

**March 26, 2018****By Robert J. Tamasy**

## **FINDING GOOD PEOPLE – AND NOT MEDDLING**

There are different types of workers; some need close supervision while others do not. Some need very specific instructions on how to proceed with a task or project, others are content to receive general guidelines about what is expected and the latitude to determine how to proceed from there.

The challenge for the effective leader is to understand what each employee requires to be able to perform most productively, provide what is needed, and understand how closely to supervise the work. Many years ago, then U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt stated, “The best executive is one who has sense enough to pick good people to do what needs to be done, and self-restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it.”

This is because there are also different types of leaders. Some prefer rolling up their sleeves and getting directly involved; others like to offer close supervision; and still others delegate work assignments and trust their staff to get the job done, checking back only if they have questions or need further instruction.

My own working style has always leaned toward minimum of structure and freedom to determine the best way to approach my work. I have had supervisors who demonstrated confidence, giving assignments and letting me do them my own way. Other bosses, however, chose to keep close tabs on what I was doing. Some even micromanaged my work, which I found annoying, even disconcerting. I observed that other people, however, needed closer management. Clearly, we cannot lead everyone exactly the same way.

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So, as Roosevelt said, good leaders understand how to choose the right people and then discern how much direction they need, without being meddlesome. The Scriptures address this important balance:

**Know the ones you lead.** Leaders know what they want to accomplish. They also should strive to know and understand those through whom those goals will be accomplished. *“Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds.... the lambs will provide you with clothing, and the goats with the price of a field. You will have plenty of goats’ milk to feed your family” (Proverbs 27:23-27).*

**Demonstrate concern and interest in those you lead.** Jesus used the metaphor of the shepherd to explain His commitment to His followers. Good leaders are wise to observe His example. *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away.... I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me – just as the Father knows me and I know the Father – and I lay down my life for the sheep” (John 10:11-15).*

**Recognize the uniqueness of everyone you lead.** Everyone on a team has different gifts, talents and experience. Recognizing their unique contributions enables the leader to entrust each of them with responsibility – and authority – commensurate with what they have to offer. *“Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. Now if the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,’ it would not for that reason stop being part of the body...” (1 Corinthians 12:12-26).*

© 2018. Robert J. Tamasy has written *Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today’s Workplace; Tufting Legacies*; coauthored with David A. Stoddard, *The Heart of Mentoring*, and edited numerous other books, including *Advancing Through Adversity* by Mike Landry. Bob’s website is [www.bobtamasy-readywriterink.com](http://www.bobtamasy-readywriterink.com), and his biweekly blog is: [www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com](http://www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com).

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## Reflection/Discussion Question

1. What kind of worker are you? Do you prefer a lot of freedom in how you pursue your tasks, or do you like ongoing direction and support from those to whom you report?
2. How does a good leader go about selecting the right people for what needs to be done, as Roosevelt suggested? Once those individuals are chosen and brought to the team, how can the leader avoid meddling in what they are doing?
3. Do you think it is easy to discern what people need to perform their jobs most effectively, as the passage from Proverbs says we should do? Why or why not?
4. Why is it important for people to sense their leaders genuinely care for them and have their best interests at heart? Do you agree this is even necessary? Explain your answer.

## NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

*Proverbs 27:17; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 3:9; Ephesians 2:10*

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