



8 Ways to Make People Feel Like a Million Bucks

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Ranking among the greatest Christmas movie classics, *It's a Wonderful Life* tells a beautiful story about the priceless value of relationships.

The story follows the life of George Bailey, a man who sacrifices his dreams to travel the world, instead choosing to stay in his hometown and run the family-owned business after the sudden death of his father.

Throughout the movie, George's humanity draws us into his life. As we watch him grow from a child to a young man, and then to a husband, father, and business owner, we see how George continually places the well-being of others ahead of his own interests. Yet, we can sense his frustration at being pent up in a small town, working long hours, earning a modest salary, and living in an old, renovated house.

When life's circumstances push George's business to the brink of bankruptcy, his frustrations boil over, and he contemplates taking his own life. At this crucial moment, a guardian angel is sent from heaven to prevent George from committing suicide. Through a series of supernatural events, the angel convinces George of the beauty of his life—even with his present troubles. With a renewed sense of gratefulness, George goes back to his home.

Upon his return, George's family and friends rally around him in an overwhelming outpouring of support and generosity. In a show of goodwill, they take up a collection and donate it to George. With his business secure and his financial situation saved, George uncovers a note left by his guardian angel:

Remember George: no man is a failure who has friends.

WINNING WITH PEOPLE

Like George Bailey, most people can trace their successes and failures to the relationships in their lives. As a leader, you can't be a loner. Your success is tied to inspiring a shared vision. In this edition of *Leadership Wired*, we'll explore 8 practices whereby you can win with others.

1. Let People Know You Need Them

When your dream is bigger than you are, you only have two choices: give up or get help. Inspire others to join in the dream by letting them know they are needed. Every person has a longing to be significant; to make a contribution; to be a part of something noble and purposeful. Invite people into a vision, allow them to participate in making the vision a reality, and show them how their efforts are part of making a dream come true.

2. Create a Memory and Visit It Often

"Memory is the treasury and guardian of all things."

~ Cicero

Instead of accepting life's lot, take responsibility for pursuing dreams worthy of memory. Exercise creativity to push for memorable achievements even when times are tough. Commemorate defining moments through mementos, and use the mementos as symbols to celebrate accomplishments and perpetuate memories.

3. Give Others a Reputation to Uphold

“Treat a man as he appears to be and you make him worse. But treat a man as if he already were what he potentially could be, and you make him what he should be.”

~ Goethe

Form a high opinion of people and back that opinion by equipping and empowering those around you for critical assignments. When interacting with your people, don't allow them to be distracted by past failure; instead, steer them toward a promising future. Paint a picture of the potential you see inside of a person, lead them toward the realization of that potential, and hold them accountable to be their best.

4. Share a Secret with Someone

“Conceal a secret from your friend and you deserve to lose him.”

-Portuguese Proverb

A Sicilian proverb says, “Only the spoon knows what is stirring in the pot.” When you allow another person to know what is stirring within you, giving them a “taste” of a plan or idea, you instantly make a meaningful connection with them. Sharing a secret with someone includes that person in your journey and enriches your own experiences.

5. Do for Others What They Can't Do for Themselves

“You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you.”

~ John Bunyan

As a leader, you have the precious responsibility of taking your people to places they could never reach on their own. You can do this in three ways: connection, invitation, and impartation. First, take the time to connect your people into strategic relationships they would never otherwise form. Next, you'll be able to offer opportunities for people to join a team which will achieve more as a unit than any of its members could individually. Finally, share your ideas, and by doing so, you'll impart knowledge that others do not possess on their own.

6. Find the Keys to Their Heart

“Coaches who can outline plays on a blackboard are a dime a dozen. The ones who succeed are those who get inside their players and motivate them.”

~ Vince Lombardi

Uncover the passions inside those you lead by asking questions about each person's dreams, values, and strengths. Accept and appreciate the fact that every individual is different, but constantly search for common ground to serve as a point of connection.

7. Practice the 30-Second Rule

Within the first 30 seconds of a conversation, look to say something encouraging to the person you're speaking with. By doing so, you'll give others the Triple “A” treatment: attention, affirmation, and appreciation. When you add to others, they'll be drawn to you.

8. Write Notes of Encouragement

Encouraging notes have a personal touch and represent an investment by the writer. Such notes are remembered by the recipient long after the writer has forgotten them.

Nineteenth century writer Walt Whitman struggled for years to get anyone interested in his poetry. In the midst of his discouragement, Whitman received a life-changing letter from an admirer of his work. The note read: "Dear sir, I am not blind to the worth of the wonderful gift of Leaves of Grass. I find it the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed. I greet you at the beginning of a great career." It was signed by Ralph Waldo Emerson.

If you want to reach the top, don't run over others. Likely, the only way you'll reach the top is to be carried there by others.