

CAREER HEALTH

Personal Influence

By Nolene Dawes

In my experience we're all leaders since we influence others. Try not sounding like your mother or father some time!

True leaders who lead business and sales teams stand out through committed people and successful results!

The person in my corporate life who remains in my mind as a true leader is the person who recruited me into the world of financial services. Not surprisingly, he's now at the top of the tree, largely because he's highly effective at leading people. However, I'm not sure that he has a clear sense of how he does it.

What makes an effective influencer?

They act intuitively and may not know how they do what they do, or at least are not consciously aware of the process in sufficient detail to successfully transfer the skill.

Ineffective people managers on the other hand just can't seem to get through to their people, even though they have the best intentions, read and research, go to courses, and exert a lot of energy doing so.

The fact is that no amount of information can help if you don't know what you need to learn!

When there is an issue in business, the norm is to do an audit of the process and the person's skill level, recommend change, up-skill the person and implement the new process.

The paradox is that when there is a problem communicating with and influencing a person, the answer most often is to performance manage and counsel them. This is rapidly followed with much ado, wasted time and energy, negative influence on others and perhaps then to part company and recruit someone else. The next recruit may then become another problem!

In many cases the performance management process may be engineered by the best in the HR world and be robust. However, the person operating the process, the manager, needs to

be sufficiently skilled to get a positive result.

So why don't we audit how we influence others?

We are complex organisms with complex programming. Think for a moment about our fragile PCs, when our computers go down we scream, re-boot and if all else fails call a technician. Similarly it's useful to check our personal software and de-frag our disk, then up-grade carefully. We want to increase our capacity not shut down!

We need to look at what we do, how we do it, and add some choices so that we can change behavior to what is more effective.

I recently worked with a dynamic person who runs a growing profitable company. This person has so much ability and energy, innovative ideas and robust systems in place that the Company's success is assured. The major issue, one that cost time, energy and way too much angst was how to recruit effective top grade people and manage their performance issues.

I'm pleased to say that having guided them through a self-audit and assisted in giving some clear processes, their self-confidence now matches their ability. Now experiencing less stress on this front they are getting on with doing the work they love.

This is a gradual process and the positive results they have already achieved are convincing enough to keep them motivated. As they build personal skill and confidence in this field, their motivation increases and they are consciously a true leader.

I have often said to developing managers that it's predominately how we are rather than what we say that influences the people we manage. To be effective and get results as a true leader our behaviour must be congruent with what we say.

The good news...it can be learned!

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If You Think 'Organic' Food is 'Organic', Think Again

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To be certified organic, a product must contain 95% organic ingredients or materials during its production. The other 5% should be on the list of allowable synthetic substances. A National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances was prepared in 2002 but has since been amended because food producers can file a petition to include substances that are not on the original list but which they think are essential in their production. In June 2007, a final amended National List was issued with the number of allowable substances increasing from 77 to 245, according to the LA Times. Subsequently, the advocacy group Organic Consumers Association expressed objections to the inclusion of some of the new products allowed, especially the food colorings.

As people become more and more health and socially conscious, the demand for organic products is increasing. However, as economists point out, "as mainstream consumers are growing hungry for untainted food that also nourishes their social conscience, it is getting harder and harder to find organic ingredients." For the purists, however, the philosophy also requires farmers to treat their people and livestock with respect and, ideally, to sell small batches of what they produce locally so as to avoid burning fossil fuels to transport them.

Economic principles, however, do not coincide with purist organic philosophy. The whole supply chain of organic food production is becoming more complicated as the market grows rapidly. The producers are forced to take short cuts in order to stay competitive. In the US, for example, there aren't enough organic cows to produce organic milk. Some companies are forced to look offshore for organic ingredients, thereby violating several organic principles, not necessarily in the production process, but in terms of low labor costs and high transport costs.

The organic food industry has clearly outgrown the original regulations meant to protect it and its consumers. And the increased demand for organic food may actually be its own undoing. How 'organic is organic food' is even more important now than in the past!

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-Maria Robinson

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We hope that you find these articles to be of value in improving the quality of your life.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

If You Think 'Organic' Food is 'Organic', Think Again

By Katt Mollar

The last decade has witnessed an increased interest in things "organic" as more and more consumers seek out products that are healthy, ethical, and environmentally friendly. Nowhere is this more evident than in the food industry.

In fact, the organic food industry has gone from a cottage industry start up to a multi-billion dollar business in less than a decade. Global sales of organic food were estimated to be \$40 billion in 2006 with the world organic market growing rapidly by about 20% annually. In the US, organic food products are the fastest growing sector of the food marketplace.

