

Leaders need to focus on every aspect of their responsibilities. And one of the key areas that a lot of leaders fail to focus on is their family life. You **HAVE** to stay in balance if you are going to truly be effective in your leadership practice.

I learned this the hard way. It wasn't until my late wife's battle with lung and brain cancer that I truly realized just how important this is. Don't learn this lesson the hard way like I did...

I sat down with her to discuss the things I did wrong in our marriage as well as the things I did well. From those intense discussions, where I really looked at my life and my actions with brutal honesty, I developed this listing of things any of us should do with the person we love the most in our lives or the teams we truly care about in our professional lives.

It is not a comprehensive list, but it is one that helped me become the leader in my home I should have been for most of our marriage.

1. Let your partner and your team know you are **LISTENING!** Truly **LISTENING** to them...
2. Tell them how much you care and **SHOW IT!** Actions truly speak much louder than words here...
3. Do the simple stuff...for example, take out the garbage without being asked.
4. Plan for 30 minutes a day for you and the person you care most about that is exclusively theirs. **NOTHING** violates their time.
5. Find out a critical need where they are having trouble and help them with that issue. And for the guys...sometimes your wife just wants you to listen to her...**NOT** fix it. Tough for us but trust me...this is real.
6. Develop a plan to spend time with your family each weekend that is spontaneous and unexpected.
7. Create an environment where they feel safe telling you what you need to hear...not what you **WANT** to hear!
8. Help them with their self-image. This means different things for different people...**YOU** are going to have to figure this one out!
9. Allow them to have time alone for reading and devotions. This is important people...
10. Make family devotions and family time a major priority.
11. Plan regular "dates" and stick to them. Dates are especially important **AFTER** you're married...
12. Allow your spouse or team time to reflect on loss or failure. Taking time to work through emotions is vital.
13. Use your "detective Skills" to find out a secret wish if it's your spouse, or a secret desire if it's a team member and help them fulfill it.
14. Resolve to take care of yourself so your family and your team doesn't have to worry about you. This one has been the hardest for me to live up to...
15. Help your partner with housework and routine chores so that they can spend more time with you and doing the things they love to do. This doesn't cost you a dime but it can be one of the most important gifts you can give a loved one.

16. For your spouse, do whatever it takes to let them know you truly cherish them...For your team members, do whatever it takes to let them know how much you appreciate them and the things they do for you and the organization.
17. Take a bold step and ask them what it is **THEY** want you to know and improve upon. You have to create true safety for those you love and your team members to truly be honest with you. But when you do, you can find out some amazing things that can help you achieve what you were created to become!
18. Study your spouse and your team to learn moods and patterns that can help you make them more comfortable. Never forget, if you want to experience the best, those around you have to be at their best!
19. Every time you think it's all about you, remember, you can only become what those around you allow. To truly be great, focus on them and watch how they elevate you!
20. Leaders eat last...Great leaders take care of those in their care before they take care of themselves. This is doubly true for your family. We would all like to think that we would risk our lives defending our families if they were attacked. Why wait until an extreme crisis to do what we already know is the right thing to do? Sacrificing ourselves for our families can be done in all the little things each day. Trust me, they will notice and it will make a huge impact on them and those around you who watch these things when we think no one is looking...

This list is not perfect nor is it complete. But I offer it in the hopes it will make you think. And perhaps do something different today with someone you love. They will wonder what you've been up to... 😊

Now go be the leader that you want to become!

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