



Issue 162 - September 2016

The Leader Letter

Martin Luther King, Jr., American clergyman, activist, and prominent leader in the African-American civil rights movement once said:

"In a real sense all life is inter-related. All persons are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the inter-related structure of reality."



Our interconnectedness or oneness with each other and universal spirit has been taught for thousands of years in many spiritual, mystical, and native belief systems. The 17th century English metaphysical poet John Donne's line "no man is an island, entire of itself..." has become a truism. The 20th century Trappist monk and spiritual writer Thomas Merton wrote a book, Joan Baez performed a song, and a 1962 movie based on WWII hero George Ray Tweed were all titled "No Man is an Island."

The Internet is a powerful manifestation of our connectedness. In an incredibly short time, it has dramatically altered, interconnected, and affected our economies, social networks, healthcare, entertainment, learning definitions and methods, scientific understanding ... Globalized trade, international finance, immigration, and environmental issues like global warming also starkly illustrate what an interdependent and global village we've truly become.

Modern research on social intelligence – a key component of emotional intelligence – is further showing the effects of our interconnections. In *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships*, Emotional Intelligence guru Daniel Goleman explores how "our reaction to others, and theirs to us, have a far-reaching biological impact, sending out cascades of hormone that regulate everything from our hearts to our immune systems, making good relationships act like vitamins – and bad relationships like poisons. We can 'catch' other people's emotions the way we catch a cold."

This issue has examples of interconnectedness rippling across teams, organizations, and society. Through reflection and refocus, building strengths, fostering passion and purpose, supportive coaching and development, or speed and agility, leaders help their key stakeholders "catch" positive emotions and behaviors.

May you find a few approaches to help you become a highly contagious leader.

Practical Resources for Leadership Team Retreats, Meetings, or Conferences

Where's summer gone already? July and August seem to move at a much higher speed than the rest of the year. I hope you've had some downtime to rest and recharge before heading into a busy fall.

As I wrote in "[Does Your Leadership Team Need Strategic Focus?](#)", fall is a popular time for leadership team retreats. Getting away provides space for the collaboration and planning so vital to increasing safety, service/quality improvement, leadership, or culture development.



Following are links to assessments, checklists, webinars, blogs, and other resources for leadership team development. Some organizations use these resources to plan or set agenda items for their leadership conferences, meetings, or retreats. This can be done by having leadership team members complete one of the checklists or assessments and compare results.

When communication and teamwork needs more work, there's often a "moose" or "elephant" issue that needs to be addressed. So teams might have everyone complete a quiz or assessment anonymously. Results can then be tabulated by a neutral third party or posted anonymously to online forums or using an online tool that protects anonymity. This data fosters powerful conversations and team/culture development discussions.

- **"Harnessing the Power of an Offsite Retreat"** – common retreat objectives and approaches to maximize leadership team effectiveness
- **Moose quiz** – 10 questions to see if your team is creating conditions for moose-on-the-table (sometimes called elephant-in-the-room) that's stifling communication and teamwork
- **"Steps to Fostering Courageous Conversations to Reduce the Moose"**
- **"How to Vision Your Ideal Team or Culture"**
- **"Five Critical Steps in Developing a Peak Performance Culture"**
- **"Using Strategic Imperatives to Drive Team/Organization Development"** and then **"Setting and Cascading Goals for Increased Effectiveness"**
- **Assess Your Leadership, Coaching, and Culture Status** the self-assessment drawn from and outlined at **"Use Our 12 Point Assessment of Leadership, Coaching, and Culture"**
- **"5 Causes of Leadership Team Communication Breakdowns"**
- **"6 Dysfunctional Leadership Team Behaviors"**
- **"7 Deadly Time Traps for Leaders"**
- **"A Culture Change Compass for Assessment and Planning"**
- **"9 Key Behaviors Transforming Good Managers into Great Leaders"**
- **"7 Reasons Change and Development Programs Fail"**
- **"Four Keys to Transforming Safety Culture"**
- **"Six Lessons in Culture Development from Zappos"**
- **"Ten Critical Questions to Assess HR's Effectiveness"**
- **"7 Keys to Leading Change"**

