



# 7 PSYCHOLOGICAL TRICKS TO TRANSFORM YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE

The subconscious mind is a powerful thing. As leaders, we can leverage the power of psychology not to manipulate but to supercharge our leadership capabilities while inspiring those around us. Here are seven essential "mind hacks" for leaders.

## 1. REFINE YOUR POSTURE

Body language unconsciously communicates to those around us. The way we sit, stand, carry ourselves, and engage in conversation can come off as confident and engaging or insecure and closed off.

Remember what mama told you: shoulders back, chin up, stand up straight! Make eye contact. Point your feet towards the other person and do not cross your arms. If your feet point away, it's a sign that you're looking for the exit. Crossing your arms translates as defensive and closed off.

## 2. SIT SIDE-BY-SIDE

Engaged in conflict? Sit beside the person you're having an issue with rather than across from them. Physical distance makes it easier for tempers to flare. Proximity to the other person can keep either of you from blowing up and facilitates a more meaningful and calm conversation.



## 3. REVEAL A FLAW

Leaders, show your weaknesses. Maybe not all of them, but at least one! Recognizing your fallibility in front of your followers allows them to recognize their own shortcomings — and thus, work to minimize them. It also humanizes you and makes interpersonal relationships easier to establish.

While you want to be confident in your skills, knowledge, and ability, you also want to make room to acknowledge where you're lacking. This also allows the team members that fill those gaps to feel valuable and needed. Your team needs to feel like they're doing something important and worthwhile — not just doing the tasks you're too busy to do yourself.



## 4. BE SPECIFIC AND PERSONAL

Broad calls-to-action don't work. You can call it something of a “bystander effect.” For some reason, when humans expect that someone else will act, they won't take up the mantle themselves. We see this in instances of crime and harassment, where an individual calls for help and, despite being surrounded by people who could at least dial 911, go without aid.

To a less dire degree, this happens in professional spaces, too.

Don't mass email the office asking for volunteers. Most people will assume that someone else will do what you ask. Instead, ask people personally and directly to do the things you want to accomplish. It takes longer, but you'll get better results.

## 5. MASTER FIRST IMPRESSIONS

First impressions are everything. When meeting someone for the first time or speaking before a crowd, pull out all the stops to establish yourself as a respectable leader. For individuals, make eye contact, smile, and raise your brows slightly. This demonstrates openness and familiarity. Before you meet, rub your hands together so that any handshakes are warm and dry.

When speaking to crowds, mind your posture. Make eye contact with individuals in the crowd, lasting for the duration of a sentence or two, and move on to someone else. Hand gestures and movement around the stage, when unhurried, demonstrate a comfortable rapport.

## 6. ASK QUESTIONS

Sometimes leaders are reluctant to ask questions. We want others to see us as having all of the answers. Questions aren't always about ignorance, though — they're about interest. You can display your interest in another person or their work by asking thoughtful questions. Avoid yes or no questions and instead plan to spark a meaningful conversation.

When speaking in front of crowds, rhetorical questions can be beneficial. You might not want audience feedback in the moment, but you do want to get their gears turning.



Sparking deeper thought helps the audience feel more engaged in the subject matter and endeared towards you. On a subconscious level, you are indicating that you value their thoughts and opinions and trust them to make determinations for themselves.

## 7. LEAVE ON A HIGH NOTE

First impressions are key, but so are last impressions. Ever eat something that tastes great in the beginning but leaves a lingering, bad aftertaste? You don't want to be like that as a leader. Remember, people won't always remember what you said, but they'll remember how you made them feel.

Plan your exit as strongly as you plan your entrance. Thank people for their time more than once. Make an appropriate joke or laugh at someone else's. If possible, make physical contact: a handshake or light touch to the arm.