

## Pearls of Leadership Wisdom: Lead from the Seat You Are In

Today's message from the backyard is: Lead from the Seat You Are In. Recently I came across an article in *Forbes* magazine. It was an article about individuals who had taken action to do something around COVID-19. In it, a young medical student, actually from here in the Twin Cities, decided to start a daycare service for healthcare professionals. She just decided to start it. The idea caught on and actually is still going strong. I bet you've read a number of stories like that where individuals simply stepped in to take action to make something happen.

I have another example, and this one is an observation, and it will seem for a little bit to be unrelated, so bear with me for a minute. This is about zoom, all of us are spending more of our lives on zoom. One of my colleagues pointed out to me the other day, she said, "Have you noticed when you're in a meeting with a group of people everyone's picture can be displayed across the page and you see six or eight individuals at the same time?" She said, "Have you noticed everyone's box is the same size?" There is no head of the table on zoom, there is no one whose box is bigger than anyone else's. She felt visually the visual permission to lead from the seat that she is in.

Both stories are about taking the lead. One is about taking the lead when you just see a need and step into doing something, and the other is about your taking the lead inside an organization to influence and to be heard. No matter where we sit in an organization, we have the capacity to influence. It's easy to think that leadership goes with the title, or with the role, or with the promotion, well it does, but influence, anyone can have influence. Think for a moment about who influences you. Is it always the person at the top of the organization or the person in charge? No of course not. Influence is not tied to title or role. So how do you lead from the seat you are in?

I have three observations for you:

- #1 Stand Up
- #2 Speak Up
- #3 Act Up

Let me be specific on each. First, stand up simply means don't hide, don't put yourself on mute. Don't be the person who has to be asked before they provide their opinion. Don't wait, encourage yourself to stand up and to be there and to be part of what is going on. Encourage, the word encourage is a wonderful way of thinking about giving yourself courage to be heard, and not hide.

Second, speak up. Speak up doesn't necessarily imply you're going to criticize things that are going on, speak up means, make sure your voice is heard.

You might start sentences with things like:

- "I have an idea."
- "Here's some input that you might consider."
- "Here's something that I believe we need to do."
- "Here's an area in which I think our company could get better."
- "Here's a way in which I think I can help."



Those are all very strong ways in which to bring your own ideas forward and make sure they're heard.

Finally act up, go try something, experiment, don't wait to be asked. Offer your help to someone, do something that you know is going to be needed. In all of these ways these three things—stand up, speak up, act up—you will find yourself being able to exert influence and be part of an organization that every leader I know wants. When I say to a leader, "Would you like to have a leader full organization?" That is, in fact, something we all want to have. You can be part of creating that leader full organization by the way that you lead from the seat you are in. Thank you.