

12-18-20 Does Your Language Reflect Inclusivity?

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Hey, everyone, welcome to another episode of legendary leaders. Today, your challenge is to look within yourself and ask yourself, does your language show inclusivity? Now, we say all the time that were inclusive, right, like, that's, that's the big thing right now say that we're inclusive. But are you really, and I don't want to get into great debate here, and I'm not going to go down that pathway. So don't misunderstand where I'm going. You can say that you're inclusive all day. But if the words you use are inclusive, it's going to be very hard for you to convince other people that you truly are an inclusive leader. So, I will tell you that, for example, I work hard to ensure that my son feels comfortable in the kitchen, and doing house chores, in the same way that my daughter's feel comfortable doing yard work. And all of those things that are defined either as more of a quote unquote guys job, and then quite a bit more of what a girl's job would be right now, I know that over the years that has changed, but there's still some of that, right. And you can still see kids sort of picking on each other Oh, you like to cook What's wrong with you, or you like to dance? That's weird, right? in some capacity, no matter how much we teach, the world is going to influence our children. And they're going to be told that something isn't the way that you allowed it to be or have encouraged it to be. Right. also focus on things like I don't want to say things at all, like, that's what girls do, or Don't be such a girl, right? Like, number one, being a girl is a negative thing, because we know that it isn't. But number two, there's nothing that's called being a girl or being a boy, it's just being who you are. I want all of my children to learn all that they can. And I want to them to enjoy all they can enjoy and be supported for who they are and who they're becoming. Period, right period. And if you have kids or nieces and nephews, no doubt, you feel the same way. You just want them to feel so much love. You want them to be who they are. And you want to embrace the

person that they're becoming, whoever that is, right? That's just how we love our children. But let me flip this on you a little bit our businesses and the people within them sort of the same. Right? Now stick with me here. We want our employees to grow and learn, right? We want them to feel empowered, we want them to be successful and overcome challenges. And we want them to take themselves to the next level. We want them to be outstanding. So how do we shape them and encourage them? In the same way we are so purposeful, about shaping our kids or our nieces or nephews or how we would envision envisioning Hello, how we would envision shaping younger kids like try that. That's going to be three attempts. Right? If you don't have kids, that's okay. But no doubt you have in your mind how you would influence and shape a younger generation. Right? If you don't have the opportunity to do that through family. No doubt you have an idea of how you would do it. And that's what I'm trying to get you to draw on right now. That idea. Okay. So I'm gonna dive into another Harvard Business Review. This is another one, because it struck me, right. I mean, I just walk you through how I'm trying to develop my kids. And, and it definitely reflects on how I try to develop the people that work for me and with me and within the company and the businesses that I have, right. Noah Zanden and Lisa Shallot tackled this idea of making sure your language shows that you're inclusive, right, you're using inclusive language, you're just saying you're inclusive. You show it through the words that you use. And so when I read the article, it just struck me as to how many times I've heard leaders around me say things that they were recommending.



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Right, that that we actually should avoid using so said differently. I've heard leaders say all these crazy things, that and you're like, You're not supposed to say that. Like you, you say you're inclusive. But why are you saying This ain't no No, no. train wreck train wrecks happening? What are you doing? Right? And so I want to dive into to these examples. And let's just, I want to throw them out there. Hopefully you're not doing these things. And if you are, hey, look, cool thing about it is that now you're aware, you get to change it, which is really awesome. But minimally, you're going to see these examples that I give you, you're going to see them and you're going to remember other people that have done this and you're like holy crap. Yeah, that's why I felt uncomfortable. I want to arm you with these. Because if we're more aware of the language that we're using, we can be more inclusive. And we all want to be more inclusive, we should all want that. Okay, so let me dive into a couple of these examples that Noah and Lisa gave in their in their article. And of course, as always, I'll throw my spin on it and give you a little feedback from my wife. And then I'm going to challenge you to as always look within yourself and see how you can be better at being inclusive. So let's go ahead, let me give you some examples. An example is a leader that constantly says, I mean, as a basic one, no way is that leader inclusive. I did this, I did that I accomplished this, I pushed the team, I came up with a

