

The Seven Principles

“When asked what was behind our caring culture displayed on [*Undercover Boss*,] I said, ‘Well we actually use love to define our leadership culture at at Herschend Family Entertainment (HFE). Not love the emotion, but love the verb. We train our leaders to love each other, knowing that if they create enthusiasm with their employees, the employees will in turn create an enthusiastic guest experience.” *Love Works*, p. 13

The seven principles explored in *Love Works* actually come from one of the oldest and most respected authorities on human behavior: the Bible. In 1 Corinthians chapter 13, the apostle Paul writes, “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”

From this verse, HFE created a leadership model that would embrace love as a behavior, not an emotion.

Patient: Have self-control in difficult situations.

Leading with love is not an excuse to be “soft” on people. As leaders, we must hold people accountable. Yet at the same time, we must *always* admonish with patience and respect. Our objective isn’t simply performance; it’s to protect the dignity of the people on our team.

Whether we correct and train our employees in public or in private, our goal is always to do so with respect and love. After all, that’s exactly how we want to be treated.

Kind: Show encouragement and enthusiasm.

Kindness is intentionally creating and maintaining the right environment in your organization so employees can deliver an enthusiastic guest experience. The goal is to make deposits in people’s emotional bank account, operating on a 3 praises to every 1 admonishment ratio. With this model, management is kind to employees, employees are kind to customers, and customers are loyal and enthusiastic. Everybody wins.

Trusting: Place confidence in those around you.

Leaders must trust their employees to perform their best. You can show trust in your team by listening well and not interrupting with your own ideas. Letting employees make and be involved in decisions they are responsible for is another sign of trust from leadership. Trusting the people we work with is crucial to building a climate of positive morale and results.

Unselfish: Think of yourself less.

Being unselfish isn’t just for individuals—it’s for organizations too. The gift of leadership brings with it the awesome responsibility of giving properly of our time and resources, part of which includes delegating. A leader who delegates not only becomes more efficient, but also displays a great level of selflessness. They are demonstrating a willingness to allow others to make decisions.

Leadership also entails being a steward of giving for the organization. At HFE, we have established the Share It Forward foundation to help our employees in need. It all starts

with the selfless donation of employees and is matched by the selfless donation of the company. This foundation has now helped thousands of employees.

Truthful: Define reality corporately and individually.

Leading with love means caring enough about an individual or a team to give and solicit truthful feedback. Sometimes this feels foreign and out of our comfort zone, but it is healthy and sets in motion the opportunity for great things to happen. When leaders provide their teams with the truth about their performance as well as the tools to be successful, regardless of personal feelings, this is a sure sign of leading with love.

Forgiving: Release the grip of the grudge.

Forgiveness is sometimes agonizing, and it doesn't always lead to a happy ending. I am not suggesting that we toss out our organizational standards and goals—but simply keeping our hearts soft enough to be open to forgiveness. It may not always be the easiest thing to do, but it is always the right thing.

Dedicated: Stick to your values in all circumstances.

If you choose to lead with love, others around you may not “get” what you’re doing. Do it anyway. This type of leadership is more important than the temporary approval of your coworkers. Choosing to lead with love is the single most difficult decision a leader can make, but a wise leader dedicates him or herself to it because it is also the single best way to lead an organization.

Leaders who are dedicated to the attributes of love outlined in *Love Works*, do not only get strong financial results—that would defeat the purpose of these principles. Leading with love not only results in positive business outcomes, but also will certainly place that leader in a unique yet very successful minority in business, government and the nonprofit world. I encourage you to lead with love today, tomorrow and forever.

<http://joelmanby.com/the-seven-principles/>