



## Episode 34: The Key to Inspiring Others

Welcome to In the Right Direction podcast, where we believe you get to choose what's on your plate, you can manage the overwhelm, and that change is possible. I'm your host, Deb Elbaum, and I'm here to share insights and strategies to increase your happiness, one baby step at a time. Let's dive in.

Hi everyone, it's Deb. Here are the starting questions today: Have you ever heard a fabulous keynote speaker who inspired you to think differently about your life? Someone who said things you felt compelled to write down and share with others?

And then did you say to yourself, I wish I knew how to be that inspiring?

There are many factors that make a speaker inspiring – their energy, their lived experience, their stories – and there is one other key piece. They likely inspire you because they share beliefs about human nature, about work, or the world that intrigue you or resonate with you. They share, what I call, their “leadership beliefs.”

Here's the cool thing. It's not just keynote speakers who have leadership beliefs. We all do. You do, too. There are things you know and believe as a leader. Sharing your leadership beliefs is a way to inspire others. Today, let's talk about leadership beliefs as an important tool for your toolkit that can help you expand your leadership presence, style, and substance.

Here's how I define leadership beliefs. They are beliefs that you know to be true, given your experience, your knowledge, and your perception of the world. They are high-level statements that can be applied to any situation. We all have leadership beliefs – about how to build trust in relationships, about what makes an effective leader, and about how to successfully navigate change. These beliefs are based on our store of knowledge and lived experience, and filtered through our perceptions and the environment we are in.

Because each of us is unique, we each get to have our own leadership beliefs. Our leadership beliefs matter because they influence how we show up. They are our operating system. What we think and feel drives what we say and do. Our beliefs translate into what and how we communicate and where we invest our energy.

However, there's an opportunity to share our leadership beliefs more. When you talk with someone like your manager or a team member, unless they specifically share their leadership beliefs, you do not truly know what drives them. You cannot read their mind. You do not necessarily know what they think is most important about relationship building or what they see as the way to resolve conflict most effectively.

And it might be helpful to know those things, because when we know what someone is thinking, we can respond and create alignment more easily.

Clarifying and sharing your leadership beliefs is a conscious leadership strategy. Voicing them signals to those you work with that you are thoughtful, that you're strategic, and that you have guiding principles. Sharing them positions you as a leader. They position you as someone to pay attention to. Just like an inspiring speaker.

That was the case for me with one speaker in particular I heard in 2022. When I listened to Caroline Wanga, the CEO of Essence, speak, her leadership beliefs inspired me.

She said: Who you are is nonnegotiable. Who you are is nonnegotiable. Those words landed in my heart. It was more than the words themselves, it was how she shared this leadership belief. She said it confidently with a nonnegotiable tone and with grounded, powerful body language. Who you are is nonnegotiable. I was inspired.

Sharing a leadership belief is an opportunity to inspire others, whether you're presenting to a board, negotiating, or interviewing for a job.

Let's take the example of sharing leadership beliefs in a job interview. When you interview for a job, the interviewer usually has little knowledge about who you truly are. They do not know, for example, about how you think about building cross-functional relationships. Sharing your leadership beliefs tells them. It shows that you've thought about these topics, that you are intentional, and that you have a point of view. In other words, that you are a leader.

Here's how you might insert a leadership belief in an interview.

Suppose, for example, you are asked about a time when you navigated change. Instead of immediately answering about a specific time, start with a leadership belief. Tell them what you believe is necessary for successful leadership around change. Tell them, for example, this: That navigating change requires a calm head, open heart, and curious perspective. Doesn't that sound confident? Then, you can continue and share your story about a specific time you did just that. You see how that works?

You can also share leadership beliefs when talking with people in conversation. Knowing what you believe can create trust and signal to them that you've "got" this. That you see the situation and have a vision and a plan. That is comforting and inspiring.

Now, keep in mind that you might share a leadership belief that does not resonate with the other person. That's OK. I am sure that some people listening to Caroline Wanga that day did not resonate with some of her beliefs. As she said, we get to anchor ourselves in everything about us and share that. Then we let the universe get our message out to those who are meant to hear it.

Sharing your leadership beliefs takes courage and choice. It also takes faith, and leaning into the idea that our beliefs will be heard by those they are meant to inspire.

Let's bring this to you. Let's help you clarify and communicate your leadership beliefs.

I know that you have ideas and a point of view about lots of things. For example, about what it takes to build alignment or how to approach problems most effectively.

To get started, in the next few days, take a few minutes, sit down, and complete these sentence stems.

1. To build alignment more easily, it takes: \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The key to navigating conflict is: \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Successful problem solving requires: \_\_\_\_\_.

And then continue from there. Write out 5-10 additional leadership beliefs you have, even if you think they're simple or commonly known. They are your leadership beliefs and they matter.

To craft powerful leadership beliefs, remember to keep them concise and keep each statement to one big idea.

Then say them out loud and see how they feel. If they feel solid, you're ready to try them out in conversation.

Let others see you as an intentional thinker with a unique perspective to share. Remind them that you are a leader with caring, expertise, and a vision.

It's time to enhance your leadership with the tool of clarifying and communicating your leadership beliefs.

Thank you so much for listening and being part of my community. I would love to hear what you believe as a leader. Please email me at [deb@debelbaum.com](mailto:deb@debelbaum.com) and share one guiding belief with me. If you need help translating your experience and thoughts into leadership beliefs, head over to my website [debelbaum.com](http://debelbaum.com) and schedule a complimentary consult. I'm here to help you create your best self at home and at work, so that you're confident you're moving in the right direction for you.

Until next time!