- Model personal ownership.
- Don't lose your sense of humor.
- Be a great partner.
- Stay humble.

9. Develop Character

- Live your values.
- Train for character, not just skill.

Teach your values.

10. Burn the Free Fuel - “*Never underestimate the emotional impact you have as a leader.*” - *Kavod, Respect*

- ARE - Appreciation, recognition, encouragement
- Spend meaningful time with employees.
- Recognize all by name.
- Catch them doing something right.
- Make it public.
- Include their families.
- Recognize and encourage good ideas.
- Make ARE a natural part of your routine.