Honesty is the most important quality a leader can have because of how much it affects the team or group. Followers need to know they can trust their leader in both words and deeds. We all know how hurt we feel if someone lies to us. In a group or team, if followers think the leader is dishonest, they won’t feel motivated or loyal to the group because they might feel betrayed or disrespected. In fact, researchers in 2015 looked at the impact honesty had on groups and found that a dishonest leader reduced morale by at least 15 percent (Berndt 23). And honesty doesn’t just affect group morale, it affects members’ perception of the group’s success (Berndt 42). Members won’t be able to trust the results of work produced under a dishonest leader.

I learned firsthand how a dishonest leader can significantly impact a group. In college, I worked in sales. Our team found out that our manager had been manipulating the sales numbers so that it looked like we were doing higher sales than we actually were. When we found out, it was so demoralizing. We felt that what we had produced – numbers we had been proud of – really didn’t matter because she felt the need to lie about them to her superiors. It seemed she was ashamed of what her team was doing. If she had been honest with us and explained that our numbers weren’t high enough, we could have worked together to set goals. This would have kept our motivation and morale high and pushed us to work harder. Instead, once we knew she had lied, we didn’t feel motivated to actually try to attain higher sales numbers. Instead, we all looked for a way off of her team. Terrance Berndt wrote, ““Honesty has such an impact on group morale that it is considered the most important quality in a leader” (57), and after my experience on the sales team, I can say I never want to work with a dishonest leader again.

Works Cited