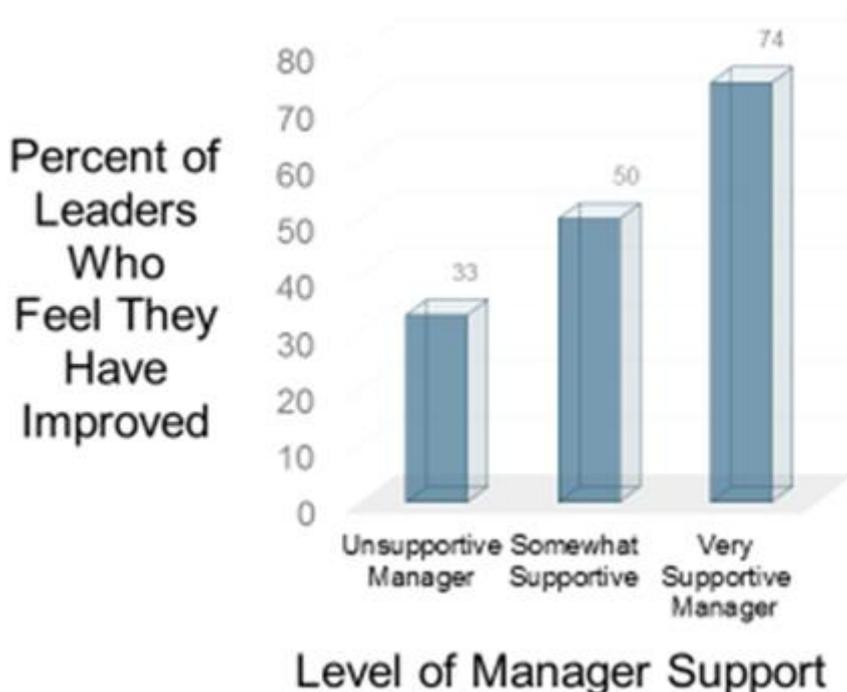
In *Alice in Wonderland*, Lewis Carroll reminds us, "the hurrier I go, the behinder I get." In a crazy-busy world, slowing down to review and refocus helps leadership teams move faster and increase their organization's agility.

Double Development Impact with Manager Support

Nearly 200 years ago farmers in Scotland began dipping or bathing their sheep in a solution of insecticide and fungicide to protect them against parasites, ticks, and lice. Today many organizations practice a form of "development dipping." Leaders are dunked in a development workshop or learning activity in the hope that something sticks.



When dipped in a leadership solution, some leaders do benefit and improve their effectiveness. But one-off events are much less effective than when they're actively supported by a manager's coaching. Here's data Zenger Folkman collected from leadership development participants on the impact of manager support:



Managers can double the effectiveness of development activities by investing some time in pre and post coaching sessions. Here are a few key steps:

Before the Development Activity

1. Review the curriculum/agenda and how it fits within his or her larger goals and role/responsibilities.
2. Discuss his or her learning objectives for this development.
3. Set a follow-up date within a week or two of the completion of the development activity.

After the Development Activity

1. Review key learning/outcomes he or she gained from the experience. How does this compare with his or her original learning objectives?
2. Discuss his or her action plans from the development work.
3. Set follow-up dates to review progress on development implementation.

Most development participants don't need protection against parasites, ticks, and lice. By going beyond development dipping and providing pre and post coaching discussions, managers can help their team members get much more from the time and money invested in development. This boosts protection against lousy leadership practices!

Are You a Culprit in The Great Training Robbery?

Is your organization using a "spray and pray" approach to training and development? What kind of return are you getting on your investment?

Michael Beer is Cahners-Rabb Professor of Business Administration, Emeritus at Harvard Business School. He and his colleagues are working on a paper focused on "The Great Training Robbery." They're finding that some studies show only 10 percent of corporate training is effective. The problem isn't so much with the training programs as with organizations not laying the groundwork to maximize the return on their investment.



Part of the problem is that most training focuses on individual behavior change and isn't part of a larger organization development process led by the senior team. This is consistent with what we've found is a simple formula to lasting and effective leadership and organization development; **B = P x C**. **That is, Behavior is a factor of Personal development multiplied by the organization's Culture.**

Beer reports "the system of organizing and managing is so powerful that individuals and teams returning from training will not be able to be more effective unless the system enables them to apply their learning. So, efforts to change the system must come first." We find that a key step to dealing with this problem is managers actively supporting development activities with **before and after coaching sessions**.

Most organizations use their training investments about as strategically as they deploy their office supplies spending. That's why **executive team building and culture development** is such a vital step. When development is part of a larger organization or culture development strategy, training investments are multiplied exponentially. This can bridge or close the gap between what's taught in training programs and day-to-day management behavior on the job.

Beer concludes "organizational transformations around the world would be more rapid and cost effective if executives were willing to create the context for effective management training by starting with honest conversations about the system and changing it first."

