

## **THE DRAWBACKS OF DIY LEADERSHIP**

As Americans, we love to roll up our sleeves and do it ourselves. We have an entire television channel, the DIY Network, dedicating to helping us tackle projects on our own—without relying on professional help. Rightfully, we feel a sense of pride after mastering new skills and empowering ourselves to build or fix something around the house.

While initiative and self-reliance are admirable traits, sooner or later we encounter a project that dwarfs our amateur abilities. In these moments, the wise course of action would be to ask for help. Yet in our stubborn independence, we refuse to admit our need for aid, choosing to press on alone. As the television show *DIY Disasters* attests, our attempts at self-sufficiency routinely backfire. Many of our remodeling projects end up in ruins, leaving property badly damaged and in need of repair. At least we Americans can take solace in knowing that we're not alone. A recent study in the United Kingdom estimated that "DIY disasters cost bungling Brits £2.1 billion a year."

### **The Needy Leader**

Let's face it: leaders are needy. Not in the sense of being at an emotional deficit, but in the sense of having a vision that's too large to accomplish single-handedly. Leaders need other people to join them in order to have any hope of seeing their vision come to fruition.

As industrialist 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." One is too small of a number to achieve greatness. Leaders have to face up to their inability to "go-it-alone" and enlist others in pursuit of the vision.

### **People Need to Be Needed**

We may hesitate to ask for help because we fear others may see us as incompetent or weak. Yet if we weren't so self-focused, we would realize that seeking aid from others makes *them* feel valuable. People get a boost from sharing knowledge or offering expertise. Being able to contribute gives them a sense of accomplishment and affirms their worth. The bottom line is that people have a universal need to be needed.

### **People Need to Take Part in Something Significant**

Leaders who free themselves of the DIY mentality learn that a powerful vision can be tremendously attractive. Living solely for oneself is a shallow existence, yet that's how many people operate on a day-to-day basis. When a leader offers the opportunity to be involved in a worthwhile cause—one that's bigger than any single

individual—many people jump at the chance. That's because people have an innate need to be involved in something significant.

## **SUMMARY**

Leaders who ask for help aren't small. On the contrary, leaders willing to admit their neediness have security and strength. When leaders share a compelling vision, honestly express a need for help, and invite others to add value, they build a team big enough to tackle what never could be accomplished alone.



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