

Pillar 5: Commitment

Friends who stay with you when effort and sacrifice are involved are your real friends.

Commitment is what true friends enjoy. When it comes to commitment, actions definitely speak louder than words.

Martin Luther King Jr. was the most visible civil right activist in the US from 1955 until he was assassinated in 1968. During his years of fighting for equal rights, he suffered many abuses. He was physically assaulted, arrested 30 times, and had threats made against his family because of his determination that all men should live as equals. Thousands of men and women joined him in his cause despite all the abuse. It was Martin Luther King Jr.'s conviction that all men should be treated equal that inspired his commitment to the cause that in turn inspired others. It was this amazing following and partnership that brought civil rights in the US to a new level.

The stronger leaders in history demonstrated an unwillingness to give up when things got difficult, and so they were able to unite others in support of their cause. These leaders were committed to something greater than themselves. They were not the kind of people who said, "That is not my problem". Commitment reveals devotion and loyalty. Successful leaders understand and demonstrate these behaviors.

Sacrifice for great things. Going out of your way to help others. Show your commitment, it will solidify your trustworthiness. Studies have shown that keeping commitments is the fastest way to build trust. Forgetting commitments is a sure way to destroy trust. Making a commitment to do

something for someone else, no matter how small it may seem, creates hope in the other person. Keeping that commitment builds trust.

(Paraphrased) Susan M. Heathfield, human resources expert and author.

Take Responsibility

Everybody makes mistakes. How you handle it is what matters. People who are committed will take responsibility for their mistakes, especially those in positions of leadership. It is always easy to find other people to blame, managers, partners, or employees. In positions of leadership, apart from willfully bad or sinful behavior the leader should assume some responsibility, he is the leader.

Under promise and over deliver.

Consistently do what you'll say what you will do. Sometimes we may really want to help or contribute towards something, and we make over ambitious promises. The problem with that, even if they are made with the best of intentions is that if something happens so that you cannot fulfill that promise you may lose the trust of others, you may be thought of as someone who likes to build him or herself up, but he or she is just empty talk.

A strategy for building trust and a good reputation is to under promise and then over deliver. I will give a very simple example of this, using money, but this example could be used in many different ways, and in many different situations, not just with money.

Suppose you were attending a fund raising program for a village health center. It is your turn to speak but since you do not have cash with you, you

promise to support the project with a certain amount of money, an amount that is small compared to others in your position, so it does not result in great applause. Since money is tight for you at the moment you want to be careful about what you promise because you want to be sure you can deliver on that promise. The following week you realize that you have some extra money that you thought you might have but at the time of making the promise, you were not sure. So now when you give you actually give a larger amount than you had promised. What would be the potential outcomes in doing that? I think people would see a few different things.

1. By keeping your promise, you are can be trusted.
2. You are extremely generous, a person who does more than he promises when he is able to.
3. A person who truly cares about his society and demonstrates that in their actions.
4. A person whom people may be more willing to listen to when having the opportunity to speak about their faith.
5. You will be a person who is truly a decoration on the Gospel, making the church to be seen in a positive light.
6. You will be a contributor of Spiritual Capital in your society.
7. You will be a person who honors his Savior in public work and life.

Commitment

- Without commitment from the leader, the players will never win.
- The people who stick with you when things are difficult are the ones you can really trust. Are you one of those people?
- History's leaders who have made the biggest impact were those willing to sacrifice for the greater good.
- "Passion is an essential ingredient for commitment, giving it the strength to endure challenges.
- Those committed to worthy causes will go out of their way to help others and make great sacrifices.

Some questions to start discussion.

- **How can leaders or managers show both trust and loyalty to younger people?**
- **Are you committed to others? Who?**
- **For whom or what will you sacrifice?**
- **Who do you know who has a sacrificial attitude?**
- **Do you have a supervisor or mentor who is committed to your success or growth? Or are you a supervisor committed to the success or growth of those under you?**
- **Are you willing to accept responsibility and be a person who praises or encourages others?**