Are your training and development efforts being robbed by ineffective implementation? Are you culpable? Or are you an accessory before the fact?

The Key to Organizational Agility is Leadership Speed

Do you feel like you're expected to move faster and do more? Are you often frustrated that your organization moves too slow and gets stalled? If your organization were to move faster, would it substantially influence your success?



These questions were recently asked in a Zenger Folkman survey on agility and leadership speed. Agreement with the statements ranged from 70% to 83%.

What do you think is most important: doing things fast or doing things right? Zenger Folkman's research from 51,137 leaders in their global 360 assessment database shows that if only doing one or the other -- doing things fast or doing things right -- is a strength, leaders were assessed as being extraordinary (in the top 10%) less than five percent of the time. However, those leaders who were assessed as strong at doing things both fast and right were extraordinary 96% of the time!

'Fast and right' leaders were shown to:

- Be twice as effective in overall leadership effectiveness
- Earn performance ratings at exceeding or far exceeding 74% of the time versus 13% with poor speed leadership
- Foster employee engagement at the 83rd percentile
- Quadruple productivity and highly committed employees compared to the worst rated leaders

How can leaders improve their leadership speed? Zenger Folkman conducted another study using their cross-training companion behaviors research. This involved looking at extraordinary leaders (10%) in leadership speed and correlating which of their behaviors and competencies were statistically significant.

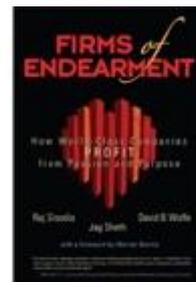
Eight behaviors emerged as having the most impact on leadership speed. Four involve executing right and four are about executing fast. These became the base for a self-assessment instrument. This Pace Assessment helps leaders understand their speed comfort zone and determine which behaviors they might work on to pick up their pace.

Joe Folkman delivered a keynote presentation, *The Key to Organizational Agility: Leadership Speed* at our July 2016 Leadership Summit in Salt Lake City. This keynote was broadcast as a webinar in August.

Quick! [Click here](#) to watch Joe's **presentation**.

Review of *Firms of Endearment*

If the reason for a company's existence is just profit, they won't be very profitable. But if a company isn't profitable, it won't exist long enough to serve any other purpose. That's what we call "**the purpose-profit paradox**".



Firms of Endearment: How World Class Companies Profit from Passion and Purpose draws from an extensive research study looking for

companies that focused on endearing themselves to their customers, employees, suppliers, communities, and shareholders. These FoEs are driven by "aligning the interests of all in such a way that no stakeholder group gains at the expense of other stakeholder groups; rather, they all prosper together."

The authors and their research team narrowed their initial list of 60 companies to "28 companies we felt best manifested a high standard of humanistic performance" and did a financial analysis on these from an investor viewpoint. They found "these widely loved companies (those that are publicly traded) outperformed the S& P 500 by huge margins, over ten-, five-, and three-year time horizons."

They also compared these FoEs to the 11 companies profiled in Jim Collins book, *Good to Great*. None of the *Good to Great* companies made their cut. The FoEs outperformed them by ratios as high as 3 to 1.

The book dives deep into understanding what sets FoEs apart from their peers. It's brimming with insightful stories and examples from many of the firms. Here's a partial list of their "distinctive set of core values, policies, and operating attributes:

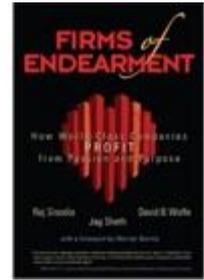
- Subscribe to a purpose for being that is different from and goes beyond making money.
- Actively align the interests of all stakeholder groups, not just balance them.
- Devote considerably more time than their competitors to employee training.
- Their employee turnover is far lower than the industry average.
- Consciously humanize the company experience for customers and employees, as well as creating a nurturing work environment.
- Project a genuine passion for customers, and emotionally connect with them at a deep level.
- Consider their corporate culture to be their greatest asset and primary source of competitive advantage."

Like *Good Company: Business Success in the Worthiness Era*, this is a very inspiring read based on a strong research foundation. The authors persuasively argue that we're now into the "Age of Transcendence...the highest pinnacle that humanity has yet ascended to." This research is further proof that the future belongs to strong, values-based, moral leaders who use their organizations to enrich everyone involved and make the world a better place.

Thoughts That Make You Go Hmmm from... *Firms of Endearment*

(see my review of *Firms of Endearment*)

"The search for meaning is changing expectations in the marketplace and in the workplace. Indeed, we believe it is changing the very soul of capitalism."



