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# 12 Phrases Transformational Leaders Use To Get Amazing Results



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Does the concept of leadership have any value at all if leaders don't use it to elevate those around them and advocate for the needs of others? Does having power and influence really matter if you aren't perceived as using it

to create transformational experiences? What is even the point of developing leadership skills and talents if you neglect to use your competence to inspire deeper thinking, maximize engagement and drive results for the organization and the people within it. I mean really? If your goal is to gain power and influence so you can focus more attention on yourself, what is even the point? Leadership can be about so much more, and transformational leadership must be about more.

Unlike these [nine phrases which expose weak leaders](#) and undermine organizational success, transformational leaders demonstrate the confidence, strength and emotional intelligence necessary to drive success. Transformational leaders care about results, but they are keenly aware that they need committed and engaged employees to get there. As such, they are acutely focused on building trust, developing competence, enhancing understanding, transferring knowledge and adding value for those who follow and rely on them.

Here are 12 simple phrases that [transformational leaders](#) use to get amazing results by connecting more deeply with employees. If you want to increase engagement, advance communication and create an organizational culture where employees can do their best work, I highly recommend you add these phrases and communication strategies to your repertoire.

## 1. I need your help.

Today In: [Leadership](#)



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Many so-called leaders view asking for help as some sort of weakness. This is flawed thinking, and they couldn't be more wrong. In fact, asking for help is one of the greatest things you can do to show leadership strength. Asking for help demonstrates far more confidence and strength than acting like you

never need it. Refusing to ask for help could actually highlight your insecurities or [cause others to view you as masking an inferiority complex](#). However, by seeking out advice, guidance and expertise from others on your team, you'll garner more respect and trust because they will see that you value their contributions and respect them as well.

By asking for help, you'll easily distinguish yourself as a transformational leader because doing so creates opportunities for others to shine. In order to help you and to problem solve on an issue, employees can flex their intellectual muscles, and their creativity juices will start to flow. When you ask for help, guidance and support from those you lead and those who follow you, you are literally developing other leaders. Remember, leadership is not about being the smartest person in the room. It's about elevating and inspiring others to become their best selves and creating environments for them to do their best work.

If you never ask for help, you are grossly limiting the potential for those you lead to become better leaders themselves. Transformational leaders develop other leaders, and you have to create opportunities for others to help you for this to ever have a chance of happening.

## **2. May I help you? – or – How can I help you?**

Be intentional about asking these questions. Leaders and supervisors shouldn't assume that staff will just up and come to you when and if they need help. You need to make it clear that you really want to help and that you don't view others as weaker or less competent for seeking out help in the first place. First, if you have a bent toward viewing questions and those who need assistance as weak or somehow failing, you can bet that your staff has surely picked up on this. As a result, they will not likely come to you for help even when it's really needed. Second, I highly recommend you read [this article](#) about the importance of learning, unlearning, asking questions and

learning some more.

As a transformational leader, you'll want to be out front with your offers to help, and create a learning environment and culture where those who seek or accept help are praised—rather than embarrassed or ridiculed—for doing so.

### **3. I understand that... - or - I understand you...**

When you engage in a conversation with one or more people and follow up with a phrase like "I understand that [fill in the blank with points of the conversation that you understood]," you are demonstrating that you indeed heard and received the message. This phrase is great for validating the needs, feelings or proposals of another, and when you use it, you are demonstrating an excellent communication technique that transformational leaders use. Your team will take notice and will appreciate being heard even when or if you need to make a decision contrary to what they want to hear.

### **4. I respect you for... - or - I respect the way...**

Most, if not all of us, want to be respected. And though you can [do these very specific things to garner more respect](#) from your colleagues, it's critically important that you also demonstrate respect for them as well.

Transformational leaders understand that showing respect requires more than lip service, but sometimes the words actually help too. Use this phrase starter to highlight a behavior, decision or way of thinking that you value and respect, even if you disagree with it. Use this as a way to share with your team members what you care most about. They will gain insights into what you value and, more than likely, will try to repeat the behavior in the future.

### **5. I trust that you can... - or - I trust that you will...**

If [you are a micromanager](#), force yourself to use this phrase at least once a

week. It is important that you show your team members that you need them. Ensure they understand that you need and value their help the same way you want them to need and value yours.

