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HOW TO BRING TEAMS TOGETHER DURING CRISIS

By DAN ROCKWELL
editor@leaderonomics.com

Crisis is a journey of transformation. During crisis, you and your organisation may change or die.

Meetings during tough times:
1. Reconnect with purpose. Your purpose is bringing value to your customers, not saving the ship. Invite a client you’ve served to the meeting. Listen to their story and reconnect with your purpose. Make it personal, more than informational.
2. Make it hurt. Pull no punches. What happens to your clients if you fail.
3. Define the crisis. Embrace the darkness by asking everyone to explain the worst that could happen. Describe how everyone’s life will change if you fail. It’s silly to dance around a burning house.
4. Express realistic optimism. Let everyone know how important they are, if they grab the rope and pull.
5. Talk more about what you can control than what you can’t. Crisis has many components you can’t control. Listen to problems, doubts, and fears. Then say, “I hear what we can’t do. What can we do?”
6. Assign responsibilities to everyone in the room, everyone. They shouldn’t be at the table, if they aren’t making it better.
7. Write assignments on the whiteboard along with the name of the responsible person.
8. Cross off assignments as soon as they’re completed, along with the date. Make progress visible.
9. Give new assignments after old ones are completed. Keep the whiteboard list going.
10. Pour energy into those who make positive contributions. Minimise dead weight.

Bonus: Celebrate wins and talk about next steps at the same time.

Leadership language:
1. We need each other, not I need you.
2. It’s not about us. It’s about the people we serve.
3. I’ve seen us rise to challenges in the past. Tell stories of the past. Focus on their work and sacrifice more than the win.

What suggestions do you have for running meetings during a crisis?

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Dan Rockwell is a coach, speaker and is freakishly interested in leadership. He is an author of a world-renowned most socially shared leadership blog, Leadership Freak.

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In calm waters, many captains are able. It is in a tempest when true leadership emerges.
—Thomas Köhntopp
HOW MANAGERS HOLD BACK THEIR EMPLOYEES

ADVICE FOR ASPIRING BOSSES

By JOSEPH GRENNY
editor@leaderonomics.com

W

e all need a coach. Research we conducted at VitalSmarts shows that 97% of employees readily admit to having a “career-limiting habit” – some behaviour that will forever hold them back, unless they can learn to change it. Consider the example of a chief financial officer (CFO) we worked with who had his heart set on landing the chief executive officer (CEO) job when his boss retired. He acknowledged that his tendency to belittle people publicly was holding him back – and he was right.

One day, his boss, the incumbent CEO and a former professional athlete, brought him into his office to “coach” him. “You’re arrogant and cruel,” he said. “If you don’t fix those things you’ll never be seen by the board as anything but a technician – and a dangerous one at that.”

The CFO was deeply embarrassed and vowed to change. But, he didn’t. When he was passed over for the CEO job, he resigned in anger. This example isn’t uncommon. Our research shows that coaching rarely works. Fewer than one in five people who make a concerted effort to change some career-limiting habit actually do it. But even worse, most managers expect their coaching attempts to fail. And worse than that, most recipients of coaching give themselves little chance of real change.

In one study, we asked managers who had just finished coaching a direct report to rate the likelihood that the person would actually change. Fewer than 10% were willing to wager on success.

Next, we asked those who had received advice how likely they thought they were to make effective use of it. While they were a bit more optimistic than their bosses, only about a third had high hopes.

Likewise, the ill-fated CFO, many of us are “coached,” but few of us are changed by the experience.

Why? Because of these three common – but fixable – mistakes:

1 LECTURING RATHER THAN INTERVIEWING

Whether people change is largely determined by why they change. And they are most successful at changing when they choose to change. This is where coaching attempts can create problems. “Coaching” is often imposed rather than invited. Successful coaching assiduously avoids an approach that might provoke resistance to the attempt at change. When we feel something is being imposed on us – even if it’s for our own good – our natural reaction is to resist.

