



Want Results? Change your Mindset

Leadership is about results. What we get done; How we show up; The impact our actions have on the bottom line. Usually, when we want different results or outcomes, we look to the first natural place to make a difference: our actions. What did we do? What did we say? What actions drove the results we got? And what new actions can we take to get the new results we need? It's a completely logical approach.

Once identified, we put those new actions into place. Too often, though, these actions are not comfortable and we are unable to sustain them in the long term. We've all been there, but why? It's because, although we are able to adopt the new actions, we haven't adopted the mindset that supports and drives those actions. Our mindsets—how we see the world, how we make sense of ourselves in the world, how we view or think about the situations that we're in—are what drive our actions. These mindsets, in turn, determine the results we get.

Take the case of Adam. He gets feedback that he needs to increase employee engagement. When he sits down with his boss, they decide the best course of action to get the desired results is for Adam to empower employees by delegating more and giving them different levels of appropriate authority. Adam leaves the meeting, saying he will do just that: Delegate tasks and, where appropriate, turn over some decision rights to his employees. Adam sets off in earnest to make the change. He reads several articles on how to delegate effectively and even takes a class on delegation and decision making.

The problem is, as he begins to implement some of the tips and tricks he learned, he finds he can't quite make them stick or gain traction. On paper he knows what it is he has to do, but in reality, he just can't make it happen. Again, why? Because Adam hasn't yet adopted the mindset necessary to drive the new behaviors he's trying to put in place.

Our mindsets drive the actions that drive the results we get.

Mindsets are like flashlights that shine light on the potential actions we can take in any given situation. There are thousands of possible actions, but the only ones we will consider taking are those illuminated by our mindset. We cannot even see the others as options—they are not in our line of sight.

So often when we want different results, we simply try to implement the actions we think will get those results. But we don't take the time to consider: What is the mindset that drives those actions? Which flashlight will illuminate those actions as possibilities?

So, back to Adam, who wants more engaged employees. He decides to implement actions to delegate more and empower his employees with increased decision-making authority. But if Adam does not have the mindset that shines light on those actions, he'll



be resistant to making the change and won't sustain them over time. The only way for Adam to truly integrate the actions into his leadership is to adopt the proper mindset.

If Adam's current mindset is: My worth is demonstrated by what I get done—no one can do it as well as I can, he won't implement the actions he has laid out. The new actions are outside the beam of light being cast by his old mindset. Someone who holds the flashlight Adam is holding is unlikely to delegate or spread out decision authority. A person with this mindset is more likely to take actions like "doing it all myself" or "micromanage decisions in order to maintain control over the outcome." These are the actions illuminated by the flashlight Adam is holding. The only way for Adam to implement and sustain the new actions is for him to adopt a new mindset by putting an additional flashlight in his toolbox.

That mindset could look something like: My worth as a leader is demonstrated by the degree to which I develop my employees—or—Surrounding myself with highly capable people is a sign of my strength as a leader. If Adam can truly adopt one of those mindsets, or pick up that flashlight, then the actions he identified with his boss, and the skills he learned about in class, will begin to make much more sense. And he is much more likely to sustain them over time. All of this increases the likelihood he will get the result he wanted: more engaged employees.

If you give someone a quiz on: how to collaborate; how to give feedback; how to be innovative; or just about any other leadership skill, chances are they will pass the written test.

Why is it, then, that so many people can't implement the behaviors they would easily identify on the quiz? It's because implementation requires the right mindset. It's about how you think.

So, when you are developing yourself as a leader, or supporting the development of those around you, it's not just about implementing a list of actions or behaviors. It's about examining the way you think so you can expand your mindsets to illuminate a wider range of leadership options and choice points. Choices that will increase the odds of getting the results you're after—because leadership is about results.