January 2012

Podcast for Managers

*Resolutions for the New Year*

**[06:09]**

**Host:** Hi, I’m Marianne Jacobbi. Welcome back to our series of Podcasts for Managers. It’s the start of a new year and we’re here to talk about resolutions. What are your goals and resolutions as a manager for the new year? We invited Stewart Friedman to share his resolutions with us. He’s the founding director of the Wharton School’s Leadership Program and its Work-Life Integration project and the author of numerous books, including his recent best seller, *Total Leadership: Be a Better Leader, Have a Richer Life*. Professor Friedman, thanks for joining us.

**Stewart Friedman:** Thanks for having me, Marianne. Great to be here.

**Host:** So it’s January and a good time to take stock and look ahead. I don’t know about you, but I’m someone who always makes New Year’s resolutions. Do you?

**Stewart Friedman:** Sometimes. I try to. And I have this year. So, yes.

**Host:** Could you share some of yours with us today?

**Stewart Friedman:** Sure. There are two that I am focused on looking ahead at 2012. And the first one is about taking what I call the “leadership leap.” And that involves seeing yourself through the eyes of other people. In other words, taking the time to think about how other people see me in terms of my actions and what it is that I do for them. So my resolution is to be more focused on the way that other people view me in terms of what it is that I bring to them in terms of creating value, making life a little bit easier for them.

**Host:** That’s a good one. Could you give an example of that in your personal or work life? Is there something that comes to mind?

**Stewart Friedman:** Well what I often find for both myself as well as for clients and students is that it’s very easy to make assumptions about what other people are thinking and feeling about me. And sometimes those assumptions are wrong. And this happens, I don’t know, 20 times a day. It happens a lot, in personal relationships as well as professional relationships—with colleagues, with students, with clients, et cetera. And so, I’ve been thinking a lot about that lately, about what it is that I could be doing more of to ensure that I get in less trouble by making those kinds of assumptions and what I’m going to try to practice more diligently this year, and it’s something that I write about and talk about and coach others about, is to listen and inquire and be genuinely curious about what it is that other people are interested in, particularly in terms of what it is that I can be doing to make life a little bit better for them.

**Host:** That’s a great resolution. I like that. And what’s your second one?

**Stewart Friedman:** So that first one is if I can make a dent on being more diligent about, you know, expressing curiosity, and asking with both my words and with my body language to have other persons speak more about what it is that they care about, what they need, if I can make a dent on that one I think I’ll have achieved a lot and it’ll make me more effective in all the different relationships that matter to me.

The second one is related to the first and it has to do with compassion. I find that it’s all too easy for me and for many of the people I know to jump too quickly to judgment about other people’s intentions and to not have enough grasp of the different challenges that they’re feeling as they try to achieve the goals that matter to them. And so another resolution for this year is to do whatever I can to both have and express compassion for the people I come in contact with and to be more understanding of the difficulties, the struggles that they have, in trying to pursue the goals that matter to them and to do the right thing from their perspective.

**Host:** I can think of lots of ways that managers and leaders might put that into practice too in their work.

**Stewart Friedman:**Yeah, and it’s an everyday kind of thing where you have opportunities in just about every relationship that matters to take that moment and pause and think about, “What is this person wrestling with? What’s their struggle? And how, by my understanding what they’re trying to respond to in their environment, can I be useful to them?” And my experience is that the more you’re able to take that step back and just pause for a moment and think about the world as the people around you experience it, the more likely it is that you’re going to be able to do things that are helpful and thereby build trust, enhance your reputation as someone who is trustworthy, and perhaps most importantly, enable other people to use their talents to best effect, to get things done that matter to you as well. In other words, to lead more effectively.

**Host:** Stew, you’ve inspired me. Thanks for sharing these thoughtful resolutions, and thanks for talking with us today.

**Stewart Friedman:** My pleasure, Marianne, as usual.

**Host:** For more on Stewart Friedman’s work, go to [totalleadership.org](http://www.totalleadership.org/). And be sure to visit our website where you’ll find helpful articles, booklets, podcasts, and recordings for managers. We’d like to hear what your resolutions are for the new year as a manager. Share them with us on the LifeWorks News Facebook page. That’s LifeWorks News. Thanks for listening.

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