



7 Core Beliefs Of Great Bosses

By Travis Bradberry, Ph.D.

Great bosses change us for the better. They see more in us than we see in ourselves, and they help us learn to see it too. They dream big and show us all the great things we can accomplish.

Great leadership can be a difficult thing to pin down and understand. You know a great leader when you're working for one, but even they can have a hard time explaining the specifics of what they do that makes their leadership so effective. Great leadership is dynamic; it melds a variety of unique skills into an integrated whole.

One thing is certain—a leader's actions are driven by his beliefs. It's through a leader's actions—and ultimately her beliefs—that the essence of great leadership becomes apparent.

"I am just a common man who is true to his beliefs." – John Wooden

Great leaders inspire trust and admiration through their actions, not just their words. Many leaders *say* that integrity is important to them, but only those leaders who truly *believe* it walk their talk by demonstrating integrity every day. Harping on people all day long about the behavior you want to see has only a tiny fraction of the impact that you achieve by believing so deeply in the behavior that you demonstrate it yourself.

Great bosses believe in their people, and this belief drives them to create an environment where people thrive. Let's explore some of the driving beliefs that set great bosses apart from the rest of the pack.

1. Growth should be encouraged, not feared. Average bosses fear their smartest, hardest-working employees, believing that these individuals will

surpass them or make them look bad. They hesitate to share information or to enable authority. Exceptional bosses, on the other hand, love to see their employees grow. They are always grooming their replacements and doing whatever they can to create leaders. Research shows that the number-one thing job seekers look for in a position is growth opportunity and that 80% of all job growth occurs informally, such as in conversations with managers. Exceptional bosses want their best employees to maximize their potential, and they know that good feedback and guidance are invaluable.

2. Employees are individuals, not clones.

Average bosses lump people together, trying to motivate, reward, and teach everyone in the same way. Exceptional bosses treat people as individuals, respecting the fact that everyone has their own motivation and style of learning. Something different makes each employee tick, and the best bosses will stop at nothing to figure out what that is.

3. Employees are equals, not subordinates.

Ordinary bosses treat their employees like children; they believe that they need constant oversight. These bosses think that their role is to enforce rules, make sure things run *their* way, and watch over people's shoulders for mistakes. Exceptional bosses see employees as peers who are perfectly capable of making decisions for themselves. Rather than constantly stepping in, exceptional bosses make it clear that they value and trust their employees' work and only intervene when it's absolutely necessary.

4. Work can and should be enjoyable.

Ordinary bosses see work as something that everyone has to do, whether they want to or not. They believe that their role is to make sure that their employees don't slack off or grow lazy. They say things like, "If it weren't for me, nothing would ever get done around here." However, exceptional bosses love their jobs and believe that everyone else can too. They give people assignments

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that align with their strengths, passions, and talents. They celebrate accomplishments and douse people with positive feedback when they do good work.

5. Diversity, not like-mindedness, bears fruit. Average bosses want their employees' ideas to align with their own, and because of this, they try to hire like-minded individuals. They encourage their employees to think similarly and reward those who "just put their heads down and work." Exceptional bosses actively seek out a diverse range of individuals and ideas. They expose themselves and their companies to new ways of thinking.

6. Motivation comes from inspiration, not agony. Ordinary bosses think that strict rules and rule enforcement drive employees to work effectively. They believe that people need to fear layoffs, explosions of anger, and punishment in order to operate at 100%. People then find themselves in survival mode, where they don't care about the product, the company, or the customer experience; they only care about keeping their jobs and appeasing their boss. Exceptional bosses motivate through inspiration—they know that people will respond to their infectious energy, vision, and passion, more than anything else.

7. Change is an opportunity, not a curse. Ordinary bosses operate by the motto, "This is the way we've always done it." They believe that change is unnecessary and that it causes more harm than good. Exceptional bosses see change as an opportunity for improvement. They constantly adapt their approach and embrace change to stay ahead of the curve.

Bringing It All Together

If you're currently a boss, is this how your employees would describe your beliefs? If not, you're leaving money, effort, and productivity lying on the table. You're also probably losing some good employees, if not to other jobs,

then at least to disengagement and lack of interest.

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Dr. Travis Bradberry is the award-winning coauthor of [*Emotional Intelligence 2.0*](#) and the cofounder of TalentSmart® the world's leading provider of emotional intelligence [tests](#) and [training](#) serving more than 75% of Fortune 500 companies. His bestselling books have been translated into 25 languages and are available in more than 150 countries.

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