7-3-20 MASTER: Making the Right Leader Responsible

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

leader, sally, bob, team, fix, ownership, work, responsible, responsibility, expectations, owns, bar, understand, attitude, senior leader, establish, happen, fact, sales, gray

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Hi, everyone, welcome to another episode of legendary leaders. You know, one of the things that you probably have realized by now, that's really important to me is being fair, especially as a leader. I think that it's critically important that we are fair to everyone that works for us and with us. And when I think about being fair, it's it's really being clear about our expectations. We have a responsibility as leaders to define what good looks like and what success looks like. If we have high performers that we have hired, or that we've developed, they are high performers because they understand what the bar is, and therefore they seek to exceed it. The only way that they can exceed the bar, or over deliver is to know what the bar looks like. So as leaders, we are expected to establish that. Now the reason that I'm talking about being fair though, is that I have seen in my career leaders who don't under on how to set the bar and then how to do it consistently across everyone,

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you know, high performers

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typically asked Where is the bar,

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but other people don't.

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And if you haven't been in a business environment to understand

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the fact that we have to establish the bar, no matter if someone asks or not,

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then that can be missed.

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Luckily, I've been fortunate enough to work for the largest retailer in the world. I did that for almost 12 years. That was my corporate career. And naturally, when you work for a large organization, you get to learn, you know how to put a team together, how to structure your business, and which teams matter and what headcount looks like and how to manage a p&l, how to effectively lead, you learn a lot of different pieces. And so I'm very fortunate for that event. On that experience that has really helped me become who I am today, has given me a lot of information to really teach leadership. on a lot of levels, but what I want to focus on today is making the right leader responsible. Because again, it goes back to establishing the bar. We own making sure

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that

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someone's positioned and our company is an open book test. They shouldn't have to guess or wonder what success looks like or what good looks like. Or if they're exceeding, typically what happens to most people who think that they're doing a good job, but in reality, they're not. It's because they don't understand where the bar is. And that either

falls on me as their leader or on them because I've defined it and they're simply not opening their eyes and being willing to understand what the expectations are. Okay? But as leaders, our responsibility is to eliminate that gray, we have to be abundantly clear that we've done our part, and then we can go forward and address the other piece. But what happens when as a leader, we haven't established a bar, we haven't Establish ownership and roles of responsibilities. Okay, what happens to them? Well, I have seen it.

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I've watched it happen with different clients and

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I've seen it happen on different levels. It is a very tough situation. Only walk you through why that is and why it's really important that you establish who is responsible for what are your organization, okay, we eliminate the gray. Ultimately what will happen and what has happened is, you know, the company will come together. And usually what it is, is the performance isn't where the senior leader doesn't matter what level they are, but the senior leader is not pleased with results. You pick it, you name it, pick a result, sales, okay, let's just use sales as an example. They're not pleased with sales. And so they start asking a lot of questions to the total leadership team as to why sales are down and what's happening and, you know, each each person let's assume there's four people in the room with this leader. Each person person owns a piece of the sales. Each of those four leaders owns a piece. Well through discussions. Let's say that Sally actually owns the ultimate piece that's causing the gap in sales. Okay, but Bob is your overachiever.

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Sally is not.

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So throughout the whole conversation, you've got four leaders that are seeking to understand the problem. They want to solve the problem. They're engaged. But Bob is even more engaged because Bob wants to have this situation resolved. That's his attitude. That's his focus. He's completely committed to the company to the mission, and he wants to exceed expectations. And so when it comes down to the fact that Sally's team needs to fix this piece of the business, she's not speaking up. She's not volunteering, and she's not

even owning the fact that this falls under her umbrella of responsibility.

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What should happen in this scenario?

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The answer to that is that the leader, okay, let's pretend it's me at this point, I, as the leader have to step in and say, Sally, that falls under

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your umbrella of ownership

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that falls within your your area of responsibility. So I'm going to ask you to go forward and put a plan together and come back tomorrow and let us know how your team is going to change the trajectory of this performance. Okay, you don't have to say it like that. You can say whatever way but you get the point I'm trying to make here. I as a leader have to assign responsibility to Sally. Why did they go to Sally because it falls under her responsibility. It's her team, because we've identified that it's Sally's team that's causing the Miss. And I'm not going to dictate to Sally how she fixes it. That's what she's paid to do. Not trying to be a jerk when I say that. That's just the fact that sound job. So Sally is responsible for going and fixing it. But what will happen if I don't assign it to Sally, if I don't step up and be the leader in that conversation? What happens and what I've seen happen is that your overachiever, Bob will step up and raise his hand and say, Okay, well, you know, let me take a stab at it. Let me work on it, I think that I can fix it.

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Okay.

