How to practice 'small-L leadership'

Even if you lack formal authority, you can still practice what business professor and researcher Robert E. Kelly calls “small-L leadership” by bringing people together to complete a job.

The only three requirements:

1. You have to know your stuff. That means actually understanding the hard facts underpinning the task. But remember: Your knowledge is just your potential energy.

2. Any group will fall in right behind a leader who has momentum: that is, somebody who brings drive to the task and spurs others on. That’s your kinetic energy.

3. Unless you show vast amounts of the first two qualities, people will follow you only if you pay attention to them.

— Adapted from “Are You a Star at Work?” Alan M. Webber, Fast Company.