



Would you like to know how two mega-successful business leaders did it? I'll be sharing with you tips that only a daughter or wife would know, tips on how two men regularly inspired so much engagement and loyalty that employees made it a habit to go the extra mile and regularly stayed with them for life.

My late father, Ernest Henderson, was the Co-Founder and President of the Sheraton hotel chain. As a child, I was forever asking him how he did it. One of his tips was, "People have a compulsion to live up to or down to your expectations."

To demonstrate to his employees how much he believed in them, whenever he'd take over a hotel and it needed refurbishing, the first money he'd ever spend was on areas that only the employees would see, like their lockers or showers or dining rooms. By his actions, he demonstrated to them how important they were and how much he valued them and believed in them. His goal was to give them a better vision of themselves.

My late husband, Frank Perdue, brought the chicken company from no employees to 20,000 at the time of his death. Like my father, he put tremendous effort into demonstrating how much he respected and valued the people he worked with. One of the things we did was, we had a goal of entertaining every associate (Perdue-speak for employee) in our home for dinner, with their spouses. At these dinners, he'd actually stand behind the buffet table and wait on his employees, and towards the end of the evening, he'd tell his employees what was going on in the company, he'd answer questions, and he'd end by telling them, "I know that the company wouldn't be where it is without you."

There's a quote that applies to both men, and it comes from a psychiatrist from a hundred years ago, William James. He said, "The deepest principle of human nature is the craving for appreciation." As leaders, both Henderson and Perdue made a life-long effort to show the men and women who worked with them that they were breathtakingly important.



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