

# Playing Well with Others

*What I should have learned in kindergarten*

**Terry Beard**

Whether you are talking about presidents, great clubs, organizations, or countries, it always starts with the people. Success begins at the top—with good quality leadership.

As leaders in this community, in this society, in the great Northwest, and as citizens of the greatest country on earth, it is by no accident that we have climbed to the summit. We've had great leadership.

As leaders, when we commit to do something we need to be dogged-determined to deliver results and not excuses. We must be firm in our convictions, we must be persistent, and above all else we must be someone that people can count on. Leaders exhibit these qualities.

Leaders have well-honed value systems that guide them in their decision-making, and they are not concerned about winning a popularity contest.

As I continue to study and to learn about what are the important traits of leaders, I learn more about myself. I ask myself do I play well with others? Do I take turns? Do I do what I say I will do? Am I truly engaged and enjoying mutually enhancing

reciprocity.

Most recently, I have been influenced by situations, issues, and events. And as a result, I've added a new filter to my social awareness and social intelligence.

Mutually-enhancing reciprocity is most important. But consider a more focused filter—am I (are we) in an exchange with others, sharing mutually-enhancing empowerment?

Over this last year as I move from being a junior-senior citizen to a senior citizen, I am taking note of relationships that profit from mutually-enhancing



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empowerment.

We have much to be grateful for, but the price we owe for our comfort is the rent we must pay by giving back to the others in our communities. On a personal level, as the clock ticks a little faster and as I take my values upmarket (using my moral compass with a keener eye and sharper focus), when the absence of mutually-enhancing empowerment is honored in the breach rather than the observance, I pick up my school supplies and move on.

When we play well with others, we take turns. Usually, we do not keep score as we trust others to share. But in time, like good wine, the flavor of the relationship will reveal itself.

I, like many of us, have been on the giving side of a relationship. When in turn we want a little help—a little assistance, (sometimes it is plainly obvious and the ping pong ball is not returned)—the mutual empowerment is nonexistent and I move on. The relationship cannot and will not grow, there is blockage, there is withholding. Time to go, to move on, to go where people play well with others.

All of these thoughts on how playing well with others is important, came home to roost. My filters for friendships and relationships were validated right here in downtown Portland, Oregon. I went to the Lincoln exhibit at the Oregon Historical Society.

The exhibit was an awesome opportunity to learn more about President Lincoln. In 2012, the movie Lincoln more than ever caused me to think about what a wonderful role model this man was and continues to be for us all.

President Lincoln had the courage to take a stand on what he felt was right. He had the

*Commitment  
is what  
transforms a  
promise into  
reality.*

Abraham Lincoln

courage, the determination, the persistence to stand up for what he believed in. He had the courage of his convictions. When he signed into law the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, he did not waiver from his goal to define freedom for America. His commitment and determination to free the slaves did not win him any popularity contests.

Lincoln was determined to live and to be guided by his value system. He was defining what freedom meant, not only for the slaves, but for all citizens of the greatest country on earth.

What gave Lincoln his ability, as we look back with 20-20 vision, to develop the leadership qualities which he possessed? What did Lincoln do really well which is not talked about often enough?

He had social intelligence, he had the ability to read people. He knew who he could count on. He knew what people wanted and needed and he gave it to them. He knew how to play well with others, he knew how to take turns. He knew who to ask to get things done. He worked the principle of taking turns. He loaded his cabinet



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with a team of rivals.

President Lincoln worked the principle of mutually enhancing reciprocity and he took it to the next level in his social intelligence filtering system. He valued and was committed to mutually enhancing empowerment.

He asked for favors and his lieutenants delivered. When he was asked to give back, he did. Lincoln knew how to pick people that he could count on. Yes, mutually enhancing empowerment.

Today, when I reflect on this man who has shaped what freedom is today in America, I wonder if we Americans are truly appreciative.

I take inventory of myself. Am I playing well with others, am I taking turns. . . am I truly engaged in mutually enhancing empowerment.

I spend less time listening to others and more time watching how people treat other people. Am I demanding of myself and of others? Was Lincoln—my role model (our role model)—demanding of others? Am I getting stuck in my junior-senior years? No, it takes one 50 years or more to figure out how to live a life.

To design a life, to develop eyes which see and filters that sort out who will engage in mutually-enhanced empowerment, is an important developmental goal.

People ask me favors, and on occasion, I'll ask them for one in return. Are there expectations? Yes.

We can do better. I can, too. Let's pay the rent we owe to others by empowering one another by taking turns.

Give and take is taking turns.



Not returning phone calls, or responding to emails, or sharing introductions, etc., (“uniprocity” which needs to be replaced with reciprocity) is not taking turns. We’ll make introductions and then the favor is not reciprocated—a lack of mutually-enhancing empowerment.

We’re all in the same boat. Let’s learn and practice pulling together. We owe it to one another to take turns. Remember that “A rising tide lifts all ships.”

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