

# LEADERSHIP

AT THE RIDGE

## Guest Services

### Team Lead Module 3 – Encouragement

*"The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life." - Proverbs 10:11*

#### **Competency 3**

Affirm team members accomplishments.

Encouraging those on your team can reap giant rewards of motivation, loyalty and productivity. In this session, we will focus on developing the skill of encouraging others in a way that shapes their soul. After completing the assignments below meet with your trainer and group of fellow team leaders to talk about what you have learned.

**Question:** Who has been the greatest encourager in your life? What have you learned from them about encouragement? Write your response here. It will help you in your later discussion.

#### **Assignment 1**

Read Hebrews 3:13, "But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness." Now answer the following...

1. What word or phrase stands out to you the most from this verse? Why?
2. How have you ever seen a lack of encouragement impact someone in a negative way? If so, list an example or two.
3. What is the purpose of encouragement?
4. How would you rate yourself as an encourager and why?  
(1= Poor, 3 = Average, 5= A model for others to learn from.)

## Assignment 2

Read the following article, [“The Anatomy of Encouragement”](#), and answer the questions below.

The Anatomy of Encouragement by Mac Lake, published in *Leadership Development Blog*, June 27, 2012

Proverbs 10:11, *“The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life.”*

We've all had that moment where we were impressed with someone's performance and felt the urge to give them a word of encouragement. Then, as soon as we open our mouth the only thing that comes out is something like, "Hey, you did a great job tonight!" or "Thanks for your leadership. That was good today." While I'm sure they appreciate the praise, think of how much more powerful our words could be if we simply put some thought and intention into our encouragement.

Encouragement is powerful and has the ability to lift a spirit, shape self-esteem and galvanize an individual's resolve to continue in the face of difficulty. So think about it, do your encouraging words have power, or are they just ineffectual comments? Years ago, Larry Crabb wrote an entire book on this subject called *Encouragement: The Key to Caring* (Zondervan). We have much to learn about this simple yet influential leadership skill.

Perhaps the key to putting a punch to our praise is looking at the anatomy of effective encouragement. While we have much more to learn than what I explore below, let's look at three simple but potent ingredients of effective encouragement.

**Sincere** – Before speaking words of encouragement, check your motives and make sure you're practicing encouragement to lift up someone else, not to gain something for yourself. Solomon warns us in Proverbs 26:28, "a flattering mouth works ruin." The Hebrew word for "ruin" comes from a root word meaning, "to push, drive away, or cast down." If we're not careful, insincere words can have the opposite effect we intended, pushing people away instead of building them up. Recently, I was eating lunch with a young man who continued to sing my praises throughout the whole hour. While I'm always up for a dose of encouragement, I found the whole thing pretty strange because this guy had never met me. His words were pleasant, yet I felt myself pushing away from him rather than being drawn to him. Encouragement is always best served with a spirit of sincerity.

**Specific** – If you want your words of praise to have more punch, then be specific with your encouragement. Notice the specifics of what people do well and consider how their

actions or words impacted you personally. If you look closely enough, you can find little nuances that made something special.

Many evenings, my wife Cindy and I watch the TV show "Chopped" on The Food Network, and I'm always fascinated at how much detailed feedback the judges give about the look, taste and flavors of each dish. They're able to praise or critique each chef with great detail because they've acquired a sensitive palate that enables them to taste flavors the average person doesn't notice. In the same way, we must look for and praise the specific detail of an individual's work. That kind of specificity takes encouragement to a very deep and meaningful level. So instead of saying, "Hey, you did a good job," you can say, "When you led the small group discussion tonight, you really asked insightful questions that challenged my thinking in new ways. You have a real gift for making people think. I appreciate you using that gift to add value to my spiritual walk." Specific encouragement is meaningful encouragement.

**Strengths Focused** – God has gifted each of us in very specific ways. Each day, we use and develop those strengths. Over time, as those strengths develop and mature, they become obvious to others. The Apostle Paul had been around young Timothy so much that he became very familiar with his apprentice's strengths. And then in a very crucial time in Timothy's ministry, Paul said to him, "Fan into flame the gifts God has given you." By giving someone encouragement centered on their particular strength, we are in essence helping him or her to "fan the flame" of his or her strengths.

Giving someone sincere, specific encouragement that's focused on their unique strengths helps them learn something new about themselves and deepens their wisdom and insights for using that particular strength. I've always said that encouragement is one of the most overlooked leadership development tools available to us.

Encouragement is a small investment with a huge return. Solomon observed, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver" (Prov. 25:11). The right word, spoken the right way, at the right time, can impact lives in ways we may never know.

#### **Questions:**

1. Have you ever received effective encouragement? If so, how did it make you feel?
2. What are common barriers that keep us from giving the type of encouragement described?
3. What leadership strengths did the article affirm about you?
4. Who do you know that best exemplifies the principles in this article? What makes them such a great encourager?

5. What aspect of encouragement do you need to grow in: Sincere, Specific or Strength Focused? And what are two or three next steps you need to take to grow as an encouraging leader?

### Assignment 3

Practicing encouragement. Before meeting with your leader, be intentional about encouraging at least three people, practicing what you learned. You could encourage a family member, co-worker, someone on your ministry team, or a friend. Take a few notes on each encounter to assist with your upcoming discussion.

1. How did people respond?
2. What did you do well?
3. What could you have done better?
4. How comfortable were you with giving encouragement?