



Toy Box Leadership

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Leadership Lessons from the Toys You Loved As a Child

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Introduction:

Toys have always been a representation of life. The first toys many of us played with as children were likely little cars, baby dolls, or small workbenches — all models of real life. We copied our parents by doing the things we saw them do, like hammering away at a plastic workbench, driving a Matchbox car down an imaginary freeway, or rocking a baby doll to sleep.

In each case, we utilized actions we would likely use when we grew up and held a real baby, drove a real car, or worked at a real workbench. As children, we played with toys just for fun, but behind the fun we learned how to deal with the reality that was to follow those formative years. The interesting thing about these valuable lessons is that they were all unintentionally learned from toys.

1. _____

LEGO Information:

It is estimated that more than 235 billion LEGO parts have been manufactured since the first Automatic Binding Brick was molded in 1949. Today, LEGO is more than just simple building blocks.

LEGO is toys, theme parks, games, movies, computers, and robots; all sold in more than 115 different countries. Now the fourth largest toy manufacturer in the world, LEGO group employs more than five thousand people and produces more than thirty-three thousand bricks every minute, totaling 16 billion bricks annually. That translates into annual sales exceeding \$1.1 billion. *Fortune* magazine recognized this success in 2000, when it named LEGO the “Toy of the Century.”

The popularity of LEGO bricks results from their versatility. You remember that feeling you had as a child imagining the endless possibilities of what you could build with that pile of LEGO bricks. Would you venture a guess as to how many ways you can arrange six eight-studded LEGO bricks? In an astounding 915,103,765 different positions. Now, how many days would that occupy your child?

Leadership lesson from LEGO bricks: _____ —

The Law of Connection:

*“Leaders Touch A Heart Before
They Ask For A Hand.”*

The Law of Buy-In:

*“People Buy Into the Leaders Before
They Buy-into the Vision.”*

The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership

Connecting Comments

(1) Each person is _____ on the next connection for

_____.

"You can do what I cannot do. I can do what you cannot do. Together we can do great things."

(2) Connecting begins from the _____

_____.

When you make a connection, it lays a foundation upon which you can build. The more connections you make, the stronger your foundation becomes and the higher you can build.

Ken Blanchard knows about the value of connecting. He says, *"In the past a leader was a boss. Today's leaders must be partners with their people... they no longer can lead solely based on positional power."* In other words, your relationships are more important than your position.

(3) Connecting unleashes the power of _____.

Synergy — "Combines the efforts of two or more entities resulting in a _____ than individual efforts could have achieved."

Former prime minister of Israel Golda Meir understood the power of synergy, stating that she *"never did anything alone. Whatever was accomplished in this country was accomplished collectively."*

(4) Successful connecting is not an _____.

LEGO bricks don't join with others simply by chance. Likewise, the best connections don't happen by accident. Pouring out a box of LEGO bricks will not produce a castle; you will just have a pile of bricks. Similarly, relationships at their best are designed, intentional, connected, and built.

Successful leadership requires the ability to connect

_____ team and connect _____
the team.

Leadership Gold — “Be a Connector, Not Just a Climber.”

Climbers

Connectors

Think _____

Think _____

Value _____

Value _____

Seek _____

Seek _____

Build their _____

Build _____

Stand _____

Stand _____

Focus on _____

Focus on _____

2. _____

Play-Doh Information:

Kay Zufall operated a neighborhood nursery school in Dover, New Jersey. It was Christmastime 1954, and Kay was looking for creative ways for the children to decorate their classroom.

She read that people were shaping ornaments out of a claylike wallpaper cleaner and then painting them after they hardened, so she tried it. The kids loved playing with the soft clay so much that she called her brother-in-law (the owner of the failing Kutol wallpaper cleaner company) and told him that his compound made for a great toy. He flew to New Jersey to talk to her and was so impressed with her idea that he immediately went back to Cincinnati, took the detergents out of the mix, and introduced Kutol's Rainbow Modeling Compound to the world. Kay later suggested a more child-friendly name: Play-Doh.

Since then more than a billion pounds of Play-Doh have been manufactured. That's enough Play-Doh to roll out a "snake" that would reach around the earth about three times. Every year Hasbro produces ninety-five million cans, in twenty-one colors, sold in seventy-five countries around the world.

Leadership lesson from Play-Doh: Success is a result of intentionally _____ and _____ shapes you.

Play-Doh people have determined to be molded in positive ways that are essential to their development.

Play-Doh is durable. Think about it — you can squeeze it, mash it, squash it, pull it, roll it, or cut it, and it remains Play-Doh. Why? Because of its ingredients. Basically, Play-Doh is a combination of water, starch, salt, lubricant, and preservative. There are three ingredients that you must possess to be consistently mentored.

The first ingredient is _____.

Growing leaders must admit that they do not have all the answers. They must honestly see their need for more knowledge. Growing leaders must know their capabilities and weaknesses. If you cannot recognize your own deficiency, you will never submit yourself to be mentored. For improvement to take place, you must admit the need to improve, and that requires a humble spirit.

