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Enlightened Leadership

Five powerful principles of true leadership!

by **James Ray**

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There has never been a more prominent time for true leaders to emerge. Now more than ever before, true leadership, what we will refer to as "Enlightened Leadership", is necessary in the network marketing industry. After years of working with a variety of the largest and most successful companies in the world, I have found that true leadership is often like the abominable snow man…its footprints are everywhere but **it is nowhere** to be found!

Let me begin by saying that my purpose in this article is not to necessarily make you feel good – in fact I am fully aware that some of the things I suggest may even ruffle the feathers of many of my personal clients.

> ***My purpose is to make you think; and hopefully challenge you to grow.***

If you are up to the challenge, then I commend you, for you already know the integral principle of growth that is imperative for your success as a leader.

Principle #1: Enlightened Leaders surround themselves with diversity of thought. They value input and they act upon it.

I was speaking to a business partner of mine recently on the way to the airport and I made the observation that most leaders in the network

marketing industry are more concerned with building an empire than they are building a business.

While corporate America has many downsides one thing is universally true: A Howard Schultz (Starbucks CEO – I highly recommend reading "Pour Your Heart into It) surrounds himself with a diversity of thinkers… often called a board of directors. These directors provide input into the decision making process. Savvy leaders go one step beyond having a board:

1. ***The Enlightened Leader regularly solicits input and opinions from their organization (read downline).***

2. ***The Enlightened Leader encourages different opinions and ideas versus stroking their ego with individuals who always tell them they are wonderful and right (this is the toughest one).***

All too often I have witnessed the network marketing monarch who believes that all decisions must be made at the top (namely by themselves), that no one can teach my people except our highest company pin levels (usually myself and the people I hand pick), and we don't need outside help (because we know it all).

This is the culprit of a small ego attempting to feel large and is absolutely deadly to the growth of your organization. Oh yes, this approach will bring you success to a point, and maybe it has worked to a degree in the past, but this approach died centuries ago in America with Democracy and nothing is more certain than the fact that it is a dying approach to building your business in this millennium. By the way, participation and

commitment goes beyond even Democracy. Having a say in matters, and being truly valued, is much more than having a vote.

While I do agree that it's the Enlightened Leaders role to provide duplicable systems and processes – it is not their role to control thought (Hitler did this successfully…for a time). This approach is self-serving and limits each team member's ability to be unique and grow.

> ***People want and need to be led…truly led. The Enlightened leader builds a following out of commitment versus compliance.***

It is almost certain that at this juncture, regardless of your product – you do not own your market. Now, let that sink in for a moment. If you have read this far and are not ruffled yet…I promised to make you think…get ready.

Principle #2: Market leadership and success is NOT about your product!

WOW! Now this is a controversial one isn't it?

> ***Here's the bottom-line: chances are great that you do not own your market.***

Time after time I hear the stories, "We have hired the best scientists in the world to research and develop our product – there is nothing like this on the market – we have spared no expense – we are the only company so committed to quality that we gave our developers an open checkbook." Sound familiar? I could go on and on but the cold hard facts are that **everyone** is saying this. If you have had you finger on the pulse of the marketplace to any degree you know this is true.

Now you might say, "OK James, but it *really is* true about my products! They really are the best." And maybe it is true for your product, but the

point that you and I must realize is that if we are hearing this story in a variety of places—so is our public and our prospects. Because I have the luxury of working with a variety of companies in the industry (as well as corporate America), I can tell you of countless times I have heard the exact same story (change a word here or there) in different companies.

This is true for your “competitor” in network marketing as well as non-network marketing. I recently spoke for a health and nutrition supplement company that was non-network marketing and I could have sworn I was hearing the same story as I had heard countless times in the networking industry.

Is it any wonder that your prospects are often skeptical?

Do you have a quality product – you better have! Do you believe in your product – it is a must! But ultimately it is not about the product.

> ***True leaders understand that their success does not come from the product it comes from their people.***

I’ve heard the owner of a large and successful corporation quoted frequently as saying, “It’s not about the people it is about the product.” This is a grave oversight and sends a message to all members that, “our product is so good that it sells itself – I don’t need you and you don’t need the people in your downline.”

