

We often think of “leadership” in the sense of “managing, directing or making approval decisions.”

But think of the times when you’ve been part of a team and a breakthrough idea came from an individual with a curious twist on how to solve the problem. This fresh perspective can spark an idea that others then build upon. The willingness to put forward an unusual perspective is an invaluable form of leadership.

How about a time when you’ve been a member of a group of volunteers that was stalled because no one would step up to take ownership for an undesirable task? Remember the relief created and the subsequent flurry of people raising their hands to help when someone finally did offer to take on the task at hand? Showing a willingness to accept accountability is another form of leadership.

Of course, there are times when “everyone leading” is NOT an appropriate approach. In a crisis where time is of the essence, a top-down one-person-at-the-helm is often the best approach. But when the quality of input is paramount and when creative ideas are needed,



a diverse team rises to the occasion.

A great team stands out because of *how* it functions. A great team is one where the whole is so much more than the sum of the parts, and each member not only contributes but plays to their strengths. A wise team leverages what’s unique in each individual. In leveraging strengths, each person can provide leadership.

Many of you are leaders of teams because of your formal position – supervisor with a group of direct reports, the owner of a small business, or head of a project team. I encourage you to reflect on times that you’ve been most powerful as leader *because you’ve been able to bring out the leadership in others.*

New in their supervisory role and eager to enhance their leadership skills, my clients are often surprised when I encourage them to shift their focus from themselves to their team members. We explore such questions as: What would it take for each person in your team to show leadership? In what way could your stepping back enable your team to move forward?

Recognize the leadership roles that your team members play in their personal lives and communities... what untapped talents do they have that >

you are overlooking?

So ask yourself what would happen if you decided to foster the leadership in everyone within your team? How might this change your perspective? What might you be doing differently? How might you judge your own effectiveness and the success of the team? I wish you well in developing your great teams! •

Sue Edwards is president of Development by Design, a leadership coaching firm. She is the author of the self-coaching workbook, Wow Them in Your New Jobs! (and Reduce Your Overwhelm)...It's Easier Than You'd Expect. www.development-by-design.com and www.clearingthe90dayburdle.com