

The first
responsibility
of a leader
is to define
reality. The
last is to say
thank you. In
between, the
leader is a
servant.

Max DePree

GROUP DECISION MAKING

SPEAK ONLY FOR YOURSELF.

- You don't know how the members feel until you all have discussions.

MAKE SURE YOU KNOW WHAT THE OTHER PERSON MEANS BEFORE AGREEING OR DISAGREEING.

- If in doubt, ask then. Reflect (paraphrase) what you thought was said ("Are you saying . . .?"). If you misunderstood, the speaker will correct you.

DON'T IGNORE ANY SERIOUSLY INTENDED CONTRIBUTIONS.

- When members speak, they need to know the effect of what they said on others in the group. If their contributions are ignored, they will wonder:
 - *Didn't they hear me?
 - *Don't they understand me?
 - *Did I raise an issue they don't want to discuss?
 - *Do they disagree with me?
 - *Did I hurt someone's feelings?

Not knowing, they will hesitate to say anything again, and potentially valuable ideas and support will be lost.

WAYS TO DISCOURAGE OPEN DISCUSSION (WHAT NOT TO DO):

- Changing the subject without explanation
- Interpreting others' behavior (i.e., "You're saying that because you're prejudiced")
- Telling others what they should do without asking their opinion
- Ridiculing others' opinions

WAYS TO ENCOURAGE OPEN DISCUSSION:

- Paying attention and listening. Don't just keep quiet until others are finished.
- Ask questions and be visibly engaged.
- Reflecting others' statements so they know you're paying attention and understanding.
- Showing that you accept someone's strong feelings about a matter ("This means a lot to you, doesn't it?").
- Telling others why you feel strongly about an issue.
- Take responsibility for your own feelings ("I'm getting angry" instead of "You're making me angry").

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