



VAIL LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE



Humility

DEFINITION

Acting with modesty and unpretentiousness as related to your attitude; maintaining a healthy ego rather than exalting yourself; acting with deference to others to serve a larger purpose; the opposite of boastfulness

OVERVIEW

Humility is an attitude. It's about respect for others and maintaining an unassuming way of carrying yourself. Rather than exalting yourself, humility is about maintaining a healthy ego (recognizing that we all have one), holding your sense of self in balance with the other forces and factors at play. For some, humility may be born from yielding to a mission, purpose, or perspective greater than yourself, however you might conceive of that.

In your interactions with others, it may be useful to think of expressing humility through a series of “do’s” and “don’t’s”:

Do- share credit for accomplishments with others, be patient, avoid boasting, admit your mistakes, make decisions that serve a broader interest

Don't- try to control everything, pretend you have all the answers, hang onto being right, boast, make decisions primarily to protect your personal interests or your own recognition

In the end, if you say you're a humble person, you're probably not.

In his classic book, *Good to Great*, Jim Collins posits that “level 5 leaders are those who are self-effacing, quiet, reserved and have a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will.” Teaching this attitude is probably not a priority in the curriculum of most MBA programs, rather it is learned in the crucible of life.

Think of some leaders who were humble. Who comes to mind? Perhaps Abraham Lincoln, Mohandas Gandhi, Harriet Tubman and Eleanor Roosevelt come to mind. What about the holocaust survivor, Viktor Frankl? Who do you know that exhibits this quality? Who do you know in the Vail Valley that exhibits this value or trait? When you find them, get close!

LEADING PRACTICES

Practices are the possible approaches you might take to put a key principle into action. To practice humility you might:

- Be patient but determined
- Use “and” instead of “but”, and “we” versus “I”
- Choose an attitude of gratitude
- Love one another
- Be ok with being wrong
- Serve a purpose larger than yourself

QUESTIONS ON HUMILITY

Use any of the following questions to stimulate a respectful conversation with friends or colleagues:

1. What is your attitude towards patience? What keeps you back from exercising patience?
2. How do you keep your ego in balance?
3. Describe a situation when you said “I don’t know.” What happened?
4. How often do you embrace an attitude of gratitude?
5. Think back to a situation where you made a mistake, what came next?
6. How do you overcome your fears?
7. What is something more important than your own status?

More on the **Inside First**® framework on the Alliance’s web site at: vailleadershipalliance.org