deadline, that was my idea. No one wants to work for someone who takes credit for everything. Right. Now, let's say that they did come up with the idea. Fine, but it's a team effort. And maybe they came up with the idea, but the results and the execution happened through the team. So if we're always a hearing, I am always saying I imagine how often that person is going to take credit for ideas that weren't even, there's just going to happen, because they're so used to saying that they did it, they're just gonna keep thinking that they did it even if they didn't. Well, again, that's not inclusive, and it doesn't create a team environment. And so what happens is, every person now is out for themselves. Because if the leader isn't going to be inclusive, and the leader isn't going to give credit, where it's due, then everyone feels as though they're gonna have to prove their worth, and they're gonna have to show it on their own. Which means no one's going to work together as a team. It's gonna be every person out there proving their own individual worth. It's not inclusive, dangerous. Another one I mentioned was just using the simple word of manpower. Right, instead of team power. Great example, it took a lot of manpower to accomplish that, right. Like, that's, that's where you hear it in your corporate environment primarily? Well, I'm not a man. Right. And many of you aren't men either. And so that's not necessarily inclusive. Now, a gap that I have, in my language that I have to work on regularly, is I say, guys all the time. Hey, guys, come on. Hey, guys, let's get this done. Hey, it's guys. And oh, it's so tough. In the south. I think everyone just calls Hey, guys, for everybody. It's just sort of this inclusive term from the southwest not inclusive. It's not. And I have to catch myself. Guys is a term that I use constantly to equal to mean team or people or group or, you know, everyone. But the reality is that the term isn't inclusive, even if I made it to be it's not. And so that's a personal struggle that I have to overcome every day. And when I catch myself, I'm like, oh, sorry, that is not what I meant. Guys is not inclusive. I'll even say it. I will say it purposely. I didn't mean to say that word. I mean, all of you or y'all or whatever. And I'll correct myself on purpose. So everyone sees that's a habit that I'm trying to break and recreate. Now, another one that the article mentioned was when people say, You're too young to remember this on I have heard this one a lot in my career, I've heard it recently. It will shut you down. Why would you want to keep listening? If you know you're, you can't relate to it. Right? Like, you're not you're gonna be, you know, too young to remember this one. Okay, well, I'm tuning out because obviously, you just told me, it doesn't matter. I'm not going to understand it. Right? It's offensive, you just assume that I will understand something. Right? Be careful about that. I think about other comments when people say, your husband or your wife, instead of saying your partner, to be fully inclusive, don't make assumptions. Right. And just because they're in a committed relationship doesn't mean they're actually married, maybe they don't want to be and they just want to partner. And I have to be careful about that. I try to be cognizant of it. And so I work to say, your partner as much as possible, because I want to include everyone, everyone is valuable, every relationship is valuable. Everyone deserves to be heard and feel included. I want every person on my team to feel as though they're part of the team.

And my words have to match that. So we also have to be careful again, I said marriage status, maybe they're not married, a partner should cover all of that. But don't make assumptions about having children. Maybe they do, maybe they don't. Anything that is said in a way that wouldn't include everyone will alienate someone. That's the reality. And so we've talked about this before, whenever we're talking about doing marketing, right, we talked about the fact that when we're doing marketing, we absolutely want to repel those customers, right, that audience that we don't want, we want to repel those individuals. We only want to get our target audience. And so we're purposeful in the way that we repel the wrong people. And that's fine. When it's a marketing, right, and you're trying to generate sales, that is a perfectly fine strategy and tactic. But when you're leading a team of amazing human beings, right, amazing individuals who are bringing so much to your team, you absolutely want in need everyone to feel valued and included and part of the team. Not just because you're a good leader, but because you're a good person. And because you care about them, and you want them to know that they're valued. And so the challenge for you today is this. What words do you use it could potentially make others feel like an outsider, unintentionally, but happens nonetheless? What works? And then how are you going to work on adjusting that to be more inclusive? What steps what actions are you going to take starting today? To change your vocabulary to change the language that you use so that every person on your team feels valuable and feel seen and feels hurt? That's your challenge. Go and be legendary.