Now, while I strongly believe that this leader does not intend to propagate this message, this philosophy cannot help but create a culture that does not truly value each individual and allow them to fully actualize their potential.

The shocking reality is that you don’t even need a great product to succeed. Do you think McDonalds has the best hamburgers available? No way! And yet I bet if you are a parent you have been there frequently. Why? McDonalds is world renowned for its “University” in which it builds identity, pride, values, duplicable systems and (you guessed it) …people.

Your kids don't buy paper-thin no meat hamburgers – they buy a "happy meal" – a fun experience in a fun environment.

Do you think that Southwest Airlines is the best airlines in the industry? Once again, no way! Flying Southwest is like being in a cattle car; and if you're hungry you're in trouble because they don't even serve paper-thin hamburgers—ever! Yet Southwest has a 60% market share of all the markets they serve non-stop. Why? Competitive prices and a unique experience once again provided by …the people (numerous times I've flown Southwest and heard hilarious jokes being told over the PA system as well as being served by flight attendants that were obviously having **fun**).

Now you might be thinking, "What does that have to do with me and my network marketing organization?" The answer is everything.

> ***One of my fundamental findings in life is that truth is timeless and universal.***

In my learning system, The Science of Success, I discuss the seven laws that govern our universe and likewise our success. One of those laws is the Law of Cause and Effect. This law basically states that "like causes produce like effects." In other words, the same principles that work for Ray Kroc and McDonalds, Herb Kelleher and Southwest Airlines, if applied to your business will work for you. In fact, it's a must.

You don't need a great product in today's market to succeed.

> ***You need a "good product" and GREAT people.***

Time and time again I have witnessed individuals do incredibly well with a "good" product. It was their personal greatness that caused them to consistently win. Likewise, I have seen individuals with a great product fail because of their unwillingness to pursue their own greatness.

Principle #3: Enlightened Leadership is about people.

There are three types of assets that you have in your network marketing business:

1. Physical (read product and tools)
2. Financial
3. Human

While all three are important, the true leader puts primary emphasis on asset number three.

> ***Common sense tells us that the human asset should be primary since this asset determines what to do with the other two.***

Unfortunately, this is common sense that's not often commonly practiced.

Your business is a direct reflection of you. If your business is growing and expanding it's absolutely certain that you are growing and expanding… likewise your people. I have personally witnessed a team of Diamonds take their organization, and conference attendance, from under 4000 to over 12,000 in less than a year. This amazing phenomenon is a direct reflection of their focus and commitment to encourage their people to grow.

> ***"Your business will grow in direct proportion to your own growth."***

It takes a bigger person to make $100,000 per year than it does to make $10,000 per year. It takes a bigger person to make $100,000 per month than it does to make $100,000 per year. It takes a bigger leader to grow an organization of 12,000 than an organization of 4,000.

Notice I never said a "better" person – rather a bigger person. The Enlightened Leader knows that not one of us is "better" than any other— we've all been given the same gifts and potential from our Creator. But it

does take a bigger person and a bigger leader – one who is totally committed to their own growth and to the personal growth of every individual in their organization.

> ***As an Enlightened Leader your prime objective must be to create an environment in which people can know themselves.***

Realize that while your product and financials are important, ultimately your success lies in the people you attract, recruit, and build. The qualities of: allowing people to fully actualize; to understand and utilize their unique abilities and talents; to encourage them to continually invest in themselves and grow; to listen to their ideas and value their input are all the name of the game to the Enlightened Leader.

You cannot lead someone to places you yourself have not been. You cannot give what you don't have. In other words, these values and this behavior must begin and live in you. And know – you will be constantly observed and tested. Your actions will speak much louder than your words. You must talk the talk and walk the walk.

Principle #4: All people must be treated like volunteers.

With a multitude of companies providing the same service as you provide in today's market, your team members will come and stick for something more than just a potential paycheck. They will come and stay for something more than just the product and programs.

You and I both know that your greatest challenge is getting people to stick during the disappointments. To stay committed when the going gets tough. Hence if we're operating out of a little ego that needs to be stroked, many won't have the time or the desire to play that game. Often they have "been there and done that" in other times in other environments.

