violating trust, and finding ways to relieve stress. One of the best way leaders in the middle can be effective is to have quick access to answers, which may require the help of others, extra time, and a good relationship with the team. Moreover, it’s critical to avoid violating people’s trust. Violation of trust can easily happen when leaders abuse their authority and position. Once trust is violated, it’s extremely difficult to manage tension and sustain authority.

Tension can also be relieved by eliminating stress. Some techniques include venting frustrations to others or taking part in physical activities.

**Challenge #2** is one of frustration, where the issue becomes how to follow an ineffective leader. Being in this position naturally causes frustration.

Insecure leaders can cause this frustration because they can be self-absorbed, controlling, and fearful of being outshone. These leaders tend to react to situations with anger when something makes them look bad, maintain the status quo to avoid change, and keep the team constantly off balance.

Frustration is also caused by the leader without vision who fails to provide the passion, direction, or motivation to progress forward in an often unsupportive environment. This negative environment will be teeming with conflict. Some leaders can also be selfish, advancing at the expense of the team. They may hoard all the perks, and as a result, create not only frustration, but resentment.

There are ways to tackle the frustration and lead effectively. Building relationships with leaders, appreciating their strengths, adding value to those strengths, and complementing the leader’s weaknesses, help to keep frustration at bay. In addition, it’s important to expose leaders to good leadership resources such as helpful books or DVDs, and publicly affirm the leader’s accomplishments.

**Challenge #3** is the pressure of wearing many hats in the leadership role. People working at the bottom of an organization usually have one focused responsibility. These people are either talented at just one skill, or do not want to move up in an organization to become leaders.

Leaders at the top of an organization may be able to choose what they do, but they also feel the weight of success or failure of the whole organization. While leaders need to be able to do many things well, top leaders need to do fewer things with outstanding skill. People in the middle of an organization experience demands from leaders at the top, customers, expectations from followers, and vendors, all on a daily basis. These leaders have to get along with everyone and survive the dynamics of leadership. Leaders who are able to handle multiple tasks and responsibilities must also be experts at knowing which hat to wear in any given situation, requiring consistent behavior, commitment to the responsibility, and flexibility.

**Challenge #4** is the ego challenge. Leaders in the middle don’t always get the credit they deserve, which can damage their ego. Because effective leaders pay more attention to what gets done than to promotion, it’s important for people to focus on their duties, deliver the goods, and being noticed come naturally. Since not everyone notices or appreciates the work people do, they must know that what they do is important. They must value their position and find contentment in knowing they are getting the work done. When jobs are done well, they make an impact which motivates people to do even more. People will notice when the work gets done, and can go a long way in motivating individuals by giving praise appropriately. “One compliment can keep me going for a whole month,” said novelist Mark Twain.

It is also essential to know the difference between self-promotion and self-less promotion. The former has a me-first mentality, whereas the latter puts others first.

**Challenge #5** appears when leaders tend to like the front more than the middle. It’s natural for leaders to want to move up, make a greater impact, and be at the top of the organization. There are advantages to being at the top, which include recognition and praise. However, recognition can be negative when things go wrong. Leaders at the top don’t have the freedom to neglect what they see from above. Leaders also must be careful to avoid moving forward too fast, risking the loss of their followers, and

“...if you have a vision when your leader does not, you can rely on your vision to create an environment of productivity and success for the people working within your area of responsibility.”