Find Your Unexpected Leader

Use this icebreaker at your next meeting to get participants thinking and talking about what makes an effective leader. When the icebreaker is done, ask participants to use the follow-up exercise to keep them thinking about how they can uncover their inner leaders.

MATERIALS:

- Pens/pencils
- Sheets of paper (for icebreaker)
- Flip charts (for icebreaker)
- Journal/notebook (for exercise)
- Calendar (for exercise)

TIMING:

- 20–30 minutes (for icebreaker)
- 4–6 months (for exercise)

Icebreaker: Leaders we admire

DIRECTIONS:

1. The facilitator asks participants to break up into small groups and asks for someone in each group to volunteer to take notes.

2. Have each person in a group share a story about an inspiring leader.

3. Ask the person sharing the story to identify the qualities that made the leader effective.

4. After each member of the group shares a story, have them work together to identify qualities the leaders have in common. Have the teams write those qualities up on a flip chart.

5. Ask each group to share with the other groups the leadership qualities they identified.

MIX IT UP: You can also ask group members to share stories about the most ineffective leaders they have worked with—and to identify those qualities that made them so.

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Follow-up exercise: Leadership development

DIRECTIONS:

1. The facilitator asks attendees to pick 12 days over a four- to six-month period and mark them on a calendar.

2. Participants are asked to take note of a positive or negative leadership quality at the end of each of those days that he or she exhibited during the day.

3. Ask participants to answer the following questions:
   1) How do you feel about the action or behavior?
   2) Is this a leadership best practice?

GET MORE BENEFIT: Ask participants to identify a partner to share their leadership comments with, and suggest that they email their partners their thoughts after each of those days.