



# Leadership Tips

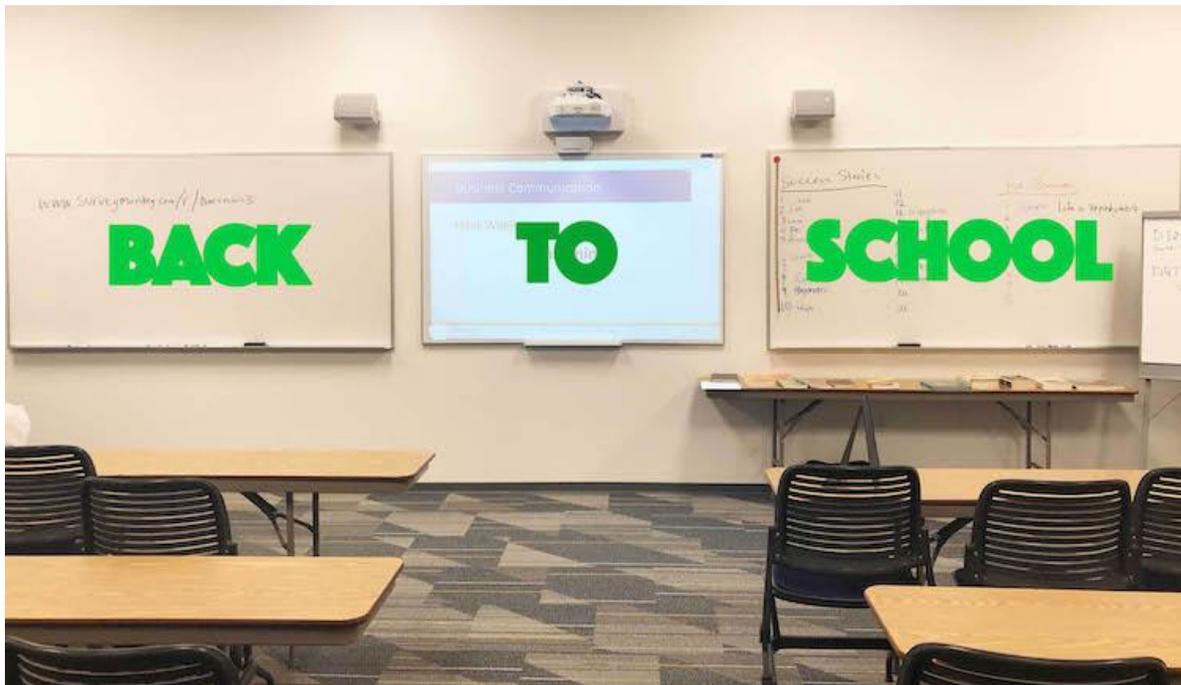
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# Back to School

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September signals back to school for many. For professionals, it can be a reminder that continuous learning is imperative for long term success. Regardless of your area

of work, it's worth reflecting on professional development, career growth and lifelong learning. In today's world of rapid change and technology on steroids, there's always more to learn.

Once upon a time we were all in school, until we weren't. And there's still much to master. The smart professional is always in learning mode, excited about bolstering existing skills and developing new ones. How about you?

- Are you excited about learning new skills and superpowers?
- Have you identified growth areas -- for yourself and for your team?
- Are there gaps in your skill sets that, if filled, can make you more promotable and more effective?

## **Adopt a Learner's Mindset**

The future belongs to professionals who are open-minded, inquisitive and hungry to learn new skills.

### **Write Now**

Consider the case of Sam, whose responsibilities as a department head included writing and delivering regular reports to the City Council. He was always fighting a deadline. Yet despite knowing each day he needed to work on his next report, he procrastinated, wasting valuable time. Simply put, he never knew how to begin, so he kept delaying getting started. Naturally, time wasted up front wasn't recoupable as the deadline loomed.

The stress and aggravation finally got to him. He enrolled in a [Better Business Writing](#) training and learned strategies for getting started: freewriting, clustering and mind mapping, as well as initially creating an outline to scope out his reports.

Now, Sam has more time to write and refine reports by replacing procrastination with preparation and writing from an outline. His confidence level has soared, and his reports have improved; Sam is now eager to write his next report.

## Are You Coachable?

Professionals at all levels can benefit from coaching. Yet unless the individual is open to coaching, it's hard to effect positive change.

### **When Right is Wrong**

Terrance was a headstrong leader who placed more value in being right than in building his team. His employees complained that he was stubborn, didn't really listen to others and only gave lip service to their ideas. Past attempts by a coach and mentor had failed because Terrance felt "the problem" was with everyone else. He was oblivious to his role in the low morale of his team.

