



The Top Five Leader Mistakes: Part II

In the January issue of *The Leader's Playbook*, I outlined [The Top Five Mistakes Leaders Make, Part I](#). This month, we'll discuss the cures for those mistakes. As a refresher, the top five are:

1. The belief that the Walk is the Talk.
2. The belief that leaders motivate people.
3. The belief that leadership is a rational methodology.
4. The belief that it *can* be someone else's fault.
5. The belief that leadership is a *divine right*.

And now, for the cures:

1. The belief that the Walk is the Talk.

Followers are always watching, observing, listening, and learning. Leading by example is not optional; it's not a part-time job. By virtue of the title you hold (vice president, foreman, manager, CEO), every action, every statement, every decision is an example. You're always leading by example, whether you realize it or not.

2. The belief that leaders motivate people.

It's not what leaders think they need, it's what they think they need and the belief that their actions will satisfy those needs that drives your followers. Find out what they need and create the opportunities for your followers that they believe will satisfy those needs.

3. The belief that leadership is a rational methodology.

We may be trained and educated to think rationally but we're hard wired and constructed as emotional creatures. It's part of our primal nature. Think about your own individual emotional feelings at this very moment. What are they? Unless you're powered by the

latest Intel processor, your emotions lie just below the surface. For leaders who understand this, managing their own emotions and recognizing the emotions their followers are experiencing is a critical component of their success.

4. The belief that it *can* be someone else's fault.

When things go wrong the first question effective leaders ask is, *What did I do, or fail to do, that caused this to happen?* Leaders hold themselves accountable before they hold their followers accountable.

5. The belief that leadership is a divine right.

Leadership is a gift, not an entitlement. It is *given* to leaders by followers who willingly allow themselves to be influenced, directed, and inspired by a leader. Too frequently, a leader incorrectly assumes that because he holds the title of (fill in the authoritative title), that people will follow him and perform superbly. Loyalty may be expected, even required, but respect (the key ingredient for wielding influence) must be earned.