

How Long Since You Had an Eye Test?

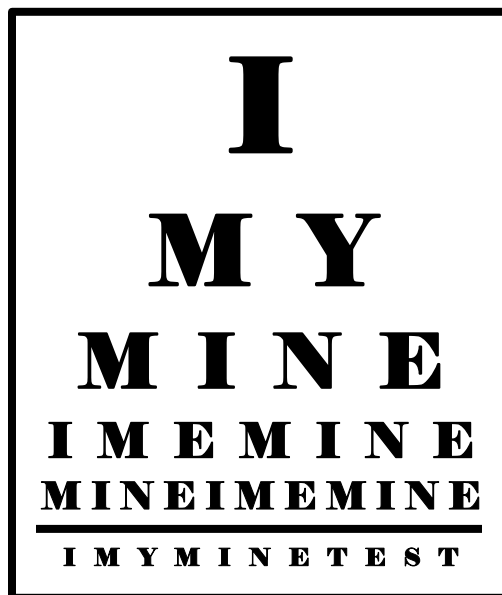
The Results of Your Eye Test Impacts the Team!

What can the Eye Test tell others about your leadership style?

We all know that it is a good idea to get a physical checkup regularly. Visits to the doctor can identify potential problems early and help resolve health issues, whether it's with our heart, hearing, or eyesight.

But what if there were such a checkup for our leadership? Here is a simple test that might highlight leadership problems, and it does not involve a trip to the clinic!

The Eye Test



For that routine physical, the eye test was the easiest part of the check-up.

Stand at a mark on the floor, cover one eye, and then read the letters on the chart mounted on the far wall. Line by line, we work our way down the chart until the letters are too small to make out. There was a time when I could even read some of the smallest print at the bottom, but as I have gotten older, the last line was no longer possible. One day the doctor started talking about fitting me for glasses.

As simple as that eye test was, the one I have in mind to test our leadership is even less involved. We can call it the **“I Test.”**

Grab that last email you just sent and pull it up, whatever it was. Go through the first 10 lines of text and look for the number of “I” words. Count any words that refer to yourself, words like I, me, mine. Record that number somewhere.

Now go through it again and look for “we” words. Count any that refer to the team, like *we*, *us*, and *ours*. Record that number also.

That is it. Simple. Now just look at the two numbers. How do they compare?

If the “we” words are outweighed by the “I” words, there may be a problem with our “I” sight.

Here is what we mean.

Looking into Our “I’s”

Whether written or spoken, if our language is dominated by references to ourselves, it tells others where our focus lies. It is about self. We are most concerned with what “I” think, what “I” want, or what “I” need.

And what our teammates intuitively perceive is that as that space fills with “I,” there is less room for others. What they think, what they want, or what they need matters less.

This is where disengagement begins.

And, as Terry “Starbucker” St. Marie of [More Human Leadership](#) adds, it also signals an “*every person for themselves*” culture. When the leader demonstrates that taking care of #1 is priority #1, it won’t be long before the rest of the team [follows that example](#).

With everyone focused on self, a **trust gap** grows, and the team may begin to suffer heart issues.

“I” excludes. Ultimately, “I” is the language of disunity, self-interest, and distrust.

The Power of “We!”

In contrast, with “we” there’s room for the rest of the team. With “we” it is all about what *we’re* doing together, and *everybody* matters.

Part of the power of “we” is that it changes the orientation of the *why*. People may or may not be motivated to get something done because “I” told them to do it. But on a team where they

understand that others are counting on them, social pressure comes to bear, which can potentially be a much more powerful force.

And from a cultural standpoint, “we” is a way of bringing people together, strengthening the bonds among us, and supporting our common goals. “We” do things to help each other so that *our* team succeeds.

“We” includes others! “I” includes only “me!”

Leadership Eye Test – The Takeaway

This little leadership “I” test is much simpler than the eye test we take at the clinic. The results can indicate the potential for future health issues on our team.

If the number of “I’s” are too many or overweight, not only are we not seeing well, but we could be looking at long-term cardiac issues with our **overburdened I team**.

And unlike the doctor’s eye chart, most people do not need glasses to see what is written on our bottom line. Those little words we use quickly make it clear to anyone who is paying attention.

If we hope to build trust, encourage engagement, and engender a strong, positive culture, we must have an **inclusive mindset** to be a successful leader.

A good place to get a quick health check on inclusiveness is checking the language we use.

Have you done an “I” check lately?

Lead On!

The goal of an organization is to move members from a me to a we culture!

The “we culture” is so engrained in us, we no longer need an “I” test.

The organization becomes **more resilient, more caring, more successful, and more powerful**.

Everyone thinks **WE!**

Thus-- we are winners! Together, we win more!