It was only after a very poor annual review mandating tangible improvements that Terrance realized that he had to change his ways...or be fired. With his feet to the fire, he embraced [coaching](#) and began to self-reflect. He worked diligently to improve relationships with his direct reports and not obsess about "being right." He became coachable. He worked on himself and his relationships with his team.

Terrance benefited greatly from feedback gleaned through an [EQ-360 emotional intelligence assessment](#) filled out by many of his direct reports, colleagues, peers, and manager. He became more collaborative and is no longer making others wrong, which is building trust within his team.

## How Do You Spell LISTEN?

Did you know the same letters that spell LISTEN also spell the word SILENT? True listening means more than silently waiting for your turn to speak. Profound listening is a total body experience, where you listen with your ears, eyes, mind and heart, giving undivided attention to the other party's words, tone of voice, inflections, pauses, facial expressions and body language.

### **Levels of Listening**

As a manager, Diedre always prided herself on being a great listener. With her photographic memory, sharp mind, and attention to detail, she could quote verbatim what she heard in a meeting or interview. Yet she often missed the emotional component of others' communications. Skilled at gleaning facts and figures, she ignored her direct reports' moods, feelings and emotions. It was a blind spot of hers. Much to her shock, it came up in her annual review.

Diedre went swiftly from denial to embarrassment to action. Recognizing the criticisms had some validity, she enrolled in an [emotional intelligence training](#) to become more attuned to others and better tap into their emotional states. She also took a listening training to learn about meta-messages and the role of listening in building trust, and practiced active listening.

Both Diedre and her department are benefiting by her enhanced listening abilities. She also followed up trainings with [emotional intelligence coaching](#). Sharing her insights with her colleagues has led several of them to follow her lead in shoring up these valuable managerial skills.

### **Building Relationships Even With Difficult People:**

We find difficult people at all levels of organizations, as well as a reluctance to confront them. Because it's unpleasant and fears of retribution or escalation are real, it's often the elephant in the room that nobody talks about.

## **From Fear to Friendship**

Regina was a successful, well-liked professional who had always avoided working with difficult people. While she wished others would speak up, and hoped her manager would call out inappropriate behavior, she never spoke up herself.

As we learned later, it was actually our *Leadership Tips* edition on "Difficult People" that gave her a greater understanding. She realized it was time to confront her own fears by speaking her truth and standing up for herself.

Regina received coaching on [standing up to difficult people](#) and role-played what to say and how to say it. With courage and tact she was able to arrange a meeting with her grouchy, grumpy peer and create a different relationship with her going forward. They found some middle ground as each better understood each other. While not yet buddies, these two did find a new method of communicating marked by mutual respect going forward. It became a win-win.

## **The Drive to Excel**

My commute often takes me past playgrounds with basketball courts where girls and boys both play together and practice individually. Over time I recognize the players. Some, it seems, continue to work on those shots they're most confident in, and locations they're most proficient from. Others can be found practicing *different* shots to expand their repertoire, range and game: lay-ups, hook shots, bank shots, free throws, etc.

What skills are you continuing to working on? Perfecting your strengths? Or seeking new opportunities? The best players in any sport develop their all-around game. Golfers master both their long and short game. In every sport there's the physical side and the mental side to master.



Back  
to  
School

As America goes back to school, we invite you to rededicate yourself to lifelong learning and to embrace new skills and superpowers to help you succeed.

It's been our pleasure to partner with you on facilitating positive change. Keep those questions and topic suggestions coming our way. And check out some of our new and popular offerings shown below.



### **COACHING:**

Do you have a leader or employee in need of coaching to improve their leadership, communication skills (including listening skills), emotional intelligence, or customer service proficiency? *Let us help.*

### **RELATED MEDIATION AND COACHING SERVICES FROM TCT:**

[Managing Stress, Anger and Frustration Through Coaching](#)

- [Emotional Intelligence: Executive Coaching](#)

- [Enhance your Executive Presence through Coaching](#)

- [Coaching and Feedback for Increased Performance](#)

[Coaching Employees for Success](#)

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### **ASSESSMENT TOOLS:**

- [DiSC® Classic Communication Style Assessments](#)

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**RELATED TRAININGS:**

- [Stress Management Training](#)

- [Critical Conversations](#)

- [Executive Presence Training](#)

- [Managing Change](#)

- [Supervision and Management 101](#)

- [Think On Your Feet: Develop Your Ability to Think, Stand and Speak in Spontaneously](#)



Contact The Consulting Team to learn more about training and consulting assistance and also one-to-one coaching for leaders and employees.

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