"Consider the words affection, love, joy, authenticity, empathy, compassion, soulfulness, and other terms of endearment. Until recently, such words had no place in business. That is changing. Today, a growing number of companies comfortably embrace such terms. That is why we coined the phrase 'firms of endearment,' or FoE."

"...the best way to create value for shareholders in the long run is by consciously creating value for all stakeholders."

"FoEs are exemplary in their focus on helping employees maximize their potential through training, development, and mentoring."

"FoE leaders view stakeholders as partners, not as objects of exploitation or means to their financial ends. They don't objectify stakeholders. Instead, they encourage stakeholders to collaborate with them in moving their companies forward."

"Organizational energy is created and released when an organization's people are emotionally and intellectually excited by the firm's vision and values. One of the most important tasks of a leader is to mobilize this energy and focus it on the achievement of meaningful goals."

"The most desirable energy state is the "passion zone," which is characterized by high levels of positive energy. Employees of companies working out of this zone are full of enthusiasm and excitement, and take palpable pride and joy in their work."

"....culture rules. Every FoE CEO knows this. Members of the executive staff of FoEs don't cite "product superiority," "value," "service," or any other mundane reason when asked about their company's chief competitive advantage. They almost invariably say it is the company culture."

"A new era has dawned. Fundamentalists of capitalistic theory can no longer hide with impunity behind arguments that champion corporate insulation from social concerns, contrived in the name of shareholders' rights. It's not a matter of morality, but of sound corporate management in the twenty-first century."

Feedforward Rather Than Feedback to Fix Our Broken Performance Management Systems

Research by Marie-Hélène Budworth, assistant professor of Human Resource Management at York University, shows that managers giving feedback to staff changed their performance 1/3 of the time, had no effect another 1/3 of the time, and actually reduced performance 1/3 of the time. What if a medical treatment was only effective 30% of the time and actually did harm 30% of the time; would healthcare professionals keep using it? Not likely. Especially if much more effective treatments were available.



Even when managers work hard to focus 90% of the performance conversation on strengths and positives, most employees remember the focus on their weaknesses or "improvement areas." As Kim Rigden explained in working with Marie-Hélène to use a feedforward approach at Toronto Paramedic Services, "the employee leaves the meeting and ALL they remember is the 10% educational feedback they got and report to others that they were just given a dressing down and told how much they suck at their job."

Research by the Corporate Leadership Council found that when managers focus on the weaknesses of an employee their performance declines by 27%, whereas when they focus on the strengths of an employee performance improves by 36%.

Marie-Hélène presented this feedforward process at the recent Canadian Positive Psychology Association conference:

- **Introduction** – overview on how this is a different conversation about highlights and what the coachee is proud of. A key objective is aligning personal examples with organizational goals.
- **Story** – discuss examples of a highlight or something the coachee felt good about – happy, energized, in flow (even before the results of his or her actions become known).
- **Peak** - the peak of the story. What did the coachee think at the peak moment?
- **Condition** – Manager probes for conditions, feelings, thinking, success points, characteristics, strengths, etc. that allowed the story to happen.
- **Feedforward** – discuss the upcoming period and what the coachee is doing to draw from his or her strengths/successes. To what degree do the coachee's plans take him or her closer to or further away from the conditions just described?

This is a much more positive and effective process. One study showed that when this approach was used by managers, employees were observed to perform significantly better on the job four months later compared to employees who went through their organization's traditional performance appraisal process.

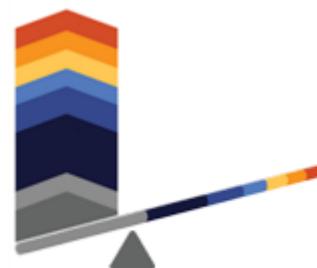
As reported in "[New Survey Showing a Strengths Revolution in our Workplaces](#)" on Michael McQuaid's research, "78% of employees who report having a meaningful discussion with their manager about their strengths feel their work is making a difference and is appreciated. These employees are most likely (61%) to be leaping out of bed in the morning to get to work."

Further Reading:

- "The Performance Evaluation Meeting"
- "Most Performance Appraisals like Being Poked in the Eye with a Stick"
- "Fixing Performance Review Systems – Most are a Disaster"

Webinar: Using Leadership Levers to Build Critical Strengths

Archimedes was an ancient Greek mathematician and engineer. He was the first to apply mathematics to physical phenomena. His understanding of the lever provided a foundation for pulley systems, engineering, and a variety of machines. He famously illustrated leverage by stating "give me a place to stand on, and I will move the earth."