Conflicts, disagreements and misconceptions between the age groups are rooted in the stereotypes people hold about each group.

If you’re trying to help someone change, your first consideration must be to approach him or her in a way that enhances, rather than damps, motivation. Typically, as in the case of the CFO mentioned earlier, people are already aware that they should change. They may even want to change, but they aren’t changing. So we waltz in with five more good reasons why they should change. We deliver a pithy sermonette and we distract them from choosing to change by instead igniting rebellion.

Effective coaches ask more questions and give fewer lectures. Your job is to help people uncover and strengthen the motives they already have. Think of your coaching conversations more as interviews than as sermons and you’ll be far more successful.

2 MOTIVATING RATHER THAN ENABLING

We all have an inherent bias in judging what it will take to help people change – overvaluing motivation. For example, if we’ve got a colleague – like our CFO friend – who deems people, we assume the problem is a basic character deficit. Perhaps he’s just a sadist. Maybe he gets a kick out of flaunting his power or intellect. If we have a colleague who tends to procrastinate, we might assume the problem is basic laziness. Or, if we have a colleague who avoids making presentations, we might admonish her to “have some courage, for crying out loud.”

The problem is that when we assume that most issues are a simple matter of motivation, we commit what psychologists call the fundamental attribution error—that is, attributing behaviour primarily to dispositional factors (he’s too timid, she’s so aggressive, etc.). Great coaches don’t make this mistake. They start by addressing ability barriers instead.

For example, if someone struggles with procrastination, a good coach might suggest tactics for better managing interruptions. In the case of our CFO friend, his coach helped him recognise his own emotional triggers, which eventually helped him overcome his habit of public personal attacks. If you try to motivate people who lack ability, you don’t create change; you create depression.

3 FOCUSING ON THE ACTOR AND IGNORING THE CONTEXT

We’re often blind to the many forces that create and sustain certain behaviour, so we tend to focus only on the ones we can see – for example, the CFO biting people’s heads off. But this is dangerously naive and largely ineffective. Of course we need to address the person’s motives and abilities. But we also need to address four powerful sources of influence: fans, accomplices, incentives, and environment. Someone may feel emboldened to behave badly if:

• A respected board member gives him the thumbs up after an ill-tempered outburst (fans)
• Those who disapprove say nothing (accomplices)
• He continues to be promoted and rewarded in spite of (or in his mind, because of) his behaviour (incentives)
• Unreasonable goals and deadlines keep him in a constant state of anxiety and fatigue – undermining his emotional reserves (environment)

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

These four factors can confound even the most resolute people in their efforts to change. But our research shows that when all of these sources of influence are engaged positively in the effort, the likelihood of rapid and sustainable change increases tenfold.

The CFO, in this example, did eventually change. He went on to become a leader who elicited deep loyalty and affection from many. Success came as he acquired new skills, distanced himself from unhealthy enablers, connected with people who modelled the behaviours he wanted to embrace, and removed himself from a context that overtaxed his ability to stay emotionally healthy.

In short, coaching works when the motives they already have.

Effective coaches ask more questions and give fewer lectures. Your job is to help people uncover and strengthen the motives they already have.

Joseph Grenny is a bestselling author, keynote speaker, and social scientist for business performance. His passion and expertise is human behaviour and its impact on business performance and relationships. To know more about being an engaging leader, check out our leadership articles on www.leaderonomics.com or drop us an e-mail at editor@leaderonomics.com.
STRENGTH IS IN UNITY AND RESILIENCE

By ANTON VAN DER WALT
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VISITING game reserves with my camera is always a special time for me. It allows me to get close to nature where I can observe and photograph the fascinating and often complex behaviours of wild animals. One such reserve, Madikwe, is situated in the North Western part of South Africa and is home to the African wild dog (aka the painted dog). The African wild dog is a highly endangered species. Sadly, less than 5,000 dogs may still be found in reserves in Africa.