Because of the rapid growth of the organic food industry, it is no surprise that big food companies and retailers have joined the act. Because of these alliances, unlikely organic products are sprouting up everywhere including organic Cheetos and organic McDonald's coffee. The new movie **FOOD INC.** eloquently speaks to this issue. Hershey Foods owns Dagoba, Kraft owns Boca Foods and Back to Nature, and Heinz is a big investor in Hain Celestial which is connected to many small organic companies including Earth's Best, Spectrum Organics, and Frutti di Bosco.

So who standardizes and regulates this burgeoning worldwide industry? Every country has its own regulations in labeling organic products.

In the USA, the Organic Food Production Act was passed in 1990 giving mandate to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to set national standards and in 2002, the USDA set up the National Organic Program (NOP) to regulate organic food products. The USDA regulations cover issues

such as genetic modification, radiation, bioengineering, pesticides, fertilizers, hormones, antibiotics, and other man-made chemicals but they do not cover some environmental as well as ethical and social issues.

Certification covers all processes involved from production to processing, packaging and transport. The products that fall under NOP jurisdiction are fresh and processed agricultural food products, including dairy products, meat and livestock and food crops. It covers food products only and does not include non-food organic crops such as cotton and plants for cosmetics and personal care products.

In the US, the following terminology is allowed on organic food products:

100% organic - single ingredient such as a fruit, vegetable, meat, milk and cheese (excludes water and salt).

Organic - multiple ingredient foods which are 95 to 100% organic.

Made with organic ingredients - 70% of the ingredients are organic and can appear on the front of package, naming the specific ingredients.

Contains organic ingredients - contains less than 70% organic ingredients.

To say the least, organic labeling is both complicated and confusing. However, only those products that meet the 100% organic and organic criteria are allowed to carry the USDA Organic seal and the USDA emphasizes that the term organic is not synonymous to natural or all-natural.

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RELATIONSHIP HEALTH

Communication & Self Management

By Article Street

Communication & Self Management - The Key to Reducing Stress in a Relationship

Most relationships, whether professional or personal, have the potential of causing stress in the lives of people. When you experience stress in a relationship, you tend to let it take control of how you feel and what you do. You also have a tendency of doing things more unhappily and in a hurried manner. This results in becoming either aggressive when dealing with others in order to release the stress, or becoming submissive as a way to hide the stress. While aggressiveness may make you feel better temporarily, you soon begin feeling stressed even further because of hurting another person, whereas by hiding your stress by being submissive, you internalize it and hurt yourself emotionally, and thus cause further stress in your relationships. Relationships that are chronically stressful can have a negative impact on your spiritual, emotional and physical health.

When stressed, your manner of communication will alter when you respond to a stressful situation that goes beyond your threshold of tolerance. The kind of behavior most people choose to manage a situation they find stressful will usually be something that they have used in the past which they feel protected them. It is an inbuilt human instinct to heed internal factors while blocking out external ones. However, by blocking out external issues, like the feelings of other people, and listening to only your internal factors, you impinge negatively on your interpersonal communication skills.

In order to have relationships that are free of stress, you require motivation, commitment, positive intent, and learning and using certain skills to manage stress, so that it does not overcome you and your relationships. Apart from developing effective techniques of communication and the ability to resolve conflicts in an equitable manner, these skills include changing certain behaviors and habits, and the way we think. Fortunately, practically everyone can learn these skills, although it is only when we choose to actually put them into practice that we can have relationships that are truly free of

stress. Here are a few communication and self-management techniques that you can acquire which will help you to reduce stress in your relationships:

Preventing Stress: One of the most effective ways of stress management is to prevent either yourself or other people from getting to high levels of stress. Reducing a problem by preventing it is considered to be one of the best self-management skills that can be acquired.

Understanding Yourself: Controlling your emotions and managing yourself are important skills that need to be acquired.

“Wisdom is not a product of schooling but of the lifelong attempt to acquire it.”

-Albert Einstein

When under stress, you ought to be attentive about how you treat the other person, and whether you are doing it appropriately. If not, you need to understand that you are under stress, the reason for the stress, and the methods of managing the stress.

Listening Effectively: This involves letting the other person, whether your spouse, partner or colleague, talk. Later, you can rephrase what has been said, and if some point may be unclear, asking questions in order to clarify it and be more informed.

Expressing Your Thoughts: Most of us are conditioned from an early age that it is selfish to express what we actually feel or really want. However, not expressing our real feelings and needs results in communication that is ineffective, which increases stress in a relationship.

