LEADING TRANSFORMATION #66:

CELEBRATIVE LEADERSHIP--PRACTICAL EXPRESSIONS

What are some practical ways in which leaders can express CELEBRATIVE LEADERSHIP?

1. LISTENING: People like to tell their stories. Giving them time to do so with keen interest is motivating to them. It shows care, interest and above all respect. Asking the right questions can make a huge difference. Example: “Tell me all about how you came to make this wonderful discovery. It has revolutionized our company and we are so proud of you.”

2. ORAL COMMUNICATION: This is face to face word of mouth communication. The right choice of words, the tones and the settings in which they are expressed, add strength to messages that we send to audiences. People are greatly impacted by what they hear from others about themselves.

3. WRITTEN COMMUNICATION: A simple note to say, “Thought a lot about you today. So glad to be on the same team with you. I appreciate you.” Love is expressed for many purposes. Showing respect is one. In some situations, “I respect you” carries more force than “I love you.” This is because “love” seems overused and comes across as a cliché. It may raise the question: What exactly does that mean?

4. AUDIO VISUAL COMMUNICATION: This represents technology-mediated audio and/or video communication. Other materials can be added to increase the force of messages transmitted by audio visual technologies. Music, artwork, environmental settings can all be used to add strength to messages in ways that are not possible with regular face to face oral communication.

5. PHYSICAL TOUCH: Mother Theresa modeled the power of touch. She knew how much acceptance she released into a life by touching it gently and in godly love. Looking people straight in the eye with undivided attention sends a powerful message of affirmation and care. People can see the love in your soul through your eyes. However, physical touch must be appropriate to the cultural norms and personal preferences of audiences.

6. EVENTS: Holding special events to honor people for specific achievements provides great encouragement and motivation. We usually take time to do this when holding memorial events for people who have died. I once asked an elder: “What would happen if people were celebrated this way whilst they are alive and well” She jokingly replied: “They will not die!” Events that are well organized for honoring people can be life-giving.

7. TIME: Leadership by Presence remains one of the most powerful tools of Transforming Leadership. Everyone knows how busy top leaders are. Leaders have smart ways of excusing themselves from spending adequate time with followers. One them is the claim that they have mastered spending quality instead of quantity time with people. It is true that quantity time is not always quality; but quality time is always quantity.

All the above connections carry more force if they are at the SOUL-TO-SOUL level. For this to happen, it is important for leaders to destroy their “power-icons” that can potentially create “class distances.” Power-icons include titles, appearances, and images of privileges that are limited to a few. Engaging simply as colleagues, neighbors, or friends can be both simple and powerful.

Take time to Celebrate not only achievements but also the very lives of team members; not only as the leader but also at the soul-to-soul level as a fellow human, neighbor, colleague or friend.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. In which of the expressions of Celebrative Leadership are you doing well?

2. What specific actions do you need to take in order to excel in expressing Celebrative Leadership?