MADIKWE’S WILD DOGS

Wild dogs are very sociable animals. Packs consist of between five and 15 members. There is a strict hierarchy within each pack, led by either an alpha female or male. Our guide told us that the bonds between the pack members are extremely close-knit. They cooperate in hunting, food sharing and in the care of pups, sickly and aged members. Wild dogs are fearsome pack hunters with a success rate of up to 80%. This is an astonishing feat of courage and skill given that lions or hyenas do not come near to achieving this kind of success!

Towards the end of 2014, the Madikwe reserve had 40 wild dogs operating as three independent hunting packs. We visited Madikwe early in 2015 and were shocked to hear the devastating news that all but three adults and two cubs had been wiped out by rabies. Other than humans, rabies and distemper are probably the African wild dog’s greatest threat. During our visit, our guide was able to locate the five remaining dogs, and it was a bittersweet photography opportunity. They appeared sickly and weak and we were sure that we would not see them alive again.

We visited Madikwe again in 2016 and I was certain that the survivors would have all perished in the interim. You can just imagine our joy to discover that not only had the last five dogs survived, but they had grown and multiplied and were now a healthy pack of 14 dogs! Our guide told us that soon, the pack would be large enough and strong enough to split into two independent hunting packs. We were so fortunate to have seen the 14 dogs during our visit and I cannot begin to describe the emotion one experiences when witnessing such an incredible feat of survival. The pack is once again the pride and joy of Madikwe Reserve – the resident game rangers cannot wait to tell visitors that the “Makanyane” (African name for Wild dog) are back and strong!

THE HUMAN HUNTING PACK

Like the African wild dog hunting pack, effective groups and successful leadership teams consisting of between five and 15 members will display behaviours similar to those of the hunting pack. Cooperation, sharing, mutual care and consideration are necessary for teams to function effectively. According to bestselling author Patrick Lencioni in his book, The Advantage, he writes that, “A leadership team is a small group of people who are collectively responsible for achieving a common objective for their organisation…” Teamwork is not a virtue, but rather a choice, and a strategic one at that. Anything else is simply a work group.

A leadership team is a small group of people who are collectively responsible for achieving a common objective for their organisation. … Teamwork is not a virtue, but rather a choice, and a strategic one at that. Anything else is simply a work group.

The effective functioning of teams is critical and remains a competitive advantage for successful organisations. As the Greek philosopher Aristotle said: “The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.” Teams working together will be greater, and achieve more collectively than each of its individuals are capable of on their own. Successful teams understand this and ensure that they do the following:

1. Create and cultivate trust amongst each other.

2. Seek and deliver commitment towards each other.

3. Drive unity between each other.

4. Resilience

Having resilience means we can recover quickly from difficulties. It is a certain way of how we endure toughness. If the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, how much more resilient are we capable of being when we have a unified and committed team?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What behaviours do your team exhibit when the going gets tough? Do they create more trust, drive commitment and strive for unity? Or do they attack each other and start pointing fingers? As in the enduring tale of the Madikwe African wild dog, cooperation, mutual caring and consideration and sharing are key to survival.
By DANIEL BURRUS
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DON’T PLAY THE PERPETUAL GAME OF FOLLOW-THE-LEADER

HOW TO SHIFT FROM CRISIS MANAGEMENT TO OPPORTUNITY MANAGEMENT

In my latest New York Times best-seller, Flash Foresight, I share seven principles that can make invisible opportunities visible. Becoming anticipatory, both personally and organisationally, is crucial.

Agility has been a reasonable survival strategy during times of rapid change, like the 1980s, 1990s, and even the early 2000s. Today, however, the pace of technology-driven change is beyond rapid. Change is too fast for even the best reaction time to be fast enough. These days, thriving is not only about agility, it’s also about anticipation.

IS BEING PROACTIVE ENOUGH?

Being proactive has been another popular technique; it’s defined something like this: “Don’t wait, do something now—take action!” But do what? How do you know the action you’re taking is the right action?

