

4 Mindsets of a Successful Leader

By Keith Ferrazzi, Author of "Who's Got Your Back"

Have you found yourself thinking of starting your own business? Are you trying to climb the corporate ladder while the company is working through the recession? In other words, are you aiming to be a leader?

Well, behind every great leader, at the base of every great tale of success, you will find an indispensable circle of trusted advisers, mentors and colleagues. These groups come in all forms and sizes, and can be found at every level and in nearly all spheres of both professional and personal life. What they all have in common is a unique kind of connection with each other that I've come to call "lifeline relationships."

In order to build these all-important lifeline relationships, there are four core mindsets that can be learned and practiced, and help lead you on a path to personal and financial prosperity. They are:

Generosity This is the base from which all the other behaviors arise. This is the commitment to mutual support that begins with the willingness to show up and creatively share our deepest insights and ideas with the world. It's the promise to help others succeed by whatever means you can muster. Generosity signals the end of isolation by cracking open a door to a trusting emotional environment, what I call a "safe space" -- the kind of environment that's necessary for creating relationships in which the other mindsets can flourish.

Vulnerability This means letting your guard down so mutual understanding can occur. Here you cross the threshold into a safe space after intimacy and trust have pushed the door wide open. The relationship engendered by generosity then moves toward a place of fearless friendship where risks are taken and invitations are offered to others.

Candor This is the freedom to be totally honest with those in whom you confide. Vulnerability clears the pathways of feedback so that you are able to share your hopes and fears. Candor allows us to begin to constructively interpret, respond to and grapple with that information.

Accountability Accountability refers to following through on the promises you make to others. It's about giving and receiving the feet-to-the-fire tough love through which real change is sustained.

The real key to establishing close relationships with people you consider your trusted advisers in your career and in your personal life is how these four mindsets work together.

The process starts with generosity. It jolts people out of traditional transactional do-for-me-and-I'll-do-for-you relationships. Actively reaching out to and helping others gives us the opportunity and permission to take a relationship to a deeper level. This allows us to explore intimacy, ultimately to the point of being vulnerable and open with one another.

If we've created a safe space, a place where we feel safe enough to say candidly what we think and feel, we can take greater risks in the relationship. It can lead to making a commitment to mutually support one another through thick and thin and to hold one another accountable for doing the things that will allow us to achieve our dreams and destinies. Taking such risks can lead us to create more than just friendships -- we can create lifeline relationships to a better future.

This process is iterative: The more you give, the deeper you get and the more profound your sharing becomes. That strengthens your safe space, and provides more freedom to be vulnerable and candid -- which opens the relationship even more deeply. Trust builds incrementally, by stages, growing deeper and stronger as the mindsets are practiced more sincerely and passionately.

Once you work within the four mindsets, you will see it's a truly inspiring experience. Whether you're working with an experienced sales team or building a business from scratch, the lifeline relationships you build will become more than your colleagues or assistants. They will become you're a trusted circle of advisers and your peers.

That's worth repeating: peers. Equals. Even though one of them may have clear organizational authority -- and the title and decision-making power to go with it -- each member functions as a highly respected equal, offering up creative ideas, candid feedback and criticism voiced with authentic concern for the others' interests, and rigorous attention to accountability around goals, goal setting, follow-through and, of course, results. Each member has free, open and respectful permission to call the others out when they are falling short (because we all fall short, and most of us, as I know well, tend to do so repeatedly).

Do you want to be more successful in your career and more fulfilled in

your life? Then let's get started.

Keith Ferrazzi, CEO of Ferrazzi Greenlight, has counseled the world's top enterprises on how to dramatically accelerate the development of business relationships to drive sales, spark innovation and create team cohesion. His most recent book is "Who's Got Your Back: The Breakthrough Program to Build Deep, Trusting Relationships That Create Success -- and Won't Let You Fail" (Broadway Business). You can find more information about him at www.keithferrazzi.com.