



Issue 159 - June 2016

The Leader Letter

Terence Mitchell, professor of management, organization, and psychology at the University of Washington Business School, along with doctoral student William Felps "analyzed about two dozen published studies that focused on how teams and groups of employees interact, and specifically how having bad teammates can destroy a good team." They concluded:



- "A single 'toxic' or negative team member can be the catalyst for downward spirals in organizations."
- "...in one study of about 50 manufacturing teams ... teams that had a member who was disagreeable or irresponsible were much more likely to have conflict, have poor communication within the team and refuse to cooperate with one another. Consequently, the teams performed poorly."
- "...negative behavior outweighs positive behavior -- that is, a 'bad apple' can spoil the barrel but one or two good workers can't unspoil it."
- "Companies need to move quickly to deal with such problems because the negativity of just one individual is pervasive and destructive and can spread quickly."

Some toxic team members can't be coached and developed into a more positive place. They may be a bad fit for the team or organization.

However, our research shows that the team leader has a major impact on the energy, engagement, and attitudes of the people reporting to him or her. The leader's coaching skills is a key factor. Four short, fun, and entertaining videos clips on key approaches to coaching effectiveness are highlighted in this issue.

You'll also find vital points for growing leaders at all levels. You can use our 12 point assessment for a quick reflection on the impact your leadership, coaching, or culture is having on the people you lead. And building strengths that play to your passions -- and those you lead -- is proving to be a critical factor in increasing performance.

Of course, knowing what we need to do and doing it is one of leadership -- and life's -- biggest challenges. We all know far more than we do. We often don't need more information but perhaps more inspiration to move us to application. You'll find a link to a webinar on execution and thought on knowing versus doing.

I agree with author and executive coach, Marshall Goldsmith, "as I have grown older, I am no longer interested in just helping leaders learn -- I am interested in helping leaders do."

Growing Leaders at All Levels Even More Critical Today

A central theme in ***Growing the Distance: Timeless Principles for Personal, Career, and Family Success***, is dealing with change through continuous growth and development. As we've been revising our **workshops** -- especially our core program, *Leading @ the Speed of Change*, that theme is resonating even stronger.



We all need to be leaders regardless of our formal title or role:

- There are two kinds of organizations in today's world: those that are changing and those that are going out of business. There are also two kinds of people: those who are changing and those who are setting themselves up to be victims of change.
- If the rate of external change exceeds our rate of internal growth, we're eventually going to be changed. Learning and personal growth are at the heart of an organization's or individual's ability to adapt to a rapidly changing environment.
- Leadership is a verb, not a noun. Leadership is action, not a position. Leadership is defined by what we do, not the role we're in. Leadership development is ultimately personal development.
- Today's tools have changed and our society is organized differently. But the human habits and characteristics that determine our success with today's tools and society haven't changed. The human elements guiding our behavior are consistent. Leadership principles are timeless.
- There are no leadership formulas. Leadership is a journey of personal discovery and learning. While we can pick up valuable travel tips from others who've been down their own personal pathways, we can only blaze our own pathways to peak performance.

Click on ***Growing the Distance*** if you'd like to learn how this title grew, read the Introduction and Chapter One, and learn more about our current offer of a special discounted rate with free shipping.

Every organization is ultimately only as good as its people. Today, more than ever, organizations look to everyone, at all levels, to think and act like leaders. The key is to first create inner self-leadership, which ultimately will determine how people perform in their roles and help move the organization forward.

Grow for it!

Use Our 12 Point Assessment of Leadership, Coaching, and Culture

A few months ago I delivered a webinar on **Essential Building Blocks for Leadership, Coaching, and Culture Development** (click on the title if you want to view it now). The 45 minute webinar (plus 15 minutes of Q & A) was divided into three main sections:

1. Foundational and time tested frameworks used for years in hundreds of **keynotes & workshops**,
2. New research and approaches to elevating leadership and coaching strengths (covered in greater depth in my recent webinar on ***Ground Breaking New Approaches to Leadership and Coaching Development***), and



3. Strengthening people and process with culture and organization development (covered in greater depth in my webinar on ***Executive Team Building and Culture Development***).

Our **Essential Building Blocks webinar** is a broad overview of my 40 years of study and writing **books**, delivering **keynotes & workshops**, and facilitating **leadership team retreats** condensed into 45 minutes.

We developed a 12 point self-assessment across these three key areas. Many webinar participants completed the survey. Here are a few results and my observations:

- Building a "leaderful" organization with everyone highly energized and engaged is a big challenge. Just over 10% of participants scored a 5 out of 5 and only an additional 20% rated their organizations a 4.
- Less than a quarter of participants felt they were doing a good or great job of balancing the discipline of systems/processes, with technology and technical expertise, on a base of people leadership.
- Few organizations were using an evidence-based methodology to help leaders identify and magnify their strengths rather than focus on their weaknesses.
- Only 20% had a process for building exceptional leadership and coaching skills. That likely explains why most responded somewhat, not much, or not at all to whether their team/organization was proactively changing so they wouldn't be changed.
- 60% felt their culture was blocking rather than boosting change and improvement efforts. The roots of this problem are likely found in similar numbers reporting that their leadership and culture efforts were partial and piecemeal rather than integrated and aligned. And this was further reinforced by a failure to strongly link leadership behaviors to vision, values, and purpose/mission.
- There are lots of **moose-on-the-table** in these organizations. Barely a quarter of respondents reported a culture of courageous conversations to raise issues before they stifle performance.