Being proactive is the attempt to solve today’s problems before they grow worse. That’s not good enough: we need to solve tomorrow’s predictable problems... before they happen. We don’t just need to take positive action, but we need to take positive action based on future known events. To succeed today, we need to be pre-active.

Being pre-active is agile, being pre-active also being both agile and anticipatory.

The shift from proactive to pre-active also creates a shift in the nature of our relationship with change. We tend to think of change as disruptive, but this is generally true only when change comes from the outside in. For example, when a new technology comes out that changes customer behaviour, or when the boss changes strategy, or when a competing marketplace opens up overseas, we scramble to adapt.

Being pre-active means putting yourself into opportunity mode, looking at predictable problems before they occur, and then preventing them from happening in the first place. It means, instead of always reacting to change that happens from the outside in, it’s about creating change from the inside out.

DON’T PLAY CATCH-UP, RATHER, ANTICIPATE THE FUTURE

Change from the outside-in is disruptive. Change from the inside out is purposeful and constructive. This is the kind of change that allows you to direct your future and seize your destiny. The only possible way to operate in that kind of change is by becoming anticipatory.

One way to do that is with a tactic I call future benchmarking.

Benchmarking is a popular technique of strategic management that involves tracking and imitating the best practices of the leader in your field. But there is an inherent problem here: you’re benchmarking the best practices of the present. By the time you reverse-engineer it, copy it, and implement it, it will be obsolete. Because change is moving forward so rapidly, you’ll always be playing catch-up.

What you really want to do is jump ahead. How? By skipping over today’s best practices and benchmarking what the best practices will be in the visible future, based on Hard Trends and future certainties.

Let’s say you’re a manufacturer. You decide that Toyota’s “lean manufacturing” approach is the best model around right now, so you say, “Let’s copy that.” But it may take you four or five years to successfully copy what Toyota is doing. So what do you do?

Instead of looking at what Toyota is doing today, ask yourself, “Based on the Hard Trends we know will happen, and the strategic path Toyota is on, what is our best projection of what Toyota will be doing four or five years from now?” You will be amazed at what you can see when you take this approach.

Then you can base your strategy on emulating those best practices so you can become the leader of your field, instead of staying in a perpetual game of follow-the-leader.

Here are a few examples of Hard Trends to get you started:

- Demand for wireless broadband will continue to grow.
- Social media will increasingly be used for marketing and to engage with customers.
- After 4G wireless, we will have 5G wireless.
- Smartphones will get much smarter and cloud computing will continue to rapidly grow.

These are just a few examples of Hard Trends. By taking the time to list all of the things you are certain about instead of being stuck on all of the things you are uncertain about, you will not only become anticipatory and pre-active, you will discover a powerful new way to see new opportunities and create competitive advantage ahead of the competition.

Try it. The results you will get from being anticipatory will amaze you.

To be able to predict the unexpected, one must first understand what constitutes a crisis and how to go about managing it. In the Managing Crisis in Your Organisation workshop by Leaderonomics, you will delve into case studies of companies that did it right, and learn the different leadership styles to take on different types of crises.

Daniel Burrus is the founder and CEO of Burrus Research. He advises Fortune 500 companies on developing game-changing strategies based on his proven methodologies for capitalising on technology innovations and their future impact. He is also the author of six books, including bestselling book, “Flash Foresight,” as well as the highly acclaimed, “Technoteurs.” To engage with him, e-mail us at editor@leaderonomics.com.
LEARNING LESSONS ON CRISIS MANAGEMENT: LEARNING FROM THE TITANIC

HOW STATISTICAL PERSPECTIVES MATTER

BY HANK MOORE

T

HE 100TH anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic caused many people to reflect on the glamour that was lost and the empty chairs that were left. This is the first use of the Titanic as a metaphor for the modern-day management experience. It started with pump and potential lifeboats, and ended with sink and missed opportunities. So, too, are the processes and culture that needed to change from the economic downturn and corporate scandals.

