



The Ten-Minute Leadership Challenge

Reader's Discussion Questions

These questions are meant to be used as a companion to *The Ten-Minute Leadership Challenge*, by Margaret Smith. Please feel free to discuss them with your co-workers, business peers, or book club.

Authenticity

1. What are some of your core values that make up your authentic self?
2. Think about a time (or times) you have felt pressure to act in an inauthentic way. How did you handle the situation? What might you have done differently?
3. How can you help others embrace their authentic selves?
4. What are some actions you can take if your values are challenged?
5. Name three ways you would like to change, without compromising your authentic self.
6. How would you rate your level of self awareness? Are you comfortable with that? What would you like to do to become more self aware?
7. Are your relationships defined by what you can get out of it, or by genuine mutual interest and compassion?

Courage

1. What kind of person do you picture when you hear the word "courage?"
2. Think about a time you acted courageously. What was the result?
3. What are your biggest fears in the workplace? What can you do to overcome them? When you step back, are your fears valid?
4. Think about something that you would like to see changed or improved at work. What actions can you take to make that change?
5. How can you help others act more courageously and be heard in the workplace?



Trust

1. Who are the people in your life that inspire the most trust? What is it about them that make you so willing to trust them?
2. Why is "trust" a frightening concept at times? What can you do to overcome that fear?
3. Think about someone you do not trust. How can you rebuild your faith in that individual?
4. What does a trusting workplace look like?
5. If someone violates your trust, how can you confront that individual?
6. Do you consider yourself a trustworthy person? What can you do to improve your trustworthy factor?
7. Why is it important for a leader to be perceived as trustworthy?
8. What are three practical ways you can inspire confidence to those directly around you?
9. On the flip side, what are three things you could do that would guarantee distrust in your professional circle?
10. If you have valid concerns over something, what are some ways you can work through it to successfully achieve your goals?

Being Present

1. Where are you right now? What gets in the way of you focusing yourself fully on tasks? How can you eliminate those distracters?
2. How do you know when others are not fully paying attention to what you're saying? How does that affect your message?
3. Challenge yourself: During your next meeting focus on bringing your full self to the table. What can you do to accomplish this?
4. Imagine a workplace where all employees are fully engaged. What does it look like?
5. When you've hit a rough patch in your personal life, what can you do to stay focused and energized at work?
6. How often do you spend your time preoccupied with the past and the future?



Head & Heart

1. How would you describe your leadership style? In assessing your own leadership practices, what percentage of your time is spent caring for your people?
2. Do co-workers often confide in you? If not, what steps can you take to be more approachable?
3. What are some advantages to practicing love-based leadership?
4. How can you be an empathetic and caring leader without being a pushover? How can you set clear boundaries between "boss" and "friend?"
5. How do you know a caring, friendly work community when you see one?
6. What are some ways to take a genuine interest in others?
7. When you need to talk to a co-worker about poor performance or bad behavior, how do you approach them? What can you do to both show empathy and convey that you won't tolerate their actions?
8. Looking back on your experiences, how might a "fear-based" leader have affected your motivation to do great work?
9. On the other hand, how did a "love-based" leader influence your experience?
10. What are some ways you can cultivate an atmosphere of nurturing today?

No Excuses

1. Think about a time you've blamed others (or other factors) for your mistakes or subpar performance. Why did you do it? What could you have done in the first place to prevent the slip-up?
2. How do you react to others when they tell you an excuse?
3. How can you prevent excuse-making?
4. When you miss a deadline or perform poorly, how can you explain yourself? What steps can you take to correct your actions?
5. How can you set lofty, but realistic goals? What does a "No Excuses Action Plan" look like for you?
6. What's the one thing you know you can do and need to do now, yet aren't doing? What's holding you back? What's your plan to dive in and do it?
7. Who do you know that can offer you support, advice and encouragement along the way? Have you reached out to them?



Clarity

1. Why is clarity important in the workplace?
2. Think about a time someone misinterpreted a message you gave. What could have prevented the miscommunication?
3. How can a muddled message affect the workplace?
4. Do you consider yourself a clear communicator? How can you improve?
5. Let's say your boss sent you an email with unclear instructions. How can you tactfully ask him/her for clarification?
6. Is everyone on the same page?
7. Do you encourage a culture of transparency and open dialogue? If not, how might you make clear communication more of a priority?

Loyalty

1. What qualities might a company have that encourages loyalty?
2. What does challenging an employee have to do with loyalty? How might you challenge or motivate others?
3. What can you, as a leader, do to foster loyalty on an individual level? How do you show that you appreciate and trust your team?
4. Do you consider yourself a loyal employee? Why or why not? What might you need to do to increase your interest in your company and strengthen your loyalty?
5. Do you feel that those around you would step in and go the extra mile for their peers?



Self-Confidence

1. What are some visible ways we display self-confidence? Self-doubt?
2. Think of a situation where you doubted yourself or your abilities. How might you have overcome your anxieties?
3. How can asking questions add to your self-confident image?
4. Why is it important to focus on others when you're working on building your own self-confidence?
5. If you become derailed in a meeting or when asked a question, how do you get back on track? How can you regain your composure?
6. Are you afraid to recognize your successes? If so, what's holding you back from self-congratulation? What small things can you do to acknowledge your progress or achievements?
7. Name one or two things you can do to work on your self-confidence this week.
8. What's your saboteur telling you? How often, and to what extent, do you listen to the saboteur?
9. What are the things about yourself that you're most proud of?
10. What are the circumstances that encourage you to speak up with confidence? How often do those circumstances exist for you?

Community

1. What communities are present in your life? How often do you interact with your communities?
2. How diverse is your community? Do you often step outside your comfort zone when seeking new friends or acquaintances?
3. What are some of the benefits you've experienced from collaborating with others?
4. What are some ways to reach out and connect with others?
5. What might be holding you back from making new connections? What mental obstacles might you need to overcome?
6. What are some ways you can contribute to or strengthen your current community?
7. What kind of community do you dream of living in? How can you make that dream a reality?

