Collaborations

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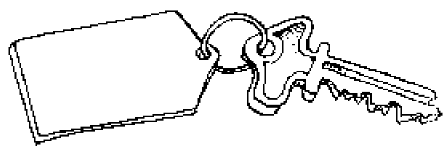
Book Corner ~ *Leading in Tough Times*

by Richard S. Deems, Ph.D. and Terri A. Deems, Ph.D.

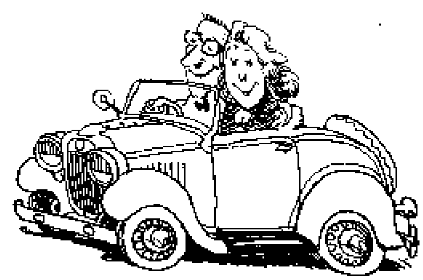
This book is full of tips and advice for managers, team leaders or supervisors who



must keep employees productive and engaged during difficult times. Since difficult times can include layoffs, economic downturn, major organizational change and more, we all can use these tips to be more effective.

When you lead during tough times, you must become very conscious of your motives, intentions, beliefs and attitudes toward others. Deems and Deems open with seven ways to set the example for others:

1. Step up
2. Know yourself
   - Know your intentions
   - Challenge your assumptions
   - Know what you do best
3. Realize that you may be the problem
4. Lead with a human force
   - Be fully alive
   - Live a balanced life
   - Treat people as people
5. Make use of your internal expertise
6. Character matters
7. Be the change



As they guide your thinking on leadership, the authors have some very useful thoughts about communication strategies, leading mindfully, engaging others, values and ethics, and motivation. I particularly enjoyed a quote about ownership - "No one ever washes a rental car." This reminds us that a lack of ownership leads to a lack of commitment.

Leading and Managing Former Peers

Question: *How can leaders, who have been recently promoted, preserve their professional and personal relationships with former peers, while at the same time adapting to the new position?*

Collaborations Response: You pose a difficult and delicate question. Leading and managing former peers is as important to the recently promoted President-CEO as it is to the recently promoted first line supervisor. If you've been around a little while you've undoubtedly seen good and bad examples of how various individuals have dealt with it. *(Continued on page 2)*

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Leading and Managing Former Peers

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On one end of the spectrum is an individual who is totally committed to being one of the "guys" or "gals." Generally he or she is very uncomfortable making unpopular decisions, assigning responsibility, holding people accountable, giving direction, disciplining when necessary, delivering "bad" news, etc. His or her overriding need seems to be being liked and accepted by his or her former peer group.

At the other end of the spectrum is the individual who seems to morph into an entirely different and often unrecognizable person when promoted. So much so that people say, "Who is this person? Where did 'insert appropriate name' go? What happened to him or her?"

Neither extreme is appropriate. Some organizations help with the challenge of effectively leading and managing former peers by moving newly promoted individuals into different work groups, departments, divisions, etc. Many organizations provide leadership or management training for newly promoted individuals. All this is an effort to assist them with a recognized difficult transition from peer group to leader/manager.

The first issue, in our experience, is for newly promoted individuals to clearly define their new role. By that we mean their mental model of their role. Many individuals never slow down to consider that their role has changed. Thus individuals continue to do the things they are good at – or like to do, even though some of those things may not be a part of their new job responsibilities. At the same time, individuals might not be doing or recognizing things that are part of their new position.

In clarifying their role, new leaders must now make trade offs between what they will do themselves and how they will lead and manage the work group. More and more, as one rises in an organization, one's role encompasses doing less of the actual "work" oneself, while at the same time accomplishing more "work" through other people. The measure of the leader is the accomplishment of the led.