Each year, one third of the US consulting firms go bankrupt. Surprisingly, many businesses have discovered that the Titanic was only one of many disasters that have affected them. In 1901, the Titanic was the largest and most luxurious ship on the ocean. It was a symbol of progress and advancement. It was a sign of the future and a symbol of technology.

The Titanic was launched on its maiden voyage on April 10, 1912. It was the largest ship ever built at the time. It was equipped with state-of-the-art technology and was considered the safest ship on the ocean. It was a symbol of progress and advancement. It was a sign of the future and a symbol of technology.

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By JAMES CAMPBELL

editor@leaderonomics.com

The characteristics of true leadership

... we do not need to read a thousand articles or attend a hundred conferences to be presented with a golden standard on leadership.

This may appear as a despondent end to my piece given the paucity of leadership we face today in the political realm. However, if we think about it perhaps there is room for hope that leadership becomes more than a word, and more than a technique.

The Khans remind us that leadership and the virtues upon which it is based come from the heart and the very nature of our souls.

Khizr has pointed this out to us and in so doing provided us with even more insight into good leadership and what at root is at stake. There is hope in our world for decent leadership despite the malevolence and darkness that we see around us.

The example of the Khan family provides us such hope, for they have exercised true leadership based on dignity, honour, loyalty, knowledge, empathy and sacrifice.

Dignity

The Khans have shown America and the world the virtue of dignity. Standing strong, committed, without rancour but with great strength they have demonstrated dignity and proper bearing. This is a mark of good leadership.

Honour

In honouring their son and those who have served and sacrificed, they too exhibit and represent the classic virtue of honour. They honour their son, they honour their country and through their demonstration of honour, they point out its continued significance as an attribute of civic leadership.

Loyalty

Make no mistake, loyalty is a critical part of leadership. The Khans’ loyalty to their country, to the memory of their son and to the Constitution – under which all Americans exercise and realise their liberties – places them primus inter pares when we consider this as the most important of the characteristics of leadership.

Knowledge

Good leaders need to have knowledge. It is not enough to want to lead or to assume that for some reason you ought to lead.

They know about the people, the institutions, and the traditions of those they seek to lead. Khizr has a copy of the US Constitution in the pocket of his jacket. Furthermore, he has read it. If you expect to lead, then take the time to acquire the necessary knowledge.

Empathy

This is perhaps one of the most important characteristics of a great leader: the capacity to demonstrate empathy. Empathy is crucial for leaders and those who aspire to lead.

Without it, leadership becomes mere power. It lacks insight and it lacks humanity. Not only do the Khans exhibit great empathy, they expect it from their leaders as well.

Sacrifice

Finally, the virtue of sacrifice. True leaders know this virtue since they exercise it every day.

Humayun made the ultimate sacrifice. And his parents know the meaning of this word for it is more than a word. Sacrifice and the ability to sacrifice is the mark of real leadership.

From small things to more significant things for the common good is a core characteristic of a good leader.

Let’s take a step back and evaluate

If we take a look at the Khans’ example, we can see that we do not need to read a thousand articles or attend a hundred conferences to be presented with a golden standard on leadership.

For these gold star parents and their heroic son provide us with a poignant and moving demonstration of what leadership is and what it is made from.

If we want to see what real leadership is about, and what virtues characterise true leadership, we can take a leaf from their book.

Judged against their gold standard, many politicians and those who claim to lead the mantle of a leader can be found wanting.

This file picture shows Khizr holding a copy of the US Constitution as his wife listens during the final day of the convention. Since he held it, sales for the government’s founding document have soared. – AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite, File

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The Crisis: Reframe
A Mind for Trouble

By LOUISA DEVADASON
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Unless you are an adrenaline junkie who loves to jump off jagged cliffs, go rapid white-water rafting or swim with apex predators, you probably don’t like conflicts and risks. Even if you loved thrill求s, you wouldn’t want that uncertainty and stress in your organisation as a leader or as a member.

