

Sometimes, we are our own stumbling block. Unfortunately, we often don't realize that and blame external or irrelevant factors when we're challenged. David Dye explains how we're able to achieve the results we want by putting our focus where it really counts.

GET OUT OF YOUR WAY

by David M. Dye



SECRETS. OF. THE. UNIVERSE.

Do you ever find yourself pushing harder and harder, but getting fewer and fewer results?

If so, you're not alone - many leaders, supervisors, and managers experience this same dilemma.

Often, this frustration results from ignoring fundamental life-principles.

Many years ago when I taught high school, we often talked about "secrets of the universe" - those enduring, but not always well-known, rules of success.

You can ignore them if you want to, but that doesn't make them any less real.

One such "secret of the universe" goes something like this:

Causes produce effects.

When you focus on effects, rather than causes, you:

- sabotage the results you really want
- work much harder than you have to
- end up frustrated and bitter.

Some examples of this principle include:

- You gain respect by being respectable, not by demanding respect.
(Cause: being respectable,
Effect: respect)
- You grow a flower by giving it soil, sun, and water, not by 'motivating' it to bloom.
(Cause: healthy environment,
Effect: flowers)
- You become trusted by being trustworthy, not by focusing on wheedling secrets out of others.
(Cause: being trustworthy,
Effect: trust)
- You get good grades by truly learning the content, not by focusing on grades.
(Cause: learning,
Effect: grades)
- You make friends by being a friend, not by focusing on how many friends you have.
(Cause: being a friend,
Effect: friends)

LEADERSHIP CAUSE AND EFFECT

Effective leaders and managers understand that real influence requires credibility and that real credibility is developed through authentic commitment to people, competence, and results.

Many leaders limit their effectiveness because they focus on the effects of leadership: achievement, influence, reputation, image, power, accomplishment, respect, security, etc.

However, all of these are effects.

They are outcomes of an authentic focus on being a role model, sharing vision, building a team, encouraging others, and solving problems. Leaders cannot lead effectively while focused primarily on their own image.

STAY FOCUSED ON CAUSE

In the short term, authentic leadership can feel risky.



When faced with an opportunity to invest in your team or to react with fear and power so you look good to others, you may be tempted to take the path of immediate gratification.

In the long run, however, when the next problem comes along or is too big, you won't be able to rally a skilled and committed team. This is a basic life lesson, but one it is easy to forget in the middle of leadership and management challenges.

Get out of your own way, focus on providing your people what they need, and you'll get the results you want.

How do you maintain your focus on leadership "causes" and not get caught up in "effects"? **RL**



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David works with leaders who want to build teams that care, increase employee engagement, and get more done. He is the founder and President of **Trailblaze Inc** and loves to

partner with people who are working to change the world. David shares twenty years experience leading, managing, coaching, and teaching in the public and nonprofit sectors where influence is

critical. He has served as an elected city councilman, has coached leaders in more than 2000 sessions, and prior to starting Trailblaze, served as Chief Operating Officer for Colorado UpLift where he led efforts to replicate organizations in Phoenix, Orlando, Portland, and New York. He regularly speaks and writes about effective leadership. Connect with David today via his [blog](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), or [Google+](#).