



RYP QUARTERLY

How to Build Your Authentic Leadership Brand

David Stewart, RYP International

Your WORDS (talk) reveal what you are THINKING, and your ACTIONS (walk) reveal what you BELIEVE.

To be judged as an authentic leader, your walk and talk must be aligned.

Every leader (as does every parent) has their own style of how they talk the talk and walk the walk. How a leader adapts their talk (communication) and role models their walk (credibility) to inspire, motivate, influence and engage others forms the essence of their leadership style.

Ultimately if a leader is trusted and respected, they will have the honour and privilege of making a difference to the people whom they are seeking to inspire and connect with. It has been my experience that if a leader loses trust or respect it can never be regained.

*What follows are **FIVE TIPS** to build credibility in both **Talking your Talk** and **Walking your Walk**.*

TALKING YOUR TALK

Tip 1: Own Both the Communication and Comprehension

Cutting through to someone or a group of people requires many techniques and approaches. Communication is much more than what you say, it involves how you say it, your tone, body language and the key messages sent. **Cut through communication requires an ability to adapt a conversation to the needs and style of the person receiving the communication.**

The key is to:

- **Use small pauses**, allowing a person/group to process and reflect on what they are hearing. Their emotional, behavioural, and personal cues given off always sends signals of what is being comprehended.
- **Implement a simple feedback loop mechanism**, ensuring you check-in sometime later to reflect on and evaluate what was heard and processed.



Tip 2: Without Feedback No Learning Occurs

Providing the gift of feedback is perhaps one of the most important leadership dynamics you can provide. Feedback can come in all sorts of ways (verbal, written, physical, emotional, behavioural, or silent).

The key is to:

- Establish the type of feedback a person prefers and responds well to.
- Ensure that the feedback is:
 - Consistent
 - Varied and timely
 - Tailored to meet the needs of the person receiving it.

Tip 3: People Forget Facts, but they remember Stories.

Storytelling is an important part of a leader's tool kit. Stories provide context and scope to real life events and scenarios. It places the human lived experience at the centre of any coaching dynamic. In fact, storytelling is the oldest and most effective way of passing on history and wisdom. Telling a vulnerable story of how you have overcome a difficult circumstance provides a message of hope and makes you more relatable to those you want to inspire.

Tip 4: Just when you are sick of saying it, some are just starting to get it.

Like teaching manners to a child, it requires repetition, enforcement, reminders, discipline and follow up. This is an important dynamic for a leader trying to drive a mission centred team culture. Never underestimate the need to constantly repeat and link a message to team and individual performance and the overall mission – the why!

Tip 5: People can only remember 3 things.

When all is said and done, if a leader is providing someone with the gift of feedback, then remember the simple *golden rule of three*. Keep your coaching points to 3 clear and memorable items, otherwise it just ends up becoming “alphabet soup!”

WALKING YOUR WALK

Tip 1: The Standard You Walk Past Is the Standard You Accept

What a leader ignores will automatically be deemed acceptable by everyone else. What a leader praises, disciplines, acts on, or chooses to measure sends a very clear message as to what is important and what is not.



Tip 2: Symbolism is Everything

What a leader says is a priority or is important **MUST** be followed up with actions, recognition, and some system of measurement, because **what gets measured gets done**. Measurement can be formal or informal but requires the disciplined signal of enforcement. This could be as simple as an agenda item in a staff meeting. Remember your actions must reflect your coaching narrative.

Tip 3: Culture is Caught Not Taught

This is a critical element of building leadership credibility. Often a leader espouses the desired vision, mission, and values but that is where it ends. There must be meaningful feedback and recognition for the people who are role modelling what is desired. This praise/recognition is incumbent on a leader providing it in a timely and meaningful manner when it occurs. Remember simply praising everyone for simply having a pulse, turning up for work on time or trying hard is not meaningful. Important to separate what should be expected from what is drives performance.

Tip 4: Managing by Walking Around is Critical

The Team Vibe Always Precedes Performance. Walking around and talking to people is what a leader needs to do. This is where you will pick up on the formal and informal team cues of how the team is performing and feeling. It is through this process that Leaders and Teams build their dynamics to problem solve, co-ordinate or collaborate with others, build a sense of belonging & engagement, foster a spirit of goodwill, and form effective familiar relationships. Without familiarity it is impossible to build a high performing team.

Tip 5: Don't be a Seagull (Fly in, squawk a bit, crap everywhere and then leave)

Remember, teams only perform best when they are confident. Give the gift of both positive feedback and constructive criticism but spend the time to facilitate a process of learning, understanding, problem solving and expectation setting. Empowerment requires confidence, competence, and permission. Everyone will be influenced by your attitude, actions, and behaviours.





Finally...

The skills, energies and techniques involved in both Parenting and Leadership are very aligned. In both circumstances you are seeking to nurture, nourish, inspire, influence, and motivate people to become better versions of themselves. This requires many techniques and approaches. What cuts through with one person, will have no impact on another.

Welcome to the World of Parenting and Leadership. Neither is a title that gains automatic respect, it takes time, effort, persistence, and, above all, patience.

Linking your TALK with your WALK is a key step in building your AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP Brand

Facta Non Verba – Deeds Not Words

David Stewart (B Ed, Grad Dip Sports Science, master's Business Leadership) David is the Founder & Principle of RYP International – A Coaching & Advisory Practice. He has worked globally with organisations, their leaders, and teams to develop their capability and culture to maximise performance.