



LOUIE'S LEADERSHIP LESSONS: Quick Reference:

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INTRODUCTION:	

Our story began three years ago in the rolling hills of Boyd County, Kentucky—a place I never knew existed. It's your typical love story: boy meets girl, boy woos girl with his whimsical ways, girl is swept off her feet, they fall in love and live happily ever after. Except the boy is an adopted pup named Louie, and I am the girl—a leadership expert . . . or so I thought.

If you Google the word leadership you will have over 700 million results in less than half a second. It is overwhelming how much information is out there about leadership. And I am someone who adds to the plethora of material because I write about leadership. You could call me a leadership junkie because I have the experience, I am a voracious reader on the topic, I have worked with a number of leadership gurus and I am a leadership subject matter expert.

Louie's Leadership Lessons contain nuggets of wisdom I've learned over the decades about leadership and the gift of relationships, with a renewed perspective from working with Louie.

I have distilled all Louie has taught me into a leadership model that is easy to remember and easy to follow. When you have a leadership dilemma, ask yourself . . . "What would Louie do?" The answer can be found in the following acronym . . . **LOUIE**.

[LOVE]

Employees can be like Louie. They bring a lot of baggage to the job and may be hard to love at times. One of the most important needs for any human being, if not *the* most important need is the need to feel loved. All of us have this innate desire, yet it is one of the most elusive human needs.

While employees can be hard to love at times (maybe most of the time), you have a choice to make—you can choose to love or be indifferent toward them.

The characteristics of leaders who love:

- They are patient.
- They are kind.
- They honor other people.
- They rejoice whenever truth prevails.
- They are protective.
- They are trustworthy.
- They are always hopeful.
- They persevere through difficult situations.
- They are other-seeking and other-serving.
- They manage their emotions well.

Of course, there are also things that they are not:

- They aren't envious.
- They aren't boastful.
- They aren't prideful.
- They don't keep records of wrongs.

That's what love in action truly looks like. How many characteristics did you check off? **Servant leadership** is any leader who is willing to walk out the characteristics displayed here are humble enough to serve, and strong enough to lead!

It takes strength to love other and to see them as people rather than objects of scorn, mistrust or other negative emotions. Be intentional to love others first.

[OBJECTIVES AND GOALS]

People are not much different from Louie in needing direction and goals. When employees do not know what is expected of them; what their roles and responsibilities are; when they are unclear of the goals and objectives the leader has for the organization and for them, they also respond out of fear and confusion. That behavior is distasteful and then we blame them.

Are you familiar with SMART goals? Blanchard has decided that the most effective way to write a goal statement is to start with the *Specific* and *Trackable* elements first.

S = specific

T = trackable

R = relevant

A = attainable

M = motivating

- The leader should describe the *Specific* goal and when or how often it needs to be accomplished.
- Now the leader needs to make sure the goal is *Trackable*. How will progress or performance be tracked or measured?
- Once the S and T are in place, the leader and team member can review the other three elements—*Relevant*, *Attainable* and *Motivating*.

- The leader has the responsibility for making the goal *Relevant* by ensuring the goal is important and that accomplishing the goal will make a difference to the organization.
- The leader and team member work together to make sure the goal is *Attainable*. It must be realistic and achievable. When a goal is too difficult to accomplish, people may give up—but when it is too easy, people tend to procrastinate.
- Ultimately, each team member determines for themselves if the goal is *Motivating* by considering if it is exciting and meaningful.

People need to know which direction they are going in...Without vision, people perish!

[UNDERSTANDING]

There are issues that hold us back and get in the way of us understanding others and developing great relational skills.

1. We Communicate Differently
2. We Process Differently
3. We All Have Stuff
4. We're At Different Levels of Understanding and Development

1. We Communicate Differently

Albert Mehrabian did a research project on how our messages are communicated. His theory proved that we are 7X more influenced by somebody's body language than we are by the words they use. We are 5X more influenced by the tone of voice someone uses as they are communicating a message than the actual words.

Actual words are only 7% of the message. 93% of our messages communicated nonverbally by our tone of voice and by our body language.

2. We Process Differently

Pam and Bill Farrell wrote a book based on extensive research, called *Men Are Like Waffles; Women Are Like Spaghetti*. We could say it like this: some people compartmentalize, while others process in a free-flowing manner. And it is interesting that in the business world there is a slight twist I will share with you in a minute.