Many leaders and organizations are getting twisted into knots dealing with competency models, dueling leadership models, and daunting lists of skills to develop. But which leadership capabilities are the most critical? Are there a few key skills that create tremendous leverage on many of the others?

Zenger Folkman recently concluded an extensive research study in search of leadership levers. Shifting through data gathered over two decades from over a million global respondents, ZF uncovered six critical capabilities most used by those who produce the highest results. Because of their strong leverage, we named them -- Leadership Levers.

And talk about leverage; becoming highly competent at just one of these critical levers catapults a leader into the 72nd percentile of global leaders in terms of effectiveness. Building capabilities across just three of the levers hoists a leader into the 90th percentile of all global leaders.

On September 27 at 1:00pm ET I'll deliver a fast-paced webinar, ***Leadership Levers: Building Critical Strengths***, to share the findings of this research and the approaches used in our newest workshop. Join me to learn:

- The six leadership behaviors that distinguish extraordinary leaders from all others.
- Why focusing on developing strengths is the best and fastest way to increase leadership effectiveness -- and how to best leverage strengths.
- A unique and proven cross-training approach for leveraging strengths.
- The importance of aligning an individual's passion with the needs of the organization and why the resulting Individual Development Plans are far more likely to be implemented and sustained.

This webinar won't move your world. But you will get key insights to leverage your leadership development efforts. And you'll see evidence-based methods leverage points that dramatically move the needle on personal, team, and organization results.

Click here for more details and to register.

Tweet Reading: Recommended Online Articles

This section summarizes last month's LinkedIn Updates and Twitter Tweets about online articles or blog posts that I've flagged as worth reading. These are usually posted on weekends when I am doing much of my reading for research, learning, or leisure. You can follow me on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/JimClemmer>



My original tweet commenting on the article follows each title and descriptor from the original source:



A discussion of the pressing need for bold leadership, the impact of age and gender on boldness, and how to increase bold leadership.

"Podcast/E-book: Bold Leadership" -- Interview with Josh Bersin, founder and Principal at Bersin by Deloitte
www.zengerfolkman.com
Bold leaders are willing to do something new and are open to ideas and creative solutions that may not be commonplace in their company today."

The CLEMMER Group is again honored to be recognized for our work with Zenger Folkman's powerful development systems.

Top Partner in the Americas, *"These partners were recently recognized during our Global Leadership Summit. Please join us in congratulating our Top Partners in 2015."*

Replace fear of feedback with an attitude of acceptance by following three simple steps.

"Why Workplace Feedback Fills Us With Fear (And How To Recover)" -- Jack Zenger
www.forbes.com
"Leaders who are rated poorly on seeking and acting on feedback are rated at the 12th percentile in their overall effectiveness... those in the top 10% are rated at the 90th percentile in comparison to other leaders."

Research showing which seven of 48 behaviors elevated individual contributors to the top 10% of performers.

"7 Ways To Go From Being 'Picked Last' To First At Work" -- Joe Folkman
www.forbes.com
"If you would like to improve your own ability to be chosen first, read through the list and identify the two that would make the biggest difference in your job. Performance on these characteristics will help you stand out."

Read *The Leader Letter* in Twice Weekly Installments

The items in each month's issue of *The Leader Letter* are first published in my twice weekly blog during the previous month.



If you read each blog post (or issue of *The Leader Letter*) as it's published over twelve months you'll have read the equivalent of a leadership book. And you'll pick up a few practical leadership tips that help you use time more strategically and tame your E-Beast!

Feedback and Follow-Up

I am always delighted to hear from readers of *The Leader Letter* with feedback, reflections, suggestions, or differing points of view. Nobody is ever identified in *The Leader Letter* without their permission. I am also happy to explore customized, in-house adaptations of any of my material for your team or organization. Drop me an e-mail at Jim.Clemmer@ClemmerGroup.com or connect with me on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [FaceBook](#), or my [blog](#)!

May the Force (of strengths) be with you!



Jim Clemmer
President

Phone: (519) 748-5968

Email: jim.clemmer@clemmergroup.com

Website: www.clemmergroup.com



Please forward this newsletter to colleagues, Clients, or associates you think might be interested – or on a 'need-to-grow' basis.

Did you receive this newsletter from someone else?

Subscribe to ensure you don't miss the next issue!

The CLEMMER Group

10 Pioneer Drive, Suite 105, Kitchener ON N2P 2A4

Phone: (519) 748-1044 ~ Fax: (519) 748-5813

service@clemmer.net

www.clemmergroup.com

©2016 Jim Clemmer and The CLEMMER Group