

## The 100/0 Principle

Al Ritter has written a great little book, *The 100/0 Principle*, subtitled *The Secret of Great Relationships*. While this may sound like any one of the score of self-help books published annually, one merely has to look at Mr. Ritter's resume – MBA from Dartmouth, marketing and operations positions with Pepsico, CFO at Swift and Company, Senior VP for Citigroup, consulting for Accenture, and founding his own consulting company – to recognize that this short, simple, and easy-to-read book holds much promise for business leaders in any setting and level of organizational hierarchies.

I believe the simple concept at the heart of this book is arguably the single most important guarantor of success in any relationship, certainly in the personal arena, but beyond that in any organization or business enterprise. Such well-known leadership authors as John C. Maxwell, Brian Tracy, and Warren Blank have all recognized the central role of relationships in any attempt to lead. As Maxwell said, "People who are unable to build solid, lasting relationships will soon discover that they are unable to sustain long, effective leadership."

What Mr. Ritter so strikingly advocates in his book is that if you want any relationship to be successful, you must take 100% responsibility for the outcome while expecting nothing in return. While this statement may seem shocking to some, I believe it is counter-intuitive wisdom of the highest order. To examine why, consider the following statements relating to leadership:

- A leader is responsible for his own success.
- A leader is responsible for everything her organization does or fails to do.
- In a free society, all but the most socially or economically disadvantaged followers have choice and can go elsewhere.
- Meaningful relationships are based on trust.
- Followers don't automatically extend their trust to a leader; it must be earned.
- As the one with the power and authority, the leader must take responsibility for establishing trust.
- If, for whatever reason, a relationship with followers is not going well, a leader cannot expect or wait for others to fix it.
- Ergo: He or she must take responsibility for the relationship.

Mr. Ritter states and I believe that taking complete responsibility for your relationships and expecting nothing in return will yield vastly improved results in every arena of life. His book offers concrete advice and steps, such as creative listening, suspending judgment, and unconditional acceptance, for readers to adjust their thinking and change their responses to difficult people, challenging situations, even "toxic" bosses. While his experience with The 100/0 Principle has been mostly successful, he outlines a few situations where it doesn't apply. He also candidly admits that there are no guarantees that it will always work, but that in the majority of situations, dramatic results are achieved.

Roger Enrico, former Chairman and CEO of Pepsico said, "The soft stuff is always harder than the hard stuff." I can't imagine that anyone who has attempted to lead would dispute this basic observation. Read Al Ritter's book – it offers a simple and straightforward approach to getting the soft stuff right!

*The 100/0 Principle: The Secret of Great Relationships*, Al Ritter, Simple Truths, LLC, Napierville, IL, 2010

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