How's your team or organization doing? Click on **Assess Your Leadership, Coaching, and Culture Status** to find out.

The Coaching Games: Four Short Videos on Key Coaching Concepts

Research from our database of 250,000 multi-rater feedback surveys shows huge differences in results produced by leaders rated as having the highest coaching skills. These include 8 times higher levels of employee engagement, over 3 times more willingness to "go the extra mile," half as many team members thinking about quitting, and dramatically higher levels of customer service.



Getting into the Olympic spirit, Zenger Folkman has just released four short videos. Each one humorously illustrates a key coaching concept. Click on the video title to watch each three minute clip:

High Dive for Meaning – when dealing with a performance issue, effective coaches go beyond just the facts, past meaning and emotion, to see the bigger picture and patterns, that spring from underlying beliefs and assumptions.

Across the Leadership Continuum – many leaders are highly directive or take a hands-off and non-directive approach. Both can cause problems. The best coaches balance in the collaborative

zone and adjust their approach to fit the situation.

The Ladder of Inference – what do you do when a team member is blatantly texting during an important meeting? The best coaches recognize the dangers of assuming, drawing conclusions, and then taking action.

The Strengths Power Lift – how do you deal with a team member who constantly misses production targets? Do you drive for results or coach/mentor? What does the research show? What's the impact of doing both?

See why Zenger Folkman has been winning top video awards. Look, laugh, and learn as you get into the Olympic spirit!

These videos are based on Zenger Folkman's newly redesigned development process: ***The Extraordinary Coach***. I'll be delivering this powerful one-day workshop in a rare public session (most are in-house) on June 23 in Toronto. Join us and power up your coaching skills to go for the gold!

The day before (June 22) I'll be running ***The Extraordinary Leader development*** session built around our strengths-based 360.

[Click here](#) for details and registration on both sessions.

Build Strengths that Play to your Passions

The "dark side" of fixing weaknesses is very alluring.

Recently I facilitated our ***Extraordinary Leader workshop*** with a group of senior leaders. This was a highly experienced team who were strongly motivated to improve their organization and their own effectiveness. All participants had been through 360 feedback assessments before. Many reported feeling beat up by past feedback reports and some experienced an erosion of confidence.



Through reviewing pre/post on building strengths versus fixing weaknesses, discussing a case study, and their experiences with the best and worst leaders they've known, we developed a strong acknowledgement that fixing weaknesses can help a leader move from poor leadership to at or even above average. But the absence of weaknesses doesn't move a leader from good to great.

By looking for the overlap of strengths, organizational need (both based on feedback from their raters), and personal passion, most participants found their **leadership sweet spot**. However, when choosing what to focus their personal development plans on strengthening, a few leaders were still drawn to the dark side of fixing weaker areas. In a few one-on-one discussions I asked each leader which of the two or three areas he or she was considering they loved to do. Each response was immediate and heartfelt; they knew exactly which one he or she enjoyed most. And there's the answer -- if you're not addressing a major problem that needs fixing, work on what you love to do.

One reason our data shows that **building leadership strengths is 2 – 3 times more effective than fixing weaknesses** is the energizing role passion plays in sustaining our development efforts. Zenger Folkman surveyed

participants to see how they reported on the quality, progress, time invested, and results of their personal development plan. **The Powerful Impact of Building Strengths** chart shows a striking response to the statement "I have created an excellent development plan that will guide my efforts to improve." Just 13% of leaders focused on fixing weaknesses agreed with that statement versus 63% of leaders who were building strengths.

As the German philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel once observed, "nothing great in the world has been accomplished without passion."

Webinar: Execution -- The KEY to How Leaders Get Things Done

"Belling the Cat," a tale from the ancient Greek fabulist Aesop, points to the timeless dilemma of knowing versus doing. The story describes a counsel of mice trying to figure out how to deal with "the sly and treacherous manner" that the cat sneaks up on mice and kills them. A young mouse proposed putting a bell on the cat so all mice could hear it approach. Everyone applauded this solution (imagine the sound of little mouse paws clapping). Then came the big question; "who is to bell the cat."



Many individual behavior changes or implementation plans aren't as impossible as mice belling the cat. But as the German writer and statesman, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, pointed out, "knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do."

Knowing what we need to do, no matter how brilliant the flashes of insight or the urgency to improve, does not mean we are able to make the change. We know the way to higher profits is to increase revenues while decreasing costs, the way to decrease errors is to do it right the first time, or the cure for insomnia is to get more sleep. But none of those insights show us how to do it or build the habits that sustain the change.

Execution and follow through is the key to how extraordinary leaders get things done. We need to convert leadership theory to action and strategy to implementation. It's transforming why to how and converting what to when.