Staying Focused: Generally, especially in personal relationships, people have a tendency of bringing up past conflicts, which

seem related, while dealing with existing ones. However, this usually has the effect of clouding the issue, making it less likely of arriving at an understanding that is mutual and resolving the current stressful situation. Try avoiding bringing up hurts of the past or some other issues. Remain focused on the current issue, the way you are feeling, and resolving the situation by understanding each other.

Seeing the Viewpoint of Others: When there is conflict in a relationship, most people want to be heard and feel that they are understood. We usually try to make the other person see our point of view. However, when we do this, the other person feels that his/her viewpoint is being ignored, which leads to each person feeling misunderstood. It is often better to first find out the other person's viewpoint and then express yours. When other people feel that they are being heard, they are usually more open to listening to your point of view.

Responding Empathetically to Criticism: When criticized, most people become defensive as they usually feel that the person doing the criticism is wrong. Although it is hard to listen to criticism, and it often is exaggerated or is biased by the emotions being felt by the person making the criticism, it is often an expression of pain felt by that person, which you need to listen and respond to empathetically. Also, the criticism could have some truth in it, which can be a valuable source of information that you can use to make changes in your behavior.

While being rewarding and fulfilling, most relationships can be quite complex. Most people know that they need to respect and love their partners and members of the family, while also getting along with colleagues and friends. Those who can understand their own feelings, have the ability of assuming responsibility for them, and can learn the skills of communicating descriptively and unambiguously are most likely to have stress-free relationships.

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INNER HEALTH

Profit from Life's Losses: Find Significance

By John Chappellear

Ever notice everyone's on a low fat diet after the heart attack?

Everyone has time for their kids after the divorce?

Everyone's a financial genius after a bankruptcy?

As managers, supervisors and executives, we're trained to judge our success on the size of our departments, budgets, sales, profits, bank accounts and the deals we make. When I had my own \$50 million-a-year business, that's what I thought, too. Being a successful CEO, I figured if I just worked hard enough, I'd wind up on top. Failure is something that happens to the other guys.

That's when it happened to me. I lost everything. Everything I thought was important.

Money, power, prestige, gone! My position as CEO - gone, too.

Although I didn't know it then, I had been given a gift. A "Gift of Desperation" that changed me and my outlook for the better. In the end, it made me a more successful person, too.

The "Gift of Desperation" Made Me a Better Person

We can all recognize a "Gift of Desperation". It's the "a-ha" that comes at the darkest of times. Speak with anyone who has had a life-changing experience, and they'll tell you how much it has led them to appreciate each and every day. They have a higher sense of awareness and focus on living each day with joy.

Still need convincing? Look at how our country pulled together after 9-11-01. People actually started talking, connecting - and not just our friends and family - but strangers on the news or at the corner store. I had clients all over the country remarking something like this: "I never really appreciated just how important (blank) was, until now," they'd say.

The way that (blank) got filled in varied from person to person, and organization to organization, but suddenly I could tell they had begun to notice that there was more to life than profits and

“We tend to forget that happiness doesn't come as a result of getting something we don't have, but rather of recognizing and appreciating what we do have.”

-Frederick Keonig

possessions. The horror of that experience became a gift to many who chose to see the lessons.

Something Was Missing From my Life

When I received my "Gift of Desperation" I began to notice, FINALLY, something was missing in my life. It wasn't success that was missing. It was significance.

Most CEOs have the same symptoms I did. We have a gorgeous house, but are hardly around to enjoy it. We eat at private lunch clubs, but we're still hungry inside. Our expensive watches can't keep our time from slipping

away.

We have kids, but we may never really appreciate them. I didn't until involuntary unemployment kept me home, instead of frantic and at the office. "Pick me up, Daddy!" my three-year-old son kept saying. "It's good for you." Now how did he know that? But you know what, he was right.

Here I had been rushing, rushing, rushing, because I needed everything to be perfect. And then I would finally get back to my family and friends. I just needed to get all of my ducks in a row. People, have you ever tried to get your ducks in a row? I finally realized that I had to stop waiting for my life to get perfect to be happy.

The New CYA

Over time, the life I could never quite find seemed to fall right into my lap. In business, so often we're taught to CYA. Well, I started my own version: Change Your Attitude.

Today I work with people and organizations who are trying to change their attitude and behavior. Many of them, facing their own periods of desperation, are wondering if they will ever recover. They will - with a change of focus.

© John Chappellear. All Rights Reserved. John Chappellear is an author, motivational speaker, executive coach, and trainer. He lives in Florida and is grateful for his wonderful family. He is the author of The Daily Six - Simple Steps to Prosperity and Purpose. John is the founder of Changing the Focus, LLC. For more information, visit the website or send an e-mail to: john@changingthefocus.com.