_____ often prevents average leaders from becoming great ones.

"The more one learns, the more one understands his ignorance."

— Louis L'Amour

The second ingredient is _____.

Teachability is the _____
_____.

*"_____ and _____
are indispensable to each other."*

— J.F.K.

The third ingredient is _____.

You might assume that humility combined with teachability produces mentorability. You would be mistaken, because those two ingredients do not automatically instill the desire to improve in a certain area.

Winston Churchill said, "The most important thing about education is appetite."

For 50 years I have been a Play-Doh person. The books I have read, the CDs I have listened to, the experiences I have encountered and the people who have molded me, all have one thing in common... they left their _____ !

3. _____

Leadership lesson from the Rocking Horse: _____ is not necessarily _____.

Efficiency is graded on _____, not _____.

Efficiency is being able to achieve a desired result without wasted _____, _____, or _____.

It is not concerned so much with the _____ of work as it is with the _____ of work.

Four Types of Inefficient "Rocking Horses"

1. The _____

Dead horses can describe people, departments, and programs — anything that has outgrown its usefulness or is not contributing to the overall forward momentum. Organizations often perpetuate ineffective programs without questioning if there's a

better way to get greater results. Perpetual programs often exist because they met a need twenty years ago.

The tribal wisdom of the Dakota Indians, passed on from one generation to the next, says that when you discover you are riding a dead horse, the best strategy is to dismount. However, in modern business, because of the heavy investment factors to be taken into consideration, we often try other strategies, including the following:

- Buying a stronger whip.
- Changing riders.
- Appointing a committee to study the horse.
- Arranging a visit to other sites to see how they ride dead horses.
- Lowering the standards so that dead horses can be included.
- Appointing an intervention team to reanimate the dead horse.
- Reclassifying the dead horse as living-impaired.
- Change the form so that it reads, "This horse is not dead."
- Hire outside contractors to ride the dead horse.
- Harness several dead horses together for increased speed.
- Providing additional funding to increase the horse's performance.

- Do a time management study to see if the lighter riders would improve productivity.
- Declare that a dead horse has lower overhead and therefore performs better.
- Form a quality focus group to find profitable uses for dead horses.
- Rewrite the expected performance requirements for horses.
- Promote the dead horse to a supervisory position.

2. The _____

The Hobby Horse is ridden by people who are preoccupied with their own interests and put them above the company's purpose.

According to the Conference Board, the world's preeminent business membership and research organization,

_____ out of _____ employees do not feel motivated to support their employer's business objectives.

3. The _____

This person is prototypical bureaucrat. His personal agenda supersedes the company purpose. In fact, he believes the company exists to meet his needs, not that he was hired to meet the company's needs. While this attitude exists at every level, it is most unsuitable in leadership.

High-horse riders typically have ulterior motives. You can picture that person whose every action is self-serving and motivated by his own agenda. The high-horse rider destroys morale and lacks trust from the team.

4. The _____

This person is a rebel. She lacks direction regarding company purpose, choosing a renegade route instead. The wild horse is called wild because it is not broken or tamed. She despises the rider because the rider tries to steer her to a destination not of her own choosing. People who cannot take direction are wild horses who have little value within a team.

Jacques Rousseau was a Swiss philosopher whose political ideas influenced the French Revolution. He used a great example from the Bible to illustrate how most inefficient people respond. He said:

Remember the parable of talents [coins] — the story of the three servants who had received talents, five, two and one respectively? When their master returned they all gave account of their stewardship. The first two had doubled their capital. Each of them said so in sixteen words, and their work was pronounced, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” The third servant had accomplished absolutely nothing, but his report took forty-three words, three times as long as each of the other two reports. Don’t be like servant number three. Make good! Don’t explain your failure! Do the thing you are expected to do! Then you won’t have to explain why you didn’t, couldn’t, wouldn’t, or shouldn’t. Making good required no explanation. Failure required forty-three words.

Conclusion:

You've probably seen it on a T-shirt or a bumper sticker: "He who dies with the most toys wins." It's cute but false. The real truth about toys is this: when you live out the lessons these toys teach, you can win today.

"Do you remember your parents advice about your toys?"

(1) _____

Toys are only fun if they are used. Likewise, the principles they teach are of value only when you implement them.

(2) _____

When you were in kindergarten, one of the greatest compliments you could receive was that you "worked and played well with others." These kind words depended mostly upon whether or not you shared your toys.

(3) _____

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Answers:

LEGO Bricks; Relationships; Building Begins With Connecting; Interdependent; Success; Bottom Up; Synergy; Greater Sum; Accident; The; With; Vertical; Horizontal; Competition; Cooperation; Power; Partnerships; Image; Consensus; Apart; Together; Position; Relationships; Play-Doh; Choosing Who; What; Humility; Pride; Teachability; Willingness To Learn; Leadership; Learning; Desire; Fingerprints On My Life; Rocking Horse; Activity; Accomplishment; Progress; Action; Time; Energy; Resources; Act; Results; Dead Horse; Hobby Horse; Two; Three; High Horse; Wild Horse; Use Them; Share Them; Put Them Away