Execution is the only way for a leader, team, or organization to succeed. But there's a world of difference between knowing and doing. Understanding the road to be travelled is not the journey, it's the preparation. The ultimate key to results isn't what we know about increasing our effectiveness, but what we're *doing* about it?

Zenger Folkman research shows that execution is an essential and distinguishing characteristic of top performing leaders. Last month, Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman provided a 35 minute complimentary webinar reporting on their latest research showing:

- The relationship between execution and a clear strategy
- Ways to develop your ability to execute well
- 3 clusters of researched companion behaviors
- Some faulty assumptions
- The key to successful execution

Click on **Execution – The KEY to How Leaders Get Things Done** to review the archived webinar.

Another bit of advice sometimes attributed to Aesop -- among others -- states "when all is said and done, a lot more is said than done."

Thoughts That Make You Go Hmmm on ... Knowing versus Doing

"Common sense often isn't common practice."

"With regard to excellence, it is not enough to know but we must try to have and use it"

- Aristotle

"He first practices what he preaches and then preaches according to his practice"

- Confucius

"Thinking is easy, acting is difficult, and to put one's thoughts into action is the most difficult thing in the world."

- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, German writer and statesman

"Great thoughts reduced to practice become great acts"

- Hazlitt, English writer and philosopher

"In golf and in life, it's the follow through that makes the difference"

"Vision without action is hallucination."

"We have too many high sounding words, and too few actions that correspond with them."

- Abigail Adams, First Lady to 2nd U.S. president John Adams

"The great end of life is not knowledge but action."

- Aldous Huxley (VIP - page 227), English novelist and essayist

"The world cares very little about what a man or woman knows; it is what a man or woman is able to do that counts."

- Booker T. Washington, American educator, author, and advisor to U.S. presidents

"Few men are lacking in capacity, but they fail because they are lacking in application."

- Calvin Coolidge

"Wisdom is knowing what to do next, skill is knowing how to do it, and virtue is doing it."

- David Starr Jordan, founding president of Stanford University



**Vision without
action is
hallucination**

3rd Canadian Conference on Positive Psychology

For the past few decades I've followed the ground-breaking work of Martin Seligman at the University of Pennsylvania. Based on his extensive research, articles and books, and his 1998 term as elected president of The American Psychological Association he's now considered the founder of the burgeoning new field of positive psychology. This is defined as "the science of happiness, well-being, and what makes life worth living."



A central approach in positive psychology is building on our strengths instead of focusing on our weaknesses, gaps, and what's not going well. My posts on "**Positive Psychology, Strengths, and Leadership**" and "**Strengths, Positivity, and Halo Effects**" provides more background on Seligman's work, this new field of study, and my deep and abiding interest in these approaches.

In "**Re-Fired with Building Strengths**" I reviewed how positive psychology led to our partnership with Zenger Folkman and *The Extraordinary Leader* strengths-based leadership development system.

I am really looking forward to attending and presenting at the **3rd Canadian Conference on Positive Psychology** in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario on June 15 to 17. I am presenting "A Strengths-Based Leadership Development Approach That's 2 – 3 Times More Effective." Much of what I'll cover was in my recent webinar *Ground Breaking New Approaches to Leadership and Coaching Development*.

This conference has over 100 positive psychology experts in five main streams. These include research, education and schools, counselling and psychotherapy, coaching, and organizational consulting/HR. Keynote speakers include:

- Lea Waters on Strengths-Based Parenting
- Barbara Frederickson on Prioritizing Positivity
- Kim Cameron on Developing Positive Leadership Practices
- David Cooperrider on The Discovery and Design of Positive Institutions, and
- Caroline Adams Miller on Authentic Grit: Your Secret to Happiness and Success

Go to Exhilarate 2016: Learn it! Live it! for more information. I hope to see you there!

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:



Surprising results comparing countries, gender, and leadership levels. Assess your own leadership boldness.

"As A Leader, How Bold Should You Be?" -- Joseph Folkman

www.forbes.com

"Boldness is a core aspect of leadership. Real leaders don't follow the pack. They speak up and voice their opinion. They are out in front. They take charge and energize the group."

A fun illustration of a key approach in coaching effectiveness. It's easy to climb the ladder and get badly hurt.

Coaching Video (3 min): Ladder of Inference

www.zengerfolkman.com

"Today we're going to see four managers take on a tough coaching problem as they compete head to head and go for the gold. So let's get started with our third event: The Ladder of Inference!"

Based on 66,000 people rating a series of leadership behaviors and their satisfaction, engagement, commitment, and extra effort.

"5 Ways to Build a High-Performance Team" -- Joe Folkman

www.forbes.com

"Leaders who were rated lowest on these behaviors had about 13% of team members who were highly committed. But team leaders who were exceptional on these all five dimensions (those at the top 10%) had 71% of team members who were highly committed."

See the results from assessments of over 75,000 leaders and take the survey to assess your own level of leadership boldness.

The Countries with the Boldest Business Leaders -- Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman *Harvard*

Business Review blog

<https://hbr.org>

"Bold leadership can be a great differentiator when it is mixed with other important leadership characteristics, such as good judgment, honesty, integrity, collaboration, and a strong strategic perspective."

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