

## Are you bringing out the best in others?

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It is a legitimate question. As a leader, are you bringing out the best in others? Do you offer hints for them to see the potential in a given situation? Are you inspiring them to do better, go further, or see clearer? Do you help reveal danger in their path? Do you intersect danger on their behalf?

Throughout history, the great prophets and saints in virtually every culture have spoken of angels. They are sought for encouragement or advice during difficult times. They are drawn to laughter and beauty and are summoned to shield us from harm. People who claim to have seen angels are rare, yet angels inspire some of our noblest aspirations. They are bright lights in our world, often likened to invisible friends watching over us.

We often speak of angel investors as those who are first to see, and courageously fund, the promise of a new idea or venture. When describing people who go out of their way to protect others, we call them guardian angels or angels in the workplace. Mother Teresa was called both a living saint and an angel of mercy. She professed to being neither, yet touched the world in much the way that an angel might. New research indicates that many of the individuals who make the greatest difference in the

world combine the paradoxical qualities of personal humility and unwavering resolve to do what is right; demonstrate personal accountability when times are hard and a great willingness to credit others when things go well. When Dr. Albert Schweitzer talked of developing the “soul of an angel,” he meant it in unsentimental and very practical terms. Consider the following:

*Angels don't worry about you, they believe in you.* According to legend, angels don't get trapped in the worries that plague our world. Instead, they remind us why we're here and help us sense our own hidden possibilities. Even the smallest effort to apply some aspect of the soul of an angel can lift us out of our everyday limitations. In what ways do you help others sense their own possibilities?

*Angels don't try to fix everything or take away life's lessons.* Angels are believed to possess amazing detachment. They wait patiently nearby, observing the lessons being learned. They aren't interested in giving us an easy way out. They watch over our learning--or resistance to learning--and only rarely interfere or intervene. They quietly guard the space around us so that we can better focus on making learning happen. They may plant a thoughtful question or kind reminder. From time to time, they inspire us to shift our gaze or give us a

needed nudge in a new direction. When we stop trying to make everything all right for others and, instead, can stand back a step and encourage their own growth, we may have found another small thread of the soul of an angel.

*No matter what their size, angels are large in spirit.* As the legends have it, many angels are young at heart yet wise. They are unabashed about letting us see what we need to grow. They know when to choose being kind over being correct, and when to remain detached from our own necessary, and sometimes difficult, learning.

*Angels take the high road.* Like the best mentors and teachers, angels are unwilling to leave anyone behind. They encourage both planned and spontaneous acts of goodness and generosity.

One of the ways you might make this concept practical is by pausing during interactions to consider how you aid others: Do you have the soul of an angel in helping to bring out the best in them? If not, why not? Maybe we've been assuming that the soul of an angel is out of reach. Maybe we're wrong. Perhaps it is right here, and has been all along, and we've been too busy or distracted to see it.

When you bring out the best in others, you bring out the best in our world.

~ The End ~