



Be Committed to ...

EACH OTHER

*We are not put on this earth for ourselves,
but are placed here for each other.
If you are always there for others, then in
time of need, someone will be there for you.*

~ Jeff Warner

Take a moment to reflect on your vision of a successful team. Perhaps it's a group you've been a part of yourself. It might be one you've seen or read about in the news – like a sports franchise, a specialized military unit, or a team of healthcare professionals performing a complex medical procedure. Or maybe it's just your idea of what an "ideal" team would (and should) look like. Whatever it is, lock that image in your mind.

Now, look deeper at the image. How do the members of that team behave? How do they interact with each other? What kinds of things do they say? What do they believe? It's a safe bet you've envisioned a group of people that cares about each other, helps each other, and covers for one another. There's no "me first ... we're all in this alone ... every man for himself" thinking in your vision, right? Of course not! The members of your role-model team are more likely to say (and believe) things like, "you can count on me," "I've got your back," and "we're all in this, together." And that's no surprise. Undoubtedly, your group exhibits the first – and arguably most important – characteristic of five star teamwork: a commitment to EACH OTHER.

Respect, Interdependency, and Reciprocity

The mutual commitment of five star teams is driven by three primary factors – the first of which is **respect**. Team members value and appreciate the inherent worth of each person in the group. While all members may not contribute equally, each is considered equally important. And each is afforded the basic dignity that he or she deserves as a human being. In five star teams, understanding and acceptance is paramount – there's no room for derogatory humor, insults, backstabbing, or other *us vs. them* behaviors which are not only disrespectful but also counterproductive.

The second factor that drives commitment to each other is **interdependency**. Members of five star teams grasp the reality that their personal success is linked to one another's ... that they achieve only when the entire team does. As a result, they are truly motivated to contribute to each other's

success. They back up and support their teammates. They “pinch hit” for coworkers who are under the weather or otherwise unable to give one hundred percent. They build mutual trust through open and honest communication. They cooperate willingly. And they work hard at avoiding things like turf battles, rivalries, and favoritism – all of which do nothing but hamper their ability to get the job done. No one has to remind them that they need each other – they *know* it. More importantly, they *show* it!

Finally, the third factor driving mutual commitment has to do with the law of **reciprocity**. Members of five star teams are keenly aware that “what goes around, comes around.” They know that in order to *get* things like assistance, support, courtesy, caring, honesty, and the benefit of the doubt, they must be willing to *give* them as well. And give them they do!

Self-reflection Time

Look for the characteristics that differentiate five star teams from the “the rest of the pack,” and you’ll find *committed to each other* at the top of the list. But is it at the top of YOUR list?

Since self-reflection is good for the soul (not to mention the *team*), each of us periodically needs to think about, and answer, the following questions:

1. How committed am I to ALL of the other members of my team and/or work unit?
2. What specifically have I done recently to *demonstrate* that commitment and earn the trust of my teammates?
3. What can/will I do in the next several months to exhibit an even stronger commitment to my teammates?

Need help answering that third question? We’ve provided several ideas and suggestions on the pages that follow.

“How To” Tips and Techniques

- ★ Make an effort to **know your coworkers “as people.”** Learn about their special skills, their professional experiences, their families, and their interests away from work. Set a goal to find something you have in common with each teammate – then use those commonalities to encourage communication and enhance your personal relationships.

And, if you’re a member of a “virtual team,” make a special effort to keep in contact. Schedule regular “touch point” phone calls and occasional face-to-face meetings to stay connected with teammates. Use technology (e-mail, voice mail, etc.) to keep relationships flourishing – regardless of any geographical separation.

- ★ Look for opportunities to **contribute to others’ success.** If you see a teammate who is struggling and falling behind, pitch in ... lend a hand. Share your talents and your time to help others learn, grow, and get through tough situations.

- ★ **Be considerate of others.** Remember that the workplace is a shared environment. Build a reputation for being a thoughtful, considerate teammate by doing things like: cleaning up after yourself, sharing (rather than monopolizing) equipment and resources, and respecting others’ time by not interrupting them – and not expecting them to serve your every need “on the spot.”

- ★ **Keep your promises and agreements.** If you tell a coworker you’ll do something – whether “important” or seemingly insignificant – remember it ... and DO IT! Making sure that your teammates can always count on you is one of the best ways to show that you’re committed to them and worthy of their trust.

- ★ **Embrace diversity.** Work on accepting and appreciating teammates who are “different” – especially those of other races, cultures, creeds, and national origins. Fact is, diversity is a significant business advantage. Teams that are true “melting pots” have a greater ability to meet the needs of a diverse marketplace. That increases their success potential ... and *yours* as well!

- ★ **Provide recognition.** How often do you reinforce the efforts and achievements of your teammates with a kind word? If not all that often, why not? Whenever one member of the team performs well or makes a contribution, *everyone* benefits in some way. So make an effort to catch people doing good work and say things like, “Great job ... way to go ... thank you.” Nothing enhances team cohesion more than mutual appreciation.

- ★ **Carry your share of the load.** Being committed to each other means that everyone can be counted on to meet his or her responsibilities. Fail to do your part and others have to pick up the slack. That’s unfair to them. And it’s an obstacle to the group’s collective success. Certainly, all team members will have days when they’re not at their best ... when fellow teammates must jump in for them. Just make sure that, for you, those days are the exception rather than the rule.

For managers and team leaders ...

- ★ **Set the example.** Model the behaviors you expect from the members of your team. Show people – through *your* actions – what it means to be committed to each other. And once you’ve set the example, encourage them to follow your lead. Show them, teach team, coach them, and hold them accountable for meeting your expectations. ■

mis • sion *n*

1. A special assignment given to a person or group; work that you are obliged to perform for moral or legal reasons; "The duties of the job."
2. Activity directed toward making or doing something.
3. An inner calling to pursue an activity or perform a service; someone's chosen, designated, or assumed purpose in life or vocation.

★ For More "How To" Tips and Techniques on:
Being Committed to Each Other, [click here.](#)