

Have backbone disagree and commit. Leaders are obligated to respectfully challenge decisions when they disagree, even when doing so is uncomfortable or exhausting. Leaders have conviction and are tenacious. They do not compromise for the sake of social cohesion. Once a decision is determined, they commit wholly.

At Amazon, you are not just empowered to speak up if you think we're doing something wrong for customers of the business, you're expected to do so. Regardless of level.

I can tell you that I get a lot of emails all the time from everybody at the company, at every level about ideas they have and I value them and I appreciate them.

"I told you so," is an expression that's completely useless at Amazon because it's a failure one way or the other. It's either I didn't speak up when I was supposed to speak up and have backbone or that I'm not fully committing to the decision that we made in disagreeing and committing.

We have this concept that we've talked about a long time with the company about social cohesion. Social cohesion is this notion that people often will compromise with one another to get along.

And so, the canonical example is, you know, you look at a ceiling and one person says it's 10 ft and the other person says, no, it's 14 ft and they say let's compromise, it's 12 ft. Well, it's usually not 12 ft. You know, there's usually some answer that's closer to the truth.

Now, most issues that we deal with every day are not as simple as what I just said. They're much more complicated, much more nuanced. But the point remains the idea for us is to be truth seeking.

We're not trying to compromise with one another to make each other feel better or to get along. We are trying to get to truth for what matters to customers. That's what we've got to make decisions based on.

And then after whatever debate we have on issues and some issues are so difficult that we debate it for across many meetings and many weeks. But once we make that decision, we have to, as a group, disagree and commit and wholly commit to that decision. Even if you were on the other side of what got decided to be pursued.

Now, this again seems fairly obvious, but it's sometimes difficult because we hire smart people and we hire people who have a lot of mission passion. And it's hard to let go of what you think matters most for customers. But at a certain point, businesses have to make decisions. Otherwise they can't move, they will be stagnant.

And once we make a decision, we have to all get on board because the areas that we're pursuing as businesses, they have such large expanses with so many things to solve for customers with so many capable competitors that we need to focus all our energy on growing the same way.

So, have backbone, disagree and commit is a very important leadership principle to be great at.