

Volume 6**What I'm hearing**

I make it a habit to see interesting people speak as often as I can. It's a great way to observe a professional at work and learn a few things in the process. Recently, I attended a speech by Greg Mortenson, the author of *Three Cups of Tea* (a must-read, by the way), and I left with an interesting piece of information. Greg was telling a story of the first time he met General David Patreaus who had just read his book (because his wife made him). The general met him and quickly gave him a summary of his book in three bullet points. After reading the book, the general observed that the keys to success in Afghanistan consist of:

- Listening more
- Respecting the people
- Building relationships

This book has since become required reading for Patreaus' staff and many other parts of the military and government.

What it means

It's great to see a leader open up to new ways of thinking when faced with a difficult problem. It was his wife's idea, but Patreaus made the decision to keep an open mind and follow her advice. What hits me about this lesson is that these three bullet points are nothing new — they're well-established concepts. Regardless of the situation, successfully doing these things builds **TRUST**. How often do we, as leaders, go into new situations through a merger, promotion, new job or special project and have to learn this lesson the hard way? What if we always went into new situations with these three bullets in our sights? I think of how expensive re-learning this lesson is:

- To the leaders we hire from outside our organization who fail in their new roles (40%+ is the number).
- To CEOs trying to execute a successful merger or acquisition that is struggling because of challenges integrating leadership or culture.
- To baby boomers trying to lead millennials — or vice versa.
- To a high-potential individual trying to build a reputation and career through a tough assignment that requires working through others.

The list goes on . . .

What you should do

First, pick a transition happening at your organization such as hiring a new leader, acquiring a new business, setting up a partnership, reorganizing a group or moving into a new market. Second, ask yourself or your team, "How well are we doing these three things?" and "What purposeful things could we be doing to make sure we are building trust through our actions?" Finally, act on what you come up with and keep revisiting these questions throughout the process.

Not sure how to ask these questions or follow up on the answers?
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