

Hello, this is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute. Thanks for tuning in. Let us have your comments below. We're interested in your feedback.

So, we're winding down 2018 now. You might be able to take a little more time off than you had before Christmas and New Years and all that stuff, and maybe you want to do some reading. We get questions all the time about what's the best leadership book out there, Wayne? What do you recommend?

If you go to Amazon, and you just choose books and you type in leadership, 60,000 books, white papers, whatever. 60,000 hits on Amazon if you put in the term leadership, and you want written material. This is really pretty amazing. But let's try to make it simple. Nobody can read 60,000 books on leadership, and if you did, you'd probably be so addle that you probably would have forgotten the very definition.

Anyway, my favorite leadership book is *Leadership Is an Art*, by Max DePree. It came out in 1989. It was recommended to me about 10 years ago by a friend of mine that was really successful, and sold his business, a tennis buddy. It's an easy book to read. It's very well written. It's very concise. It's only about 150 pages. You could probably read it in a weekend. Max DePree actually ran a family business. Herman Miller, the office furniture company was his family's business. He was the president and chief executive after his father and his brother, I think.

He talks about servant leadership. I guess I had this wrong in my mind. You know, when I think of a servant I think of somebody that has to go fetch water and clean up and things like that. That's not what he's talking about at all. But he does say that leaders are servants of their people, and the servants have four primary responsibilities.

The first thing is, they have to liberate their people to do the things that are required of them. They can't micromanage. They have to actually liberate people to figure out the best ways to do their jobs and get them done. They have to hold people accountable. You know, one thing I see as I read about leadership in the literature, is most of the time they're emphasizing soft skills, people skills, EQ, emotional IQ and those kinds of things. It almost makes leaders sound like they're soft and malleable, and they're not. They're tough people. They're kind, and they have big hearts, but they're still tough, and they still hold people accountable. So, when I say things like servant leadership, I don't want you to think that the leader is a shrinking violet. It's not that at all, it's just that leaders have emotional quality gifts that maybe are underrated by some folks.

The second thing the leader does as a servant is he removes obstacles. How do you make people's job easier? How do you get things out of the way? How do you get rid of barriers that are keeping them from really achieving their potential?

And, the third thing is, you do allow people to achieve their full potential. You give them opportunities. You let them stretch. You assign them things that challenge them and maybe help them go beyond. You know, if you think about as a kid, if you played sports, whether it was football or baseball, somewhere along the line you had

a teacher or a coach that really challenged you and got more out of you than you thought you had. And that's the kind of thing that true leaders do.

And finally, one of the great, great lines that DePree has in this book is, "Servant leaders abandon themselves to the strengths of others." You know, I remember reading a leadership book ages ago, and it talked about two different kinds, the servant leadership kind that abandons himself to the strengths of others, and then the genius with the 1,000 followers. So, one person makes all the decisions, and all the other thousand people in the bows of the organization are simply followers.

Given the two, given what we talked about with the wisdom of crowds in a blog a month or two ago, if you can tap into your people's potentials and their strengths, how does that not make you a better leader? How does that not make your organization stronger and deeper, and more resilient? The idea that there are these domineering people, and I know they're out there, we see them, that think only they have the answers and everybody else is simply a link in the chain. I just don't understand that, when so many of our clients have ambitious, smart, hard-working people, and they can tap into that energy and talent, and they muzzle it, they tamp it down, because they and only they have to be perceived as the leader.

All right, so eight tips from DePree about leadership, and of course there's ... This is a rich book. I mean you could do a series of blogs on this. But, the first thing is the leader has to define reality. What he means by that is the leader has to establish the vision for where the company is headed. The vision needs to be compelling. It needs to be exciting and emotional, and something that people can tap into.

The second thing is the leader needs to establish the values of the company. And of course, if a leader is going to establish values, then the leader must embody the values. He must live the values. If you say, "Our values are X, Y, and Z." And you lived your life according to A, B, and C, guess what? You're going to create dissonance, and forget about it. You might as well not even establish values in your company if you don't have every intention of living the values every day.

The third thing is, you've got to create a covenant that binds people together so that they come to the realization that they're all part of the organization in order to meet each other's needs in order to meet the needs of the outside customers, and vendors, and suppliers, etc.

The leader needs to hold people accountable. The leader needs to provide space and freedom so that people can do their jobs effectively without micromanagement, without the fear of every decision being slapped down in punishment and approbation and all of those terrible things.

The sixth thing is, momentum. I love this. DePree says that the leader must establish momentum, and the way you establish momentum is you set ambitious and worthy goals, and always be moving the organization towards those goals. Love that. I think momentum, it embodies, you know when we think about sports, you know instinctively the value of momentum in sports. But, we don't think about it in business as much. It's there, it's

there, the more you can create momentum in your organization, the happier you and your people are going to be.

And, then the final thing, and I love this one too. DePree says that the final characteristics of a good leader is he or she makes a meaningful difference in the lives of other people. So again, getting back to that servant leadership. Making a meaningful difference in the lives of other people. I just can't say it any better.

The final responsibility. He says the first responsibility is to establish reality by establishing that common vision. The final role of the leader is to say thank you, and to appreciate the people that come to work every day and help make the leader's dreams become reality for the benefit of everyone in the organization.

Now how do you know if someone is an effective leader? How can you look at an organization and quickly size up, is this a good leader? Good leaders are reflected in their followers. A successful organization with happy, smiling, ambitious, fulfilled people who love to come to work every day, that's a company with great leadership. Companies where people have their heads down and work and just look at their watches and can't wait to go home at 5 o'clock, that's a reflection of poor leadership.

So, *Leadership Is an Art*, by Max DePree. Get it, read it, it's easy, and you'll love it as much as I do. This is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute. Thank You!