Yet, trouble has a way of finding us no matter how hard we try to dodge. That is why it is essential for leaders and co-leaders of businesses and organisations to have a crisis management plan. Crisis isn’t merely an issue for feeble business. In fact, it is often large firms at the forefront who have to be especially adept at navigating harsh terrain.

In a rapidly evolving time where social media is constantly affecting businesses and how they run, crisis should be viewed as a process of transformation where the old system can no longer be sustained.

Experts have stated that crisis is inevitable and the lead up to it tells a story of crisis. She believes it is putting the organisation’s competencies to the test.

There’s a dynamic mindset required of leaders who shoot for the stars and aim to win. Often, we hear talk of entrepreneurs and the entrepreneurial mind and how they have a mindset for taking risks. Successful entrepreneurs and leaders balance this with a crisis mindset. This is a mindset of trouble-shooting extremes.

In order to better grasp what this mindset involves, we need to first break it down to three stages of a crisis: before, during and after.

BEFORE: LOOK, THINK AND PLAN
Understanding and identifying your organisation’s risk level for crisis and the nature of crisis it could face is the first step to preparing your organisation for rocky times. From this, develop a plan to shrink your chances of facing a sudden and disastrous crisis.

This is also the time to develop trust and effective human resources. Being the right kind of leader and empowering the right kind of people is vital. Also, take time to improve and be aware of market trends and what’s going on both outside and inside your company.

DURING: COMMUNICATE

“Very simply, your organisation’s crisis plan is incomplete without a comprehensive digital strategy.” —Jane Jordan-Meier, The Four Stages of Highly Effective Crisis Management: How to Manage the Media in the Digital Age

It is natural during a period of crisis for there to be confusion and fear. As a result, false rumours and speculation – both within your firm and across your organisation – reach the rest of the world. Stakeholders, consumers, and employees need you to not only be transparent but sure and clear in your message during this time.

The worst is over and it’s important to take a constructive approach to reflecting, recovering and improving your systems and processes. Start building morale and seizing new opportunities. Crisis has a make or break effect on companies but either way, it accelerates change.

The crisis of the mind

Like many crisis leadership experts, James sees abundant opportunity in both the planning and management of crisis. She believes it is putting the quality of leadership and an organisation’s competencies to the test.

THE CRISIS OF THE MIND

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AFTER: REFLECT AND FIND THE SILVER LINING

Once you’ve come out from the other side, it’s time to talk about it and ask, “What could we have done better?” or “What should we have done differently?” and “What should we change?” The worst is over and it’s important to take a constructive approach to reflecting, recovering and improving your systems and processes. Start building morale and seizing new opportunities. Crisis has a make or break effect on companies but either way, it accelerates change.

All your planning and preparations engage in a rapid fire round of tests, often opening you up to new lessons if you look for them.

In short, crisis cannot be controlled, only managed by those who plan for it will become conquerors.

Louis can’t have a crisis this week as her schedule is full. She loves to talk to people and wants to hear their thoughts on everything and anything. Get in touch with her at louisa.alyce@leaderonomics.com.
DESIGN THINKING AS A PROBLEM-SOLVING TOOL

WHAT IS IT AND WHY USE IT?

By SANDY CLARKE
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In solving problems, design thinking repeatedly asks the most important question than can be asked in business: Why? There’s a dreadful notion that often rear its ugly head, expressing the idea that in order to achieve a goal or clear an obstacle, we need only attempt the thing once and it’s done. Personally, I blame internet memes. Conventional wisdom — wrong as it’s continually proved to be — is often at the root of some shaky business philosophies, many of which are so cliche-ridden that any kind of intellectual pursuit in building or creating anything worthwhile gets buried in the saccharine mix of meaningless tautologies.

One instance of this can be found in the oft-repeated phrase, “Fail fast and fail often.” It’s safe to presume few patients would survive if their surgeons embraced this advice. Had it been the motto of the great leader, Alexander the Great, he might well have been remembered as Alexander the Great was to the Persian army. And so we arrive at our problem: How can organisations truly address the problems that they face? How can they go beyond the ideas that sound good and reach a place where real progress can be made, the kind of progress that offers solutions that last?

