

## John Bates' Top 10 Tips for Being Your Best, *Virtually*

John Bates is the CEO and communications guru of Executive Speaking Success. He sees success in leadership, sales, management and (more generally, in business and life itself) as a function of great communication. Executives at NASA, Johnson & Johnson, Accenture, and other forward-thinking global organizations often say that John's methodology is quite probably the best and most effective approach to leadership, communication, persuasion, and influence that they have ever experienced.

### L=F(c) – Leadership is a function of Communication

1. Remember ***people need more human connection*** in the virtual/distributed world. And, especially right now. Be conscious of that in an appropriate way.
2. Think about your background and lighting. ***Your leadership presence is now all about your virtual presence.*** Background and lighting are easy to fix if you think about it.
3. The biggest thing you can do ***up your game*** is to get a USB mic or a nice headset with a boom mic. Sound is more important than video and the built-in mic of your computer or laptop is small and far from your mouth.
4. ***Practice Insightful Vulnerability.*** Share what you're having a hard time with *and* how you're resolving it. Talk about what you're learning, etc. Make it a safe space to share what's not working and make the expectation that people ALSO share what they're DOING about it and learning from it.
5. Remember, your employees are now a lot more like volunteers than when they were in the office. ***Inspire them to stay productive,*** have more, shorter meetings, care about them and let them know it, and consider more 1:1 meetings, more often, just so you can check in with people and support them.
6. As a leader, I think your most important job is to ***continuously remind people of the "empowering context" for the work you're all doing together.*** And, always remember to come from that place, *yourself*. People are inspired to be doing what they are doing, but they sometimes forget when they are heads down in the details. Continuously remind them of why they are working so hard.
7. ***Set the expectations upfront.*** Family is OK. Kids may be a minor distraction and as long as it doesn't last too long it's fine. Make room for everyone's different home realities. Create some boundaries and expectations with your team. We don't expect you to respond to emails after 6 pm, or 8 pm, or whatever. Setting some ground rules gives everyone some comfort and they can work within those clear boundaries.
8. ***People LOVE autonomy!*** People love having some kind of say in how they do their work and when they do their work. If you support that and empower them, they will become more productive, even if they may not do that in the way you expect. Give people autonomy, pay attention to their results and they will likely surprise you for the better.
9. ***Be good to yourself.*** Do your best to plan your day and do your work in a way that supports you. You'll be more productive, and you might even find things you can share with your team that will help them be more productive, while also being happier, too.
10. If you are new to this, know that ***it's not easy at first.*** It's a big adjustment and once you find your way, you'll probably love it and never want to give it up, completely.