

Positive Leadership Toolkit

An overview of Chapter 3: Humility

Pillar 3 – Humility

Humility is one of the most underrated yet essential traits of leadership. Humble leaders go out of their way to acknowledge the strengths, contributions, unique skills, and knowledge of their team members and colleagues. They celebrate the accomplishments of others, fostering the engagement and performance of their team members. In doing so, humble leaders foster teams that are highly engaged and motivated to perform.

“The why”: Evidence of the importance of humility

The benefits of humble leadership include:

- Ignited (leadership) ambition in others
- Increased innovation
- Higher levels of employee engagement
- Higher overall leadership effectiveness, including higher levels of:
 - Affective commitment
 - Affective trust
 - Job satisfaction
 - Organizational identification
 - Psychological empowerment
 - Self-efficacy
 - Task performance
 - Employee voice and speaking up

“The how”: Practical strategies to enhance humility

- **Embrace a growth mindset** (instead of a fixed one), taking a dynamic lens to look at potential blind spots
 - Identify your triggers and develop strategies to correct course
 - Recognize your fixed mindset voice and develop counterbalances to shift mindsets and reframe in the moment

- **Reframe failure as a “learning moment”** to create a psychologically safe environment
- **Actively seek and act on feedback:**
 - Start with **why** you are asking for feedback
 - Follow with **how** you wish to receive feedback
 - Be specific by asking **open-ended and specific** questions
 - **Be more curious when it hurts**, taking the time to sit with difficult feedback and remaining open to potentially uncomfortable truths about the impacts of our behaviours
 - **Seek feedback from multiple sources**, especially from people you may disagree with
- **Shine the spotlight on your team**, celebrating the success of team members and colleagues
 - Bring team members who are subject-matter experts or those who have contributed to meetings with senior executives
- **Acknowledge mistakes and limitations**, owning up to errors or knowledge gaps
 - Defer to subject-matter experts on your team
- **Foster a learning culture** by encouraging and celebrating continuous learning

To learn more about the benefits of humility and practical strategies to apply it, read **Chapter 3: Humility**, written by Dr. Craig Dowden, in full in [APEX's Positive Leadership Toolkit](#).