

## **Article: "Inviting Others to Join You" by Nelson Searcy (reprinted with permission from SmartLeadership.com)**

As you dream big dreams, cast big visions and strive for big goals, it becomes necessary to have others join you. You have two choices when it comes to bringing others around you: you can use intimidation or invitation. SmartLeaders invite others to join them by following these five steps: invest, engage, invite, empower and insure. Your ability to successfully invite others to join you may be the biggest measure of your leadership potential.

### **YOU ARE FORMALLY INVITED: INFLUENCE THROUGH INVITATION**

SmartLeaders invite others to join them on their success journey. As you dream big dreams, cast big visions and strive for big goals, it becomes necessary to have others join you. The popular Internet saying is correct, "None of us is as smart as all of us." Therefore, leaders must constantly rely on other people to join them and assist them in accomplishing their goals. Working together everyone achieves more. Andrew Carnegie observed "It marks a big step in your development when you come to realize that other people can help you do a better job than you could do alone."

### **INTIMIDATION VERSUS INVITATION**

You basically have two choices when it comes to bringing others around you: you can use intimidation or invitation. Intimidation relies on power, position and pressure to coerce others to work with you. Intimidation requires leverage in the form of hierarchical position -- "I'm the boss, do as I say" -- or promised reward -- "I control the money and I'll give you more of it if you help me." Intimidation can only be used over the short term because it so lowers the self-esteem of the other person. SmartLeaders know that it's better to have one person working with you than three working for you. Therefore, when they ask others to join them, they rely on invitation rather than intimidation. By inviting others to join them, SmartLeaders promote skill matching, shared success and sustained energy. Inviting others to join you is a strategy that any SmartLeader can use, regardless of position or power. And for SmartLeaders in volunteer organizations, such as churches or many non-profits, invitation is all you've got -- so you had better learn to do it well.

## **EXTENDING THE INVITATION: THE PROCESS**

Extending the invitation for others to join you is scary for many leaders. That's because you place yourself in a position where you will be rejected. Yet the consequences of not asking far outweigh the risk of rejection. Another fear is that someone may say 'yes' to your invitation but fail to deliver the results. Both of these fears -- rejection and poor performance -- can be reduced if you will follow this process of invitation:

1. Invest
2. Engage
3. Invite
4. Empower
5. Insure

By investing and engaging before inviting, you are more likely to assure yourself of a position acceptance of your invitation. After the invitation you empower and insure the person's performance. Here's some further explanation.

### **STEP BY STEP**

**Invest:** SmartLeaders consistently add value to the lives of those around them. Those in whom you have invested are the ones most likely to join you in achieving your goals. Many people have faced rejection because they invited before they invested. If you are not consciously investing in people around you today, you will have difficulty finding people to join you tomorrow. As Harvey Mackay advised, "Dig your well, before you are thirsty." The distinguishing difference between investment and manipulation is that since you do not know who you will need in the future, you must invest in everyone! You invest by depositing help or hope into the lives of others. (See *Dig Your Well Before You Are Thirsty* by Harvey Mackay).

**Engage:** John Maxwell has advised "you must touch a heart before you ask for a hand." When looking for someone to join you in a project, ask "Does what I'm doing engage this person on an emotional level?" If it does not, don't invite them -- this time! Engaging means that you must know the people around you -- know what motivates them enthusiastically, moves them emotionally and maintains them energetically. This means that you have to spend time with others. An invitation that ignites the passions of the other person is sure to be accepted.

**Invite:** When it's finally time for 'the big ASK' make sure you personalize your invitation. Make sure your invitation shares your vision, explains the unique contribution that the other person will make and asks for a specific commitment. General invitations give mediocre results. Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hanson (in their excellent book, *The Aladdin Factor*) have learned that the person extending the invitation must demonstrate seven characteristics if they are to achieve acceptance. To paraphrase: you must know what you want, believe it is worthy, believe you can get it, be passionate about it, take action in the face of fear, learn from experience and be perceived as determined to get it (pp. 51 - 60).

Empower: Once an invitation has been accepted, you must empower the person to do her part. The foundation of empowerment is knowledge, and the leader lets others know everything necessary for making the vision a reality. This includes defining the goal, preparing a plan of action, determining what is needed to make it happen, setting the boundaries and setting the other person free to work. Too often our expectations are not met because we have failed to empower the other person to succeed.

Insure: Many would-be leaders mistakenly think that by empowering another they relinquish the right to follow up. But remember: that which gets measured gets done. At certain intervals you should receive feedback from the other person to insure that the desired results are accomplished. You should also give feedback so that mid-course adjustments in behavior can be made.

### **THE FAVOR OF A REPLY IS REQUESTED**

Your ability to successfully invite others to join you may be the biggest measure of your leadership potential. Choosing to go it alone is a certain formula for failure. Partnering together with like-minded people brings significance and success to everyone involved. Follow this process and you will extend invitations that are communicated persuasively, consented to positively and completed purposefully. And, don't forget this one last piece of the process, when success is obtained, don't forget to celebrate passionately!

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