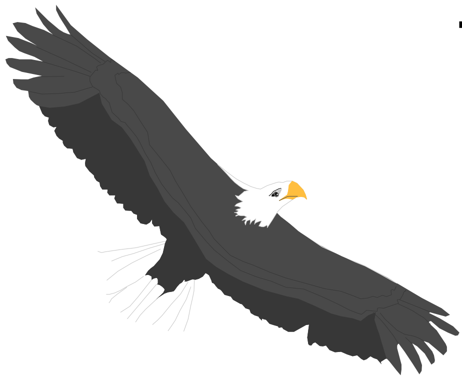
Relating this to David McClelland's "Social Motive Theory," if we clearly understand that our new role requires more need for power (influence), almost everyone can increase their motivation in that area. Conversely, if the role demands less need for achievement (doing it ourselves) and we clearly understand that, we can then take steps to meet a high natural need for achievement outside of the work environment. Or, we can reframe achievement in terms of what our group accomplishes.

After role clarification, a second excellent step is a wide ranging discussion with your group of how you work, your preferences, idiosyncrasies, hot buttons, goals, objectives, your expectations and their expectations, how you see your role and their roles, how you deal with performance appraisals, how they will know you are upset or angry, etc. This ought not be just a one-way conversation, rather one that goes both ways.

(We'd also suggest that you share the same information early in the relationship with people who might come to work for you in the future. It is always best to discuss everything possible prior to it becoming an "issue." In the heat of battle it is sometimes difficult to have reasonable, or even civil conversations.)

Our last, but no less critical, suggestion is to be open about questions and concerns you or your people might have. In general, people have a natural desire for you to be successful, especially if their own fate is now coupled with yours. Our experience is that a little discussion really goes a long way.

The Habit of Attitude



Your Attitude Determines Your Altitude

Last issue we talked about attitude and how our attitude impacts others. We gave you a few tips on how to shift your attitude. In this issue we'd like to talk about how to shift it more permanently.

As I've been observing myself over the past few months in relation to this topic, I've noticed that I tend to offer the "bright side" of situations. And, I do it without consciously thinking about it. This may not seem to be a big deal, however, I know there are people who will remember when I frequently tended to look at the negative side first. So, what happened? I used the following process for changing behavior:

1. **Recognize the habit you want to break.** (My habit was negative response.)
2. **Look for the pattern of when you display the habit.** (I was responding negatively when someone offered an idea that was different than I already had in mind.)
3. **Recognize the situation when it appears, stop, reprocess in light of the new response you want to make. Give yourself space for a different response.** (I had to remind myself and check in to see if I was considering the positives for quite awhile.)
4. **Keep at it until the new response becomes the new habit.**

Somewhere along the way, I stopped thinking about my response altogether. I developed a new *habit* -- I consider the positive without even realizing it. My overall attitude comes across as much more positive than it did in the past. This habit continues to be reinforced for me as I focused my learning and work on understanding and appreciating people's differences.

So, if you have a behavioral habit that is impacting your attitude, try this process. Be aware that stressful situations sometimes send us back to our old habits, so even after you've successfully made the change, it's worth checking in once in awhile to be sure the old habit doesn't return.

What's Marilyn Been Up To?

Marilyn has found a definite increase in the demand for Presentation Techniques training. 33 million business presentations a day are being given in today's world. Many people are doing a poor job of presenting.   The result -- a wide variety of "turn downs" for the order, the project, resources or whatever is being asked for in the presentation.

The theme Marilyn sees with her clients (CEOs all the way down to line personnel) is that people give too much information. They produce complex *Power Point* presentations with too many slides and too much on each slide. People seem to try to take everything they know and share it.

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What's Marilyn Been Up To?

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The key to success, according to Marilyn is that "less is more."

- When you tell a story and connect with your audience, you are more likely to be successful.
- When you are preparing a presentation, start first with your core message, the purpose of the presentation and the needs of the audience. That will help you formulate your message.
- Prepare the slides (or other medium) last so that they support the message.

Marilyn reminds us that a *Power Point* presentation doesn't connect with people. **People connect with people.** So, the message should be about you, not about the slides. Let the message come from you and you will make a connection with your audience.

If you are interested in more information on Marilyn's process,
call her at (760) 746-6852 or e-mail mdeming1@aol.com.

<u>We'd Like to Hear From You</u>

If you'd like to contribute to Collaborations or if you have a question or topic for us, we'd love to hear from you. Send an e-mail to sgerke@sbcglobal.net with your ideas or questions. We can't include everything, but will respond based on topics of most interest.