Your people can leave at any time. Even if they have a big paycheck and a big downline. Many a disgruntled leader has had personal experience or heard the story of entire downlines chasing the next best opportunity. Is there a sure-fire way to stop this? No. But you can decrease the likelihood if you treat people with respect instead of trying to "get respect". If you realize that they are with you and your team on a voluntary basis. You begin to understand that you actually need them more than they need you. You are responsible to them versus the contrary.

Principle #5: Leadership is a gift and is rooted in service.

True leadership is an awesome gift. Think about how fortunate you are to have the people in your organization (regardless of how large or small) looking to you for guidance – in many ways placing their future in your hands. Be constantly grateful for this gift – never exploit it and never take it for granted.

> ***"Service is the rent we pay for the privilege of leadership."***

The gospel writer Luke defined leadership as, "One who serves". All too often the small ego takes over (even in the best of us) and begins to feel a need for self-importance. When this occurs we get the equation backwards and create the monarch mentality that says, "My loyal followers are here to edify me, to hold me in the highest regard, to serve me."

Least you misunderstand…I know the value of edifying your upline – if this isn't done they can never help you when you need it (and you **will** need it).

As an Enlightened Leader you must constantly remind yourself that the edification you receive is a smart business move on the part of your downline – for the sole reason that you can help them when they need it. Not for your ego purposes and not for a false sense of control and one-upmanship.

The greatest and long lasting leaders throughout history have been the servant leaders.

These wise and bold individuals realize that the gift of leadership is only provided to them to the degree that they provide value to their organization.

Consequently, these big hearted and business savvy individuals are constantly asking themselves:

1. How can I provide more opportunities for my people to grow?
2. How can I enroll and enable them in the process of our success?
3. How can I consistently pay the debt I owe them for the privilege of my position?

All great and lasting leaders are great givers.

The world is crying for leadership…true leadership. Not the self-serving images of the past, but rather the service centered approaches that will guarantee long-term success.

In closing, I spoke to a new distributor at a conference recently and when I asked him why he had gotten in the business he responded, “Because I know a lot of people who are making serious money and I wanted a piece of the action.” I smiled and thought, “You’re not going to make it.”

Henry Ford told us years ago that, “Wealth when sought after directly will never be achieved…it only comes as a by-product of providing useful service.”

Enlightened Leadership is about taking the focus off of us and focusing on the service of others.

Service is the rent we pay for the privilege of leadership. Choose to serve and I promise your results will follow.

James Ray is a principal expert in the science of success and the power of The Entrepreneurial Mindset®. He has devoted almost two decades to studying success factors, and gives audiences these advanced strategies for accelerating results in the areas of sales, service, personal achievement, and team performance. James shares the importance of an entrepreneurial mindset to lasting success in today's market.

After achieving top recognition at AT&T for sales, management and leading their national telemarketing operations, James moved on as a master trainer with the AT&T School of Business and to establish a four year alliance with the Stephen Covey Leadership Institute.

James has since established his own consulting practice and is the developer of The Science of Success, a series of easy-to-learn, proven methods and skills that produce outstanding, consistent results in all areas of life. Companies like Merrill Lynch, Coca Cola, Dow Chemical, AT&T, Verizon, IBM, Acura, Boeing Aircraft, RE/MAX and numerous others have profited from and embraced James' unique message and methods.

In addition to the production and development of his products, personal coaching and management of his own business enterprise, Mr. Ray conducts more than 75 days of keynote presentations, corporate training, and public seminars over the course of the year. James was recently awarded the coveted CSP designation, the highest earned honor in the speaking profession. Less than 8% of the professional speakers and authors in the world have received this honor. The secret to Mr. Ray's success is his ability to take the seemingly complex and break it into manageable, understandable and memorable strategies for improvement.

James and his company, James Ray International, are committed to helping individuals and organizations who want to ignite the entrepreneurial spirit and accelerate their business growth.

James is the author of *The Science of Success*. He is a leading resource to individuals and organizations who want to ignite the Entrepreneurial Mindset® and accelerate their business growth. You can find out more about his speaking, seminars, and success tools at http://www.JamesRay.com Phone: 760-476-9077, Fax: 760-476-9074.