By embracing design thinking in our approach to problem-solving, we step outside the box and encounter two realisations:

1. Problems aren’t always solved the first time
   This sounds obvious, right? So why do we repeatedly act otherwise, carrying the attitude that if there’s a problem, it should be fixed immediately? This shows our tendency to incline towards the quick fix when there often isn’t one.

2. Design doesn’t describe an ending, it defines a process
   All too often, design thinking is about the process of problem-solving, which informs the core principles of the practice. In recognising the need for process, we step away from the quick-fix mentality that significantly limits progress.

Design thinking has some fundamentals which allow for a deliberative, thorough and considered approach to solving problems. Think about car design. It contains an intricate process, which can include the going over and the refining of ideas, or scrapping them altogether and thinking of a new way to approach the plan. The key principles of design thinking are:

OUTLINE THE PROBLEM

When organisations find themselves at the root of some shaky business philosophies, many of which are so cliche-ridden that any kind of intellectual pursuit in building or creating anything worthwhile gets buried in the saccharine mix of meaningless tautologies.

Once we step away from the quick-fix mentality, it defines a process through which a business even- tually arrives at a better outcome or overall state than before. It’s a process which starts with consideration and ends with determination. With your best idea now firmly in place, it’s important to commit the time and resources required for implementation if goals and objectives are to be achieved. By committing all efforts to focusing on the execution, success in any endeavour becomes much more likely.
Do you have a dysfunctional relationship with your boss?

By KEVIN KRUSE
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Do you ever wonder if your relationship with your boss is hopeless? While it’s common to disagree with a boss, or even to dislike a boss, how can we know if our relationship with our boss is never going to improve? How do we know if we should “fire” our boss, or stick it out a bit longer? I’m not talking about the obvious signs like sexual harassment or racism or clear human resources (HR) violations. What if things aren’t that bad, but you aren’t sure if the devil you know is better than the next boss you don’t know?

I recently read an excellent book about toxic relationships called, Why It Can’t Work: Detaching from Dysfunctional Relationships to Make Room for True Love, by Thomas G. Fiffer. It’s not about workplace relationships; it’s about how to identify dysfunctional romantic relationships and how to determine when it’s time to make the painful decision to move on. But I couldn’t help but notice strong parallels between Fiffer’s chapter on “21 Signs Your Relationship is Doomed” and signs that one’s relationship with her boss is doomed.

7 SIGNS OF A DYSFUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIP

So, with credit to Fiffer, here are the signs of a dysfunctional relationship that could apply to your boss and may warrant a job change or at least a conversation with a HR professional.

1. RESENTMENT

If you are suffering silently and never bring up things about your job or behaviours of your boss that bother you, you are loading up on resentment and it is bound to spill over some day. When resentment moves in, communication moves out, and there is little hope for an improved relationship.

2. DISRESPECT

If your boss is showing signs of disrespect or is routinely dismissive of you and your ideas, it’s a sign that mentally he or she is disengaged with you.

3. LIVING

A manager has every right to withhold certain information that is unnecessary to the performance of another’s job, or to protect sensitive information. However, having a boss outright lie to you is highly unprofessional. Trust is paramount for any successful relationship, and if you have proof that you are being lied to, it’s a sign that your professional relationship is beyond repair.

4. PUBLIC DERISION OR HUMILIATION

Anything good someone has to say can and should be said in public. But saying anything negative, or delivering criticism, should be shared with you in private. And intentional public humiliation is abusive and should never be tolerated.

5. REQUESTS TO COVER-UP UNETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

I’ve heard of stories of assistants being asked to buy flowers for her boss’s wife and mistress, of requests to doctor expense reports, of “covering” unexplained absences out of the office, and even requests to take the blame for something that was the boss’s fault. Anytime you are asked to cover up unethical or illegal behaviour, that is not being a team player. These situations always end badly and nobody will care that you were “told” or “ordered” to do something that common sense indicates is wrong.

