

# BE THE BEST

Do you want to be a top project manager?  
Then be the most effective leader.

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**A**re you the best at your craft as a project or program manager? At being a leader? To consistently build the best products, provide the best services and create the best teams, you must think and behave with the mindset that you're the best at what you do.

Here is a starter list of tenets that top practitioners embrace. My experience is that many folks in leadership positions do not follow all of these principles, but if you want to consistently be the best leader, these practices are not optional.

- 1. Get out of your office.** Problems are not typically discovered there.
- 2. The stupid question is the one you don't ask.** Listen to your instincts and follow through appropriately.
- 3. Be willing and able to say "no."** Only you can manage your commitments.
- 4. Solve problems rather than blame others.** This is what true leaders do.
- 5. Focus on your top three priorities/problems each day.** Your performance here defines your value, contributions and, ultimately, career.
- 6. Do not allow what others think about you to be more important than what you think about yourself.** Listen for helpful snippets but remain in control of you.
- 7. Readily ask for help and advice from others.** There is a treasure trove of knowledge, wisdom and experience surrounding you.
- 8. Think for yourself.** Routinely challenge tradition, authority, the status quo and your performance—professionally and maturely.
- 9. Don't trust that things are going well.** Stay interested and involved.
- 10. Practice the mindset that it's not about the ability of those around you to lead.** It's about your ability to lead, regardless of what is happening

around you.

**11. Treat others as you would want to be treated.** There is no better rule for all seasons.

**12. Behave as if you own the company.** The "company" is defined by your domain of responsibility.

**13. Never avoid necessary confrontation.** Always give problems the sense of urgency and importance they deserve.

**14. Routinely practice courage and boldness to be an effective leader.** This behavior can help transform you into leading the charge rather than merely following the charge.

**15. Demonstrate integrity in all matters.** Build a reputation of character.

**16. Hope is not a strategy.** Thoughtful action is required.

**17. Survey your clients for feedback.** The client's satisfaction with your performance and project is a far better measure of your effectiveness and success than your own biased assessment.

**18. Do not make it personal or take it personally.** It's all about what's best for the business.

**19. Look forward to, and even welcome, problems.** They are an important part of your job.

**20. Create an effective work culture that helps the team be successful.**

Your team members excel when they know what you expect from them, and what they should expect from one another.

**21. Good business is not about everyone agreeing on an outcome.** It's about achieving the best outcome.

Do these tenets define your mindset as you lead day to day? Are you the best? If not, do you want to be the best? Are you up for embracing these thoughts and behaviors? If others can walk this talk, you can learn to do so as well. **PM**



Neal Whitten, PMP, president of The Neal Whitten Group, is a speaker, trainer, consultant and mentor. His newest book is *The Gift of Wisdom: Lessons for a Lifetime*.