Men process life in boxes.

- If you look at a waffle, it is a collection of boxes and the boxes never touch
- That is typically how a man processes life.
- Life is divided into boxes that have room for one issue and one issue only.
- The first issue of life goes in the first box, the second goes in the second box, and so on. The typical man lives in one box at a time and one box only.
- men are problem solvers by nature. They enter a box, size up the “problem,” and formulate a solution

- In communication, they look for the bottom line and get there as quickly as possible

Women Are like Spaghetti In contrast to men's waffle-like approach, women process life more like a plate of pasta.

- Women consistently sense the need to talk things through. In conversation she can link together the logical, emotional, relational, and spiritual aspects of the issue. The links come to her naturally so the conversation is effortless for her.
- If she is able to connect all the issues together, the answer to the question at hand bubbles to the surface and is readily accepted.
- most men have boxes in their waffle that have no words—just thoughts, no words!
- Not all of the wordless boxes have thoughts, however. There are actually boxes in the average man's waffle that contain no words and no thoughts. These boxes are just as blank as a white sheet of paper. They are EMPTY!
- He will “park” in these boxes to relax.

Now here's the twist...for women in the business world, we have learned to think like a waffle. And we're good at it. But I do like my time with my girlfriends when we can spaghetti all over the place and it is perfectly ok.

3. We All Have Stuff In Our Backgrounds

We all react to things that may have nothing to do with the present situation but more on what is in our long-term memory. This causes conflict because an event occurs which generates a thought, which generates an emotion, which generates a feeling, which generates a behavior. When you run into an issue with someone, and your first inclination is to become upset, you can actually change the thought, feeling and your behavior. Try this method to help you analyze the situation before doing something you may regret.

Think of the acronym **PAWS**:

1. First, in order to not react, stop or **pause**. When you are upset, the blood drains from you brain to go to a certain part of your body you need to fight or flee. It's how we are wired. PAUSE...breathe and let the oxygen get to your brain. This is how you can **change your initial thought**, the one you had about getting upset with someone.
2. The second thing is to **ask** the person questions: What's going on? Can you tell me more? Help me understand. Is everything OK? Ask *yourself* questions: Why am I so aggravated by this? **Ask** questions of yourself and challenge the emotion you have. This will help you **change the feeling** you originally had.
3. Use **wisdom**. Choose your words wisely. You will never regret pausing and choosing your words wisely. I would much rather have people feel uncomfortable with my pause than I ever would with words that could be hurtful.
4. Then, **seek** to understand. Once you pause, ask questions, and choose your words wisely, you will naturally seek to understand.

These last two steps will **change your behavior** and could possibly change the outcome of a tough conversation for the good.

4. We're At Different Levels of Understanding and Development

One of the best tools you can use for this The Blanchard Companies' Situational Leadership II. People are at different stages of learning a new goal or task and we cannot assume they should be beyond their capacity.

[INVESTMENT]

The next valuable lesson I learned was to invest my time, talent, and treasures into developing Louie. We may ask ourselves: How much time do we invest in our teams? Our families? Our friends? Invest in people. Take the time to get to know them. Put the phone down, and get to know somebody. Take time to know and understand people.

I invested time so that Louie could learn to trust and love me.

[EMPOWERMENT]

The last step in my leadership training with Louie was to empower him. Empowering is key. It's not letting people do whatever they want to do. Empowering is taking the time to love them, it is establishing clear goals, understand them, and invest in them; and then empowering people to use their gifts and talents to do the job; and in doing so, you actually empower them to be the people God created them to be—not who you think they should be. They are loved and valued.

SLIDE SHOW

Louie is a totally different dog today because I love him. I took time to set up a development plan and was clear about objectives and goals in order for him to be a good, healthy dog and for us to enjoy a relationship together. I had to understand his needs. I had to understand his background. I had to understand what was going on with him. I invested time, my skill set, and other people's skill sets to help develop him. He is empowered to be a fun-loving, free little dog.

This is not unlike the teams we lead. Transformation occurs when we apply the **LOUIE** leadership model: **L**ove, **O**bjectives, **U**nderstanding (communication, how we process, we all have stuff, and we're at different levels of understanding); **R**emember the **PAWS** method. **I**nvest in others, then and only then can you truly **E**mpower others.

