

“NO!”

How to lead when they don't want to follow

“A LEADER TAKES PEOPLE WHERE THEY WANT TO GO. A GREAT LEADER TAKES PEOPLE WHERE THEY DON'T NECESSARILY WANT TO GO, BUT OUGHT TO BE.”

- Rosalyn Carter, former First Lady

IT IS NOT UNCOMMON FOR THOSE WE LEAD (ESPECIALLY YOUTH) TO RESPOND NEGATIVELY WHEN ASKED TO DO SOMETHING. HOW WE RESPOND OFTEN MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE. BELOW ARE THREE TOOLS THAT MIGHT HELP YOU BE THE GREAT LEADER THEY NEED.

1. It's Not About You

When those we lead tell us “no”, it is easy to put the spotlight on us: “Don't they know how much I am sacrificing? I don't want to do it either! You are just making it harder for me!”



WHEN THE SPOTLIGHT IS ON US, WE ARE NOT NOT SEEING THE REAL PROBLEM AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, WE ARE NOT SEEING THE SOLUTION.

2. Make It About Them



RING THE DOORBELL

Just like you wouldn't just walk into someone's house, you can't just barge in to a conversation. Ring the doorbell and let them use their agency.

They are much more likely to listen if you do.

“Hey, can we chat for a second?”

“Would you mind if I took a second?”

“Can I talk to you real quick?”

SEEK TO UNDERSTAND

If they can tell that you really want to understand where they are coming from and what they are feeling, they will be much more likely to follow you.

“Can you help me see where you're coming from?”

“It seems like you're feeling _____. What's going on?”

“Help me see this from your perspective...”

EMPATHIZE

Knowing what they feel is important. Connecting with them THROUGH that feeling brings a level of trust and confidence that nothing else can.

“I totally get it. I feel that way a lot too.”

“I think I would feel exactly the same if I were in your shoes.”

“You know, I'm actually feeling the same thing right now...”

3. Acknowledge the Boundaries

Whether we set them or they are set for us, there are boundaries we cannot cross:

- ▶ Two-deep leadership
- ▶ Physical/emotional safety
- ▶ Budget needs
- ▶ Ethical/legal concerns
- ▶ Camp/facility rules
- ▶ Etc.

While people usually resist boundaries and limits, they also thrive in the safety, structure, and self-regulation they provide. Acknowledge these boundaries from the perspective of the benefits they provide.*

“One reason we have been asked to _____ is to keep you safe. Does that make sense?”

“It's a difficult policy to keep, but it allows us to _____. You get that, right?”

“It would be awesome if we could _____, but we want to have budget to do fun things later. Sound good?”

“One of the rules we have been asked to follow is _____. It is frustrating, but helps us...”

*These conversations are much more effective as reminders. Tell them the boundaries early and often.