6. COMPARISONS TO YOUR PREDECESSOR

Does your boss always compare you with the person who was in the job before you? Statements like, “David never would have missed that typo,” or “Hector could do that in half the time,” are inappropriate. Professional coaching conversations state the performance requirement, where you are falling short (i.e. the gap), the impact it is having, and an action plan for improvement. We all have different strengths, limitations, training and experiences. Comparing you with someone else is designed to hurt you, whether your boss realises it or not.

7. INDIFFERENCE

Your indifference. Life is too short to be unhappy at work. If you truly no longer care, shouldn’t you move on?

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

If your boss is showing signs that he or she doesn’t respect you or like your performance on the job, you might be wondering why he or she doesn’t just fire you. That’s a good question. In large companies, it might be because it would look bad or require HR-related hassles. In busy times, a boss might feel he or she just doesn’t have the time to recruit, hire and train a replacement. And there is the possibility that your boss has emotional issues and treats you poorly!

So should you stay or should you go? If your boss is just temperamental or he or she doesn’t respect you or like your performance on the job, you might be wondering why he or she doesn’t just fire you. That’s a good question. In large companies, it might be because it would look bad or require HR-related hassles. In busy times, a boss might feel he or she just doesn’t have the time to recruit, hire and train a replacement. And there is the possibility that your boss has emotional issues and treats you poorly!

So should you stay or should you go? If your boss is just temperamental or you think time will improve your professional relationship, it may be worth the wait. But if you see any of these signs of a dysfunctional relationship, it may be hopeless and you should make a plan to move on.
YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMPS 2016

**DIODE KIDS**
(Ages 8-10 years)

*Key Highlights:* Resilience, Self-Awareness, Confidence & Creativity

**DATES & TIME:**
- Kids
- 7 - 8 Dec 2016
- 9am to 5pm

**VENUE:**
- Dewan Besar
  - Bangunan Bakti
  - Siti Hasman, TTDI

**NORMAL FEE:** RM350*  
**EARLY BIRD:** RM290*

**4 + 1 PROMO:** Register 4 campers, and get 1 free space

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**DIODE YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP**
(Ages 13-16 years)

*Key Highlights:* Communication & Public Speaking Skills, Leading with Confidence, Self-Awareness

**DATES & TIME:**
- YLC
- 28 Nov - 3 Dec
- 5 - 10 Dec 2016

**VENUE:**
- Warisan Sembilang Training Centre
  - Jeram, Selangor

**NORMAL FEE:** RM990*  
**EARLY BIRD:** RM890*

**4 + 1 PROMO:** Register 4 campers, and get 1 free space

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**DIODE TWEENS LEADERSHIP CAMP**
(Ages 11-12 years)

*Key Highlights:* Adaptability & Assertiveness, Handling Peer Pressure, Managing Friendships

**DATES & TIME:**
- TLC
- 28 Nov - 1 Dec 2016

**VENUE:**
- El Sanctuary
  - Alor Gajah, Malacca

**NORMAL FEE:** RM750*  
**EARLY BIRD:** RM680*

**4 + 1 PROMO:** Register 4 campers, and get 1 free space

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**DIODE SCHOOL LEAVERS CAMP**
(Ages 17-18 years)

*Key Highlights:* Personal Development Plan, Core Values, Building CV's, Career Sharing

**DATES & TIME:**
- SLC
- 12 - 17 Dec 2016

**VENUE:**
- Kendong Village Resort
  - Rembau, Negeri Sembilan

**NORMAL FEE:** RM990*  
**EARLY BIRD:** RM890*

**4 + 1 PROMO:** Register 4 campers, and get 1 free space

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*All prices exclusive of 6% GST. Early bird promo ends TWO MONTHS before camp date. 4+1 promo only applies with NORMAL fee rates.

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