



The Essence of Leadership

All of the great coaches I've read about or seen interviewed share a common belief...If you make good habits, good habits will make you. The wisdom has been around since ancient times. In fact, one of the best-known quotes from Aristotle is, **"Excellence is not an act...it's a habit."**

Here's a little test to display the power of our habits. Cross your arms as you normally would, and look down to see which one is on top. When I do this exercise with audiences, invariably about half of the audience members will have their right arm on top (I do) and the other half will have their left on top. When you crossed your arms for the very first time, you might have been still in your playpen, and you've been crossing your arms the same way ever since. Now, cross your arms again, but this time put the wrong arm on top. It feels extremely weird! If I were to challenge you to cross your arms the "wrong" way for the rest of your life, could you do it? Probably. Would it be difficult? You bet it would!

Here's the point: Habits – good, bad, or neutral – are difficult to break. Therefore, the challenge for every leader is to determine the good habits that will drive the success of their organization. Once the desired habits are identified, good training and continual reinforcement are critical in making them a part of your organization's culture.

Food for Thought...

I am your constant companion.
I am your greatest asset or heaviest burden.
I will push you up to success or down to disappointment.
I am at your command.
Half the things you do might just as well be turned over to me.
For I can do them quickly, correctly, and profitably.
I am easily managed: just be firm with me.
Those who are great, I have made great.
Those who are failures, I have made failures.
I am not a machine, though I work with the precision of a machine and the intelligence of a person.
You can run me for profit, or you can run me for ruin.
Show me how you want it done. Educate me. Train me.
Lead me. Reward me.
And I will then...do it automatically.
I am your servant.
Who am I?
I am a habit.

Mac Anderson, Founder, Simple Truths