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And so then the leader in this case, me, I would say, okay, because ultimately in those

situations, most people don't care who fixes it as long as it gets fixed. I'm going to challenge you not to have that attitude. Okay, because typically, again, we're going through basic examples, what will happen is Bob is going to go forward, and he's going to try to fix it.

But can he?

The answer is ultimately, no. The reason

why he can't fix it is because his team is responsible for that task. So he has no ownership of the function that he's trying to achieve. proof, which means what it means that he would then have to go and through influence alone, try to encourage and get buy in from Sally's team. Well, that's not his job. And that's not going to work. So, so him trying to influence Sally's team's not gonna work him trying to take his team and fix what Sally owns isn't going to work. He's not going to have enough bandwidth for that.

Right? So

he doesn't have the tools, probably all of the knowledge or the resources to be able to fix the problem. So then what happens when we come back the next day? Okay. And Bob has presented a plan. And the plan in general really works, right. He's got the maybe the right ideas. It sounds like it might work. He probably doesn't have all the facts, but it's something and so I'm going to let him try it. When we come back next week, and the problem is not fixed. What I've seen happen in that situation is that then people that especially the senior leader gets mad at Bob, because Bob didn't fix it. And now everyone's frustrated with Bob and, and Bob gets blamed for the failure. And Sally just sits there and hangs out. That doesn't work. That doesn't work on a multitude of levels. Number one, Sally has a job, she's paid to do it, she should have owned it, she should have

stepped up, she should have grabbed it. And she should have said, This is mine. If you have leaders on your team, that don't step up and do that, they don't need to be on your team. They're not going to propel you forward. They're not going to take ownership of their business,

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and they're not going to be a part of your future.

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Because they're not trying to create your future. You need to keep that in mind. Okay, Sally should be an owner and Sally wasn't. So Sally wouldn't get to stay on my team. Okay. She should be punished for the lack of execution. The lack of follow up so to speak punished, right? I'm speaking hypothetically, that's a strong word, but she should be responsible. Okay, let's move to Bob Bob shouldn't feel obligated to step up and close the gap, especially one that he cannot actually fix. Right? But because he is that type of leader that you do want on your team that has ownership drive, and and the attitude of serving your customer at the highest level, you you actually will damage Bob, if you allow him to take over that project. Because you have set him up for failure as his leader. And then ultimately, when it sails again, he will be quote unquote punished. He will be addressed. He will be looked down upon everyone will be frustrated with Bob, because he didn't fix a problem that he couldn't have ever fixed in the first place. So then Bob starts to feel defeated, and then Bob will become less likely to volunteer. His attitude his mentality is going to change. We don't want to do Bob's the type of employee we want. So then what do we do? Well, we as a leader have to be responsible. We have to set expectations with our team, that they come into meetings, they know their role. And they understand that when things are broken, if it's identified through a discussion or otherwise, that they step up to the plate, accept responsibility and take it. They don't wait for someone else to take over something that they shouldn't. Okay? Our job as a leader is if we have defined that and yet still someone isn't stepping up, then we have to be abundantly clear about who we expect should own it. It has to be very clear, we cannot leave it gray we cannot be ambiguous and we cannot let it be a free for all. It needs to fall under the team that's responsible for

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the gap.

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Plain and simple. Okay, so we have two roles to play there. Number one clue to font ownership, clearly defined expectations that we have clearly To find the bar for success, right? Define explain open book test, number one. Number two set very clear expectations in that discussion that if Sally didn't step up, we then as a leader step in and assign Sally with the role. All right. And then if Sally has a pattern of behavior like that of not stepping up and owning her piece of the business, then respectfully Sally doesn't get to stay on my team. She's that easy. I mean, it's not easy. Let me let me clarify that. It is that clear. The hard work comes after that, but it's still the work that has to be done. Okay, so I want you to be thinking about what I've just shared with you,

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that we have to make the right leader responsible.

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Then we have to assign ownership and responsibility out of the gate, and then continue to assign it. When we run into additional problems when there's some gray, maybe two teams could technically own it, then you have to make the decision but ultimately is Still comes to us as the leader. People want to volunteer, that's great, but we have to make sure that whoever is going to grab the project and own it can be successful and has the ability to deliver such that then we don't damage that person's Outlook or their willingness or their drive to grab projects in the future.

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We are responsible for that as leaders.

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Okay, so think about that. reflect back on if you've ever been in a situation like that, think about how it turned out. Think about how you can prevent this in the future. If you haven't had those clarifying conversations. My challenge for you is to go have them now with your team. And then I want you to be proactive in your discussions with your team as you run into additional problems or gaps in order to be able to to head this off. prevent this from happening within your team.

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Okay, it will ensure success.

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It will ensure the right ownership

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it will make everyone feel equally valued and they will feel as though you are Leading in a fair manner and that's really important

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as far as building and developing trust,

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right?

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Go and be legendary.