



Seeking Assessments: A Free Education

-Mark Haeussler, CEO

Most leaders believe that they have an obligation to *seek* assessments to those they lead. They see this as necessary to improve the individual or team in pursuing objectives. There is a certain power a leader yields in speaking assessments, and we can advance others and initiatives to improve.

That said, consider this: Hearing assessments is real, sustainable power.

Most leaders have worked diligently in learning and honing their skills. College degrees, certifications, mentors, reading about leadership, and some trial and error all are efforts to become a more effective leader. Leaders can forget, from time to time, that they don't know it all, and that they don't know everyone they lead and how best to apply their leadership specifically.



A leader is only as good as the moment they are in with others. Everything up to now got us to *here*. Each moment with those we lead is how we continue coordination and effectiveness of the team. As a leader, all the certificates on the wall and alphabet soup after our names means nothing in the moment if it does not connect with the people present in the moment. **The leader's power is wielded in each moment.**

Reading books, attending courses, and so on, help us hone our skills. *But to be really powerful, the leader must deliver on those skills each moment to the unique people they lead.* **Therefore, the strongest leader is the one who routinely seeks out assessments from others.** Each assessment we hear from those we lead helps us become a more effective by giving insights into how best to lead – and thus a more powerful leader. The leader's credibility measured by how well the people believe they are a good leader.

What is the best way to ask for assessments, people often ask? There are two key places to start:

1. Have an open heart, one that is centered and available to hear *what is true for another*;
2. Ask. That's right – keep asking for assessments.

Be sure to make your requests specific. Rather than ask broadly, "How's my leadership?", ask for details, such as, "How was my level of patience with you during the meeting?" (presuming patience is important in your leadership). People are more able to respond effectively if the assessment is framed and unambiguous. One last thought: To be seen as a credible leader, you need to do the work to improve on the assessment you receive. Asking is not enough. We lead by doing, and people assess us in the context of demonstrating the leader *they need us to be, not the leader we think we are.*

As a leader, we always are becoming – that is, every day, as we hear assessments and make shifts, we continue to grow. Being generative in how we seek assessments and apply our learning is hard work and something we must do consistently. Start easy in seeking assessments until people get used to the idea. Never disagree with an assessment – it is *their* assessment. And always thank people for their assessments.