

KNOW, SHOW, GROW

Three basic steps for being a world-class leader

Intro:

These three steps are basic in theory. However, the application of them requires diligence and intentionality. The leader who makes these three steps their routine will discover a new level of effectiveness and joy as they attempt to disciple others.

STEP ONE: “KNOW”

The first step for any leader is to get to know the people in your influence. Many leaders make the mistake of treating this step lightly and moving right past it. WHOA! Slow down! How can you lead somebody you don't even know? Do you know the people in your group? What are their names? What is their family like? Where do they go to school/work? What do they like or dislike? Why do they come to your small group or church? Where are they with God? The list could go on and on. The fact of the matter is that knowing the people in your group does two things: First, it allows them to know that you value them as a person. Second, it helps you understand how to lead them more effectively. This is the first step, and it is an ongoing process. A leader who skips this step or treats it lightly will most likely feel distant from and ineffective with their group. Have you been a leader for a while, but still feel like you don't know your students very well? It's not too late! Get to know 'em!

Once you have given a strong effort in **Step One**, it's time to move to **Step Two**...

STEP TWO: “SHOW”

An effective leader intentionally finds ways to show the people in their group that they care. How do you do that? Try some of these: Encouraging words, e-mails, cards, going to watch their games or performances, plan an activity with your group, etc. There are lots of ways to show you care! The key is to do something (outside of just meeting with them at small group time) that shows you have an interest in their lives. You will find that an intentional effort in this area will begin to reap some major rewards. You will feel more connected with them, they will be more comfortable sharing personal things with you, and you will notice that your discussions are better. Don't fall into the trap of thinking this is stuff that leaders do “above and beyond the call of duty.” It is a main focus of any effective leader. Do you care about them? Show 'em!

Now that you have given much of your focus and effort to **Steps One** and **Two**, you can start to work on **Step Three**...

STEP THREE: “GROW”

It's why you do what you do...right? You want to see the people in your influence grow in their relationship with God. How do you do that? Most of us tend to feel inadequate when we begin to think about “discipling” somebody. What if I say the wrong thing? What if I make a mistake? What if I don't know an answer to their question? Those questions and the recognition of our own personal inconsistencies can leave us paralyzed as leaders. Instead of carrying all the weight on your shoulders, think of ways to offload some of the pressure. Imagine yourself as a traffic cop for the individuals in your group. You are trying to steer them all in the right direction. What are some opportunities out there from which your students could benefit? Discipleship tools from the Next Chapter bookstore, weekend worship attendance, church trips and activities, counselors, Christian radio, Bible reading, concerts, web sites, ministry opportunities...the list is endless. There are enough good opportunities out there. An effective small group leader is good at being aware of what is available and pointing the people in their group toward those growth opportunities. The question to ask is “What would be a good next step for this person?” Be looking for the opportunity to arise. Yes, you may have to be the one to create the opportunity sometimes. But not always...and that's a big relief. Christianity is a team sport. Together we can grow 'em!

A FINAL THOUGHT

These three steps cover the basics of effective leadership when it comes to helping the people in your influence experience spiritual growth. If you are the kind of person that really wants to see others grow (that is probably why you do what you do), then you most likely get frustrated and/or discouraged when you don't see the growth you want to. Just remember two things: First, every person grows at their own rate. Second, you can't change a heart. Only God can do that! If you do your best to know, show, and grow then you can stand with your head held high knowing that you have done your best to sow into the lives of your group members.