

Insight Thirteen

Making sure my leadership behaviours are 100% consistent with what I am trying to achieve.

If you want to foster a particular culture in your team or organization then every aspect of your own behaviour will be up for scrutiny.



Teresa arrived in a retail business from a financial services background - like a tornado. As MD of a substantial division, she was on a mission to create an empowered organisation where 'stepping up to the mark' was the norm. At her first review with the Group MD, it was clear that things were not going as planned. An internal climate survey indicated too many disenchanted and micro-managed people in her team. She tried to rationalize it away but her boss suggested working with a coach. The coach encountered the same rationalization and defensiveness: "it's them, not me!" Then, one day, Teresa was meeting the coach at a regional office. She started re-arranging where the brochures and newspapers were displayed in the reception area. Challenged by the coach, the penny began to drop and more things came out, like checking every line of expense claims. Within weeks, Teresa started trusting people and delegating properly. The next climate survey told a much happier story...

Michael was a highly organized, and highly creative individual – an unusual combination. He was renowned for his innovations in customer service inside and beyond the group he worked for. His direct reports were all hand-picked, bright and experienced. Michael was complaining to his coach that they never came up with any useful new ideas for the business and he wanted to find a way of making them more creative. The coach asked him to describe a typical 'away day'. What became abundantly clear was that Michael was only receptive to ideas that came from his brain! The coach got him to role-play a forthcoming meeting to rehearse Michael in exhibiting encouraging behaviour, and suppressing the urge to deliver 'his' solution. They then agreed that Michael would delegate chairing the meeting, too. First time round, it was clear that Michael found the change really difficult, but he persevered. Recalling the second session, he was "astonished by the practical and ingenious ideas" his team had generated.

