



How bad is YOUR behaviour? Read the seven sins below, and for every sin you find yourself consistently engaging in, give yourself one point. Then see the results at the end.

1. Only Ask What You Need To Know

As the Leader, your instincts are what counts. What matters is already crystal clear to you—so why muddy the waters with more questions and feedback? Besides, everyone knows the fewer questions you ask, the fewer problems there are. Employee input? Once every leap year should suffice, if that. If anything, you should be **telling more and asking less**. Remember: as a Leader, you have the duty to give your wisdom about anything and everything, at all times. But when you open the door to feedback, you risk slowing things down and veering off-course. Who needs that?

2. Hard Facts Count, Feelings Don't

You hired employees to execute your vision, not to get sentimental about it. Emotions just slow things down: they are for soap operas, not for serious business. Perhaps you should **discourage** feelings more. How about a "no smiling" policy to maintain maximum efficiency?

3. All Feedback Is Personal, Always

All critique touches your skills and vision as a Leader, and is therefore personal. Why would anyone criticize unless they're just bitter, jealous or dumb? Clearly, the problem lies with them. If they were

smarter, they'd simply agree with you. Perhaps you should mandate that all criticism should come with a **formal apology**—after all, they've clearly misunderstood you either willingly or unwittingly.

4. Fix Things Fast With Band-Aids

If a problem is important enough, it'll sort itself out without needing to disrupt what people do. You've got bigger fish to fry, like making the quarterly report look nice. Real problems tend to resolve themselves over time – they always do. In fact, you could throw **more band-aids** at the problem! A deluge of superficial solutions looks like action, keeps people busy, and therefore makes them not worry about things they shouldn't worry about.

5. You Know the Right Priorities Already

Business is all about **your** vision—if employees had better ideas, they'd be sitting in your chair. Don't be distracted – you've got strategy, investment, and rules to focus on. Everyone knows true leadership is about staying the course, no matter the icebergs anybody might think they see. Perhaps you could consider making an official **criterion of what is relevant**: anything approved by you.

6. Know Who Is Complaining & Who Is Not

Feedback systems are really just employee sorting mechanisms, for you to know who is trustworthy, and who is not. You don't need to do much about either, except to remember who to offer an extra drink at company parties and who to ignore. Make sure to praise any like-minded people publicly but remember not to engage with people who don't get your vision. No need to complicate your life unnecessarily. You might consider installing a **company-wide “Loyalty Leaderboard”** and throw monthly favours for those who win. Just make sure that the criteria is known to you alone.

7. Don't Talk To Employees

That's what you pay middle management and HR department for. Direct interaction could lead to questions, complaints, or worse—suggestions. It's far more efficient to maintain your distance and work on your Leader Stuff in your office. Better yet, build a secret passage from your office to the parking lot so you can avoid any accidental interactions in the hallway. A **well-hidden** leader is a well-respected leader.

Did you consider all the seven sins, and honestly think whether one or more of them describe your behaviour consistently? Remember to give yourself one point for each such sin and look to the next page for results.

Results

0 Points: The Jedi Master

You're calm, wise, and in tune with your employees. Your team probably celebrates your attentiveness with spontaneous applause. Perhaps you should write a book on how to run a company based on good listening? Just make sure you take a break and let someone else ask for feedback once in a while!

1-2 Points: The Great Chief

Most of the time you're doing great and have a solid handle on this "listening" thing - you usually ask the right questions and actually care about what people say. Occasionally, you might slip into 'Leader Knows Best' mode, but that's nothing a little more curiosity can't fix. Just let them speak and remember: employees love real feedback and a genuine ear, even if you already think you know what they're going to say! Keep your instincts sharp but let your ears stay open.

3-4 Points: The Bossy Manager

You're trying, and that's what counts! Sure, you've got a few blind spots, or maybe you've applied one too many band-aids lately, but you care, and you try. Feelings don't bite! The key now is to open the door a little wider to feedback, even if it sometimes makes you itch. Who knows? The solution for some of your problems might walk into your office with the next employee you meet!

5-6 Points: The Armchair General

Let's just say you've still got some room to grow. Sure, it's easier to avoid criticism and dismiss feedback as distractions, but there's value in hearing those murmurings in the corridors. Next step: come out of the office, mingle with the team, maybe loosen up a bit, and give what they're saying a serious thought. Perhaps even try some of what they're suggesting! Start asking more questions and showing a little vulnerability, you'll find employees start giving you the insights that can steer the ship before it hits those icebergs.

7 Points: The Czar

Congratulations! You've officially won the award for "Leader Most Likely to Rule from an Ivory Tower"! We suspect you've got a secret tunnel from your office to your car to avoid employee interaction altogether. You've got potential, however - you wouldn't be doing this test otherwise. Start small: talk to an employee (yes, just one) this week. You don't have to fix everything immediately, but acknowledging their existence is a great first step. A little humility and an open door policy might seem chafing at first, but deep down, you know that it's the right way to run a successful company.

Want to get more ideas on how to listen to your people in practice, and how to improve how they engage in the workplace, support change and implement company strategy? Book a 30 minute brainstorming session with us - our treat.

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