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## "The Little Things" That The Best Leaders Make Sure They Do

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No doubt, leaders spread their message by taking the microphone at a major conference.

But just as with games, movies, apps, and ideas, leaders grow in popularity and reach a tipping point in their influence (<http://www.eremedia.com/tint/leaders-need-to-remember-childhood-lessons-share-play-nice-say-thank-you/>) when employees share their observations of that leader by word of mouth.

That is, Jeremy interacts with leader Kevin and comments on that experience to a friend — either positively or negatively. Most often, it's not the leader's speeches, policies, or plans that create the positive impression, but rather, "the little things."

Notice how often these "little things" become the fodder for comments about presidential candidates and why voters connect with them — or dislike them.

### Little things that smart leaders make sure they do

"The little things" include:

- **Getting in their space** — Some leaders isolate themselves. They undervalue the importance of simply being with others — in the same hallways, cafeteria, conference rooms, entrance ways, elevators, parking lots. People like people who are like them—people who have the same experiences. Even shared physical spaces and experiences provide common ground that leads people to believe that they may have common values and beliefs with you as their leader.
- **Asking for a favor** — Asking for a favor takes humility, but you can make it look easy. Ask for directions, an explanation or opinion about something in their area of expertise, help to recall statistics someone shared in a meeting the prior week. Let them help you in any such simple way, and watch how pleased they become to assist. Everyone likes to feel smart and helpful.
- **Remembering names** — "*I don't remember names, but never forget a face.*" "*I'm not good with names.*" These claims are serious setbacks for a leader who intends to have credibility with people. Knowing someone's name opens the door to opening their mind. Trying to talk with someone and have an impact when you can't even call them by their name (<http://www.metrolyrics.com/you-never-called-me-by-my-name-lyrics-david-allan-coe.html>) is like sending mail addressed to "Dear Occupant."
- **Showing concern for their family** — Remembering to ask about the health of an ill spouse, child, or aging parent says you are concerned with them as a person—not just someone to do your bidding on the job, project, or team. Or celebrate the successes of those family members who're involved in sports, projects, or major career projects.
- **Asking about personal interests** — Is the person training for a marathon? Does the person collect antiques and visit trade fairs over the weekends? Does the person play in a jazz band on Friday evenings at a local restaurant? Asking questions or commenting on such interests before or after a meeting or at lunch builds a bridge of connection so that they're ready to listen when you have more important topics to discuss with them.
- **Lending a hand with menial tasks** — The typical employee has seen far too many governmental leaders act as if the citizenry should serve them. When someone who holds a position of authority actually serves another person — that is, lends a helping hand with a task in progress — people notice. The media even consider it a photo op when the president spends an hour serving turkey to the homeless at a soup kitchen on Thanksgiving Day. Willingness to "pitch in" and help when there's work to be done communicates humility, always an attractive character trait.

# You win followers by doing "the little things"

So, what's the point?



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The point is that leaders in the workplace win followers one by one by doing "the little things" that build solid relationships (<http://www.eremedia.com/tlnt/the-six-measures-of-a-great-leader/>). Then when they need trust to change hearts and minds or handle a crisis, they have the influence and credibility to do so.

This was originally published on Dianna Booher's *Booher Research blog* (<http://www.booherresearch.com/blog/>).

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## Should You Send Out Temps During A Strike?

— Interesting article, Jeff. It'll be interesting to see whether employers will be so quick to turn to staffing agencies ...

## Sourcers: Are You Providing The New HOT STUFF?

— Oh -- I forgot -- I am a librarian.

## Best of HR Roundtable: Why Don't We Focus More On Generational Strengths?

— I agree with many of these approaches as the workforce of tomorrow brings myriad challenges with aging Baby Boomers ...

## Engineers Should Help With Recruiting (Interviewing Is No Longer Enough)

— There are some great recommendations here, Jessica. I've used all of these methods for a number of years. What is ...