

# To Inspire Extraordinary Performance, Lead With Unconditional Generosity

📅 January 30, 2026 👤 Dr. Christian Marcolli

Like any competitive arena, the corporate environment can be ruthless. Most companies are faced with relentless market competition, economic volatility, regulatory pressures, technological evolution and shifting customer expectations—just to name a few challenges.

In such a highly competitive marketplace, leading your individuals with game-changing potential to deliver extraordinary performance can make all the difference. They can be the ones who create the advantage. It all starts by being able to identify your potential Game Changers. In addition to their technical and interpersonal competencies, look for these four essential characteristics:

1. A passion for excellent performance, along with the commitment and focused energy to achieve it
2. A clear desire for feedback and want to hear the truth
3. The ability to transform input into action
4. Mental toughness, along with knowing how to meet the moment

Once you have identified your Game Changers and put them in the optimal position in your organization where they can make a real difference, your work has just begun. You now need to interact with them as a “Leadership Champion” and lead them toward the extraordinary.

This will only work if you build what I call a “Winning Match” with them. How do leaders create this level of productive partnership? It’s all in the approach.

Leading with generosity sets Leadership Champions apart. Along with their desire to make a difference in others, generosity is a central component that forms the foundation of all of their beliefs and actions as leaders.

Many leaders I speak to believe they are generous. But one distinct difference between most leaders and those who are truly Leadership Champions is that most leaders apply conditional generosity. For example, they provide their people with time, support and resources. But there is always an expectation that they will receive something—in most cases, high performance—in return.

True Leadership Champions, however, act and lead from a different place, based on a great deal of unselfishness, service and trust. Their high investment of time, intellect, emotions and effort; their sharing of knowledge; and potentially even their securing financial resources for others goes without the expectation of a certain result or a direct return on investment.

This is what I call unconditional generosity—and it's necessary for building a Winning Match.

## **Achieving the Extraordinary Isn't About Quid Pro Quo**

A Leadership Champion's willingness to unconditionally share and support is critical. And it only works if you don't expect a direct return on investment, and you don't view the world as a quid pro quo.

Rather, as a Leadership Champion, you understand that single generous actions don't always yield direct, concrete results, but that being unconditionally generous as a regular leadership practice will very likely have an unexpected positive impact in ways you cannot always predict.

Thus, it's crucial for you as a leader to develop the necessary level of self-esteem and self-confidence. You need to make peace with the fact that with—and thanks to—your support, your Game Changers may someday be better than yourself. You need to find a lot of satisfaction in that.

Consequently, you consider your knowledge, expertise and your acquired contacts as free goods that should be used by other people, especially your Game Changers, to make a true impact and difference not only in the present, but also in the future.

## Unconditional Generosity, Smart Support

The generosity of Leadership Champions is expressed through their unconditional support for Game Changers, empowering them as quickly as possible to deal with big challenges independently and according to their own judgment. In the long run, the role of the Leadership Champion is not to be the rescue squad, tasked with eliminating acute problems as soon as possible. It is far more important to support your Game Changers as they find and develop their own unique strategies to solve critical problems on their own, and to empower them for independence to tackle the big challenges.

Game Changers want to constantly get better, develop themselves and push the boundaries. They therefore wish for feedback and input, so that they can contribute as much as possible to the overall success of the company. Only if your Game Changers experience you as a Leadership Champion, who shows up with unconditional generosity, will they thrive. They will be able to benefit from your knowledge, your experience and your valuable contacts—knowing that they can rely on you, and that you won't attach conditions or demand some immediate kind of payment in return. This is when your own attitude level matches perfectly with that of your Game Changers.

To lead with unconditional generosity, here are five key action steps to consider:

- Transfer responsibility for important, highly visible tasks to your Game Changers, even if, as a top executive, you might lose some accolades and visibility. Commit to making your Game Changer look successful. Provide them with the opportunity to make a real difference.
- Proactively offer your time, expertise and experience, organizational know-how and the access to your network, as free goods to your Game Changers.
- Relieve your Game Changers by taking over and further delegate parts of their standard tasks so that they can concentrate and focus on their new challenges that really move the needle.
- Provide ongoing support and constructive, honest feedback. Take the time to do regular leadership sparring with your Game Changers so that they keep learning from past experiences and keep pushing the boundaries in the future.
- Show perseverance, patience and resilience in developing your Game Changers, and expect no return on investment for your generosity.

Your goal as a leader should be to achieve the extraordinary with and through others, and with that, make others great. Bringing your unconditional generosity—along with your desire to positively spark a change in others in a lasting way—is critical to make the best even better, and forge that Winning Match.



### **Dr. Christian Marcolli**

Dr. Christian Marcolli is a global expert on sustainable high performance who coaches executives, business leaders, market-leading brands and elite athletes to achieve outstanding results. His firm, Marcolli Executive Excellence, focuses on fostering leadership excellence, driving team effectiveness and creating organizational health. He's an in-demand speaker, award winning author, University of Zurich-trained psychologist and former pro soccer player. His latest book is WINNING MATCH: Leadership for Game Changers—Together Toward the Extraordinary. Learn more at [www.marcolli.com](http://www.marcolli.com).