

Leadership Intimacy®



align  profit

“What behavioral scientists know, and business gurus seldom give sufficient credit to, is that shared and aligned goals, when built on the common thread of social intimacy, are more readily attained and sustained.” –Tom Wiltzius



Leadership Intimacy as a new Golden Rule

“Do Unto Others as They
Want Done Unto Them”

You as a leader, on behalf of your organization, have goals you want to achieve.

And you know that your success reaching your goals depends on how well your employees perform. Their performance depends on the environment you create.

A long, long time ago, our very wise ancestors understood that the best way to create an environment that encourages harmony and success could be expressed succinctly in what has come to be known as the Golden Rule.

Treat others as you would like to be treated.

Another version, known as the Platinum Rule, gives the Golden Rule a twist that demands intimacy. Rather than treat others the way you would prefer to be treated, it demands that you know the other person intimately enough to:

Treat others as they want to be treated.

It might seem that following the Platinum Rule would give other people power over you and make you a less effective leader. To the contrary, when you treat others as they want to be treated, you give yourself power.



Leadership Intimacy—the new form of power

Once you establish a certain level of intimacy with anyone, they begin to trust you and feel safe and comfortable enough to deal honestly and openly with you.

In organizations intimacy does much the same. Intimacy clears the way for people to share and contribute their best. By knowing people and their needs intimately, leaders find it easier to help them achieve their personal goals and to align their goals with the strategic goals of the organization.

Leadership Intimacy encourages:

- Alignment and unity
- Free flow of communication
- Commitment and high performance
- A more fulfilling and enjoyable work environment
- Deep and lasting loyalty
- Employee retention
- Individual health and well-being

Leadership Intimacy discourages:

- Poor behavior
- Personal misunderstanding
- Political games and workarounds





Ubuntu—the essence of being human



Leadership Intimacy draws inspiration from the African concept of Ubuntu, defined by Nobel laureate Leymah Gbowee, pictured here.

I am what I am because of who we all are.

Ignited by the spirit of Ubuntu, the heroic Liberian peace movement she organized led her country out of a brutally merciless civil war and on to the election of Liberia's first woman president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

In the workplace the same spirit of interconnectedness encourages people to focus on their humanness and to work for the greater good. Just as Ubuntu teaches us that we can't be human all by ourselves, the guiding principle of Leadership Intimacy reminds us that we can't work alone, much less lead that way.

The great African leader Archbishop Desmond Tutu, describing the personal qualities that embody Ubuntu, gives any leader a model of what I have in mind when I think of Leadership Intimacy.

A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, based from a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished.



How to instill Intimacy in the workplace



Another way to define intimacy: “Being your true self with someone else.” In other words, “I show me, and I see into you.”

Intimacy in the workplace begins when you deliberately create an environment where people can be themselves, can speak from the heart and not just from the corporate handbook or the balance sheet.

You know you are beginning to achieve intimacy in your workplace when everyone feels emotionally safe enough to say what needs to be said, do what needs to be done, and to grow, not only as a team or an organization, but as individuals contributing to the greater good of humanity.

If an employee can't tell you that she or he thinks you're heading in the wrong direction, or if no one feels safe pointing out a problem before it turns into a crisis, the future of your company is in grave danger.

What a price to pay for a stagnant business culture that prizes silence and obedience over a commitment to be intimate enough and safe enough to tell the truth.



4 Kinds of Leadership Intimacy



Intimacy in the workplace is akin to the traditional Na'vi greeting of endearment from the movie *Avatar*. When the Na'vi greet each other, they say, "I see you," meaning "I see into you, I get you."

When you care enough to see, listen and understand, you're on your way to building at least four kinds of Leadership Intimacy.

Organizational Intimacy Having full understanding of the organization's strategically aligned goals, behaviors, and core values.

Self Intimacy Being fully aware of oneself with an in-depth self-knowledge. Being comfortable with self-disclosure and excellent at self-regulation.

Social Intimacy Having a deep awareness of others and being savvy about the complex causes of human behavior. Moving toward trust, such that the other person in a relationship feels safe and comfortable enough to share.

Influential Intimacy Using all three deep familiarities to facilitate the growth of everyone involved as human beings, a team, and an organization.



A Leadership Intimacy Mantra



As a leader, it is your responsibility to create all four kinds of intimacy. To help you do this, remind yourself as often as possible:

- I need to get closer to my direct reports.
- I need to get closer to my peers.
- I need to get closer to my customers.
- I need to get closer to my manager.
- I need to coach, guide, influence, and support them the way they want to receive it.

If all leaders understood their employees better, more work would get done, less stress would arise, and fear would be replaced by authentic commitment, desire, energy, High Commitment and High Performance.

Contact us to learn more about our Leadership Intimacy. We look forward to hearing from you.
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