Employees want to use their talents and make contributions to goal accomplishments, and in order to do so, they need space to be creative, to think of options and to make the plays that will lead to the desired results. Tell your team members what the goals are. Share an outline of what the end should look like and then get out of the way and let them shine! Your staff will come to see that you actually do trust them, and they will become more invested and engaged in the process.

## **6. You are right. – or – I was wrong.**

Leaders don't always have the answers. Encourage your team to have respectful debate with you and with one another. Teams are formed when members feel comfortable with conflict and safe to disagree with one another and with the boss. Show your strength and courage as a leader by being willing to admit that someone else was right on something or that you were wrong. Allow some of your vulnerability to come through; it builds relationships.

This is again another opportunity to show your team that you need them. Your staff will see you as a more powerful leader—not a weaker one—and they'll appreciate being able to honestly contribute their own thoughts and ideas to the conversation.

## **7. Sorry, it was my mistake.**

There are two sides of the leadership coin - (1) leaders should stand ready to accept responsibility for failures and (2) leaders should share responsibility and spread praise for successes. Transformational leaders know that when

something goes wrong under their watch, they need to own the mistake. Sure, find out all the details and deal with individuals accordingly but ultimately, as the leader, you will need to apologize and acknowledge your mistake somewhere in it—even if it was a failure to develop an employee, an oversight with process adjustments or neglecting to address policy conflicts.

## **8. I have time for...**

This little phrase packs a whole bunch of "you matter to me" in it. When you tell your team that you have time for something that they indicated they wanted to do, discuss or work on, you are getting huge leadership points. You can fill in the back side of this starter phrase with anything that matters to the team, and the big take away they will leave with is "I matter—we matter."

Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman, authors of *First Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently*, share that one of the best things your team can give you is the benefit of the doubt. I wholeheartedly agree. When you show your team members that they matter, they want to show you that you matter too by giving you the benefit of the doubt in times of ambiguity and change. Again, people want and need to feel appreciated and valued. As a transformational leader, you'd do well to prioritize time to address your team's needs.

## **9. What do you think? - or - How would you handle it?**

It's not your job as the leader or the supervisor to come up with all the answers. In fact, transformational leaders don't share the answers so easily even when they do know them. Why would a transformational leader withhold the answers? This is done in an effort to develop the team members and get the benefit of their ideas and objections. When you ask

employees what they think or how they'd handle something, you are prompting growth and innovation, developing critical thinking skills and encouraging others to give input. By asking these questions, you develop other leaders and create a culture of trust.

## **10. I am open to...**

So often leaders talk about managing and navigating change without ever having sent the message to their teams that they, themselves, are actually open to change or to doing things differently from how they are currently being done. Don't make your team guess on this. Clearly indicate your willingness to try ideas that your team proposes. You can show you are open to a new process, method or strategy by simply saying, "I am open to [fill it in with whatever you are willing to do]. By using this phrase when appropriate, the team will start to see you as a "change agent" instead of someone who just talks about it.

## **11. Thank you for... - or - I appreciate you for...**

This one seems simple enough right? However, more often than not, people say 'thank you' without actually expressing exactly what the person did that pleased them. Feedback is great when it is specific, timely, actionable and balanced so be sure to say "thank you for [fill it in with the specific behavior or result that matters]. Give out your "thank yous" as prompt as possible after an event, and remind the team member why and/or how her behavior or result supports organizational strategy.

## **12. You can do it. - or - I believe in you.**

One of my former supervisors would often tell me, "Terina, you can do it; I believe in you." I smile even now as I type this here because it always made me feel good to hear it. It made me believe that he had my back. When you

are developing a high-potential employee or emerging leader by giving her a whole bunch of 'stretch' assignments, the message you will send is that you believe she can do it, but never underestimate the power that comes with actually saying the words.

I would get these stretch tasks, and sometimes I'd express nervousness or say that it might be too much too fast. My supervisor's confidence in my talents and abilities helped to ease my nerves. Show your team members that you believe in them, and they will want to rise to meet or exceed your expectations.

## You tell me -

- Are you currently using any of these phrases with your team members? What would you add to the list?
- As a team member, does your supervisor/team leader use any of these phrases with you?
- How intentional will you be to incorporate these throughout the year to engage with and develop your staff?

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