



Practical Leadership:

Inspiring *Action*, Achieving Results

Jim Clemmer's Leader Letter

July 2006, Issue 40

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'Do As I Say, Not As I Do' Doesn't Cut It Any More

More and more, I hear managers express frustration over the behavior of the people they lead. They complain about their failure to take initiative and responsibility, grumble about lateness to meetings, or lousy teamwork.

But it's so much easier to point fingers elsewhere. For when it comes to their own behavior, many of those same managers aren't acting any differently than the people they complain about.

Too few managers model what they demand from others. If you're a manager, ask yourself: How often do I seem to be saying one thing while doing another? How often am I practicing what I preach?

Managers who want to stop giving out mixed signals, need to hold up the leadership mirror and make sure they are satisfied with what they see being reflected back.

This is the introduction to my June column in the *Globe & Mail*, the rest of the article has common examples of disconnects and ideas for improvement. [Read the full article here.](#)

Practical Role Modeling: Barrick Gold Provides Specific Guidelines

In 2004, The CLEMMER Group worked with Health and Safety V.P., Don Ritz, Corporate Safety Manager, Bruce Huber, and their staff to custom design a "Courageous Leadership for Health and Safety" supervisor and management training program. Built around [The Leader's Digest](#) and its [Practical Application Planner](#), we trained internal trainers to deliver the two-day workshop to thousands of managers at all the Barrick Gold mine sites around the world.

In preparation for our senior executive retreat kicking off this whole program, Don developed a series of highly useful, specific, and practical tools showing everyone at three management levels and frontline staff how they can move up the "commitment continuum" beyond **Permission, Lip Service**, or **Passionate Lip Service** to **Involved Leadership** and **Integration** (read a description of this continuum under "Assessing Management Commitment" in the January 2004 issue of *The Leader Letter* at <http://www.clemmer.net/news/jan2004.html#keys>). You can see the tool he developed [here](#).

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I have heard many staff professionals or senior executives talk about the need for "behavior change" or "walking the talk" around safety, customer service, quality improvement, change, leadership, and the like. Rarely do they follow through on those exhortations with such specific behavioral tools and training such as Barrick Gold has done. Given this strong leadership focus, the company recorded a 25 percent decrease in safety incidents in 2005.

Facing the 'Bad-Boss-in-the-Mirror' Syndrome*Hi Jim,*

I enjoy your articles immensely, and was especially intrigued by "[Bad Boss: Learn How to Manage Your Manager](#)" (September 2005 issue). Your boss management strategies are useful advice, not just for the 'bad boss', but for life in general. For example, many of them can be applied to any non-workplace relationship that involves repeated or extended contact: purchasing a new home, studying with a workgroup, serving on a co-op, coordinating a fundraiser, etc.

However, there is one aspect of the 'bad boss' syndrome that you don't touch upon. Sometimes, it is far and away the most significant aspect -- and that is, the 'bad-guy-in-the-mirror' factor. In some cases (more often than we like to think), the problem is not the boss; it's us. I recall the case, many years ago, of a new co-worker who complained that, among the two dozen bosses she had worked for, almost all were bad and only one or two had turned out to be even mediocre. It didn't take long to see why she had such poor relationships with all of her previous bosses: she was lazy, irresponsible, spiteful, and a malicious gossip -- just poison to our hitherto good team dynamic. Our boss tried to work with this individual, with steadily mounting intervention, education, frustration, and sometimes, even outright bluntness. Nothing worked. In the end, she left of her own accord, but not before complaining yet again about how 'bad' her boss was. I thought the world of our boss and felt that he handled her very well given the circumstances, but it would have been just another 'bad boss' story coming from this malcontent's lips.

Your leadership strategies generally counsel managers to look to themselves for change and adaptation rather than to their charges (because we have limited control over the thoughts or actions of others, but complete control over our own). I think that this philosophy can be generalized and applied in reverse to the 'bad boss' scenario too. Whenever we encounter difficulties and resistance, the first place for a long hard look should be in the mirror.

- Barry Chow, Executive Vice President, Resiance Corporation, Calgary, AB, Canada



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Thoughts That Make You Go Hmmm...on Feedback

"I make mistakes. I'll be the second to admit it."

Jean Kerr, American playwright

"To become different from what we are, we must have some awareness of what we are."

Eric Hoffer, American social writer

"No question is so difficult to answer as that to which the answer is obvious."

George Bernard Shaw, Irish playwright and Nobel prize winner

"I cannot judge my work while I am doing it. I have to do as painters do, stand back and view it from a distance, but not too great a distance."

Blaise Pascal, French mathematician, physicist, and religious philosopher

"...less effective leaders most often solicit confirming feedback. Not surprisingly, those leaders held far less accurate views of how well they performed as leaders. The most effective leaders assessed themselves very closely to how others rated them as leaders."

Daniel Goleman, *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence*

"...the research for past decades has shown that subordinates were in the best position to appraise any leader's effectiveness. Research in the military proved that having the enlisted men select sergeants was more effective than having higher-ranking officers make those selections."

Jack H. Zenger & Joseph Folkman, *The Extraordinary Leader: Turning Good Managers Into Great Leaders*

Using The Leader Letter for Upward Leadership

A subscriber sent me an e-mail asking for my recommendations on ways to introduce *The Leader Letter* to senior management without making it look like he was criticizing their leadership. He was also looking for advice on advancing his management career.

I could only give general ideas since I don't know enough about the specifics of his situation. Here are a few suggestions I responded with. If you'd like to do something similar in your own organization, pick through these ideas for the ones that make the most sense to your own style and/or situation:

- Do you know what's keeping your senior managers awake at night? In other words, what are their primary goals or concerns? If you're not sure, ask someone who might know or could mentor you.

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- Go through each issue of *The Leader Letter* with an eye to identifying ideas or advice that touches on a senior manager's key issue. Forward that issue with a short note on how you thought this might be useful. Back issues are at http://www.clemmer.net/news_main.shtml.
- Try to cultivate a mentor relationship with a senior manager or someone who is close to them and might be a seasoned person that would enjoy taking a young and ambitious person under their wing. This could be an older HR person or someone in a key technical or staff support role.
- Find out what strategic projects or initiatives are being planned and volunteer to be a member or leader of the team working on it.
- Subscribe to [Improvement Points](http://www.clemmer.net/improvement.shtml) at <http://www.clemmer.net/improvement.shtml>. As each quote comes to your e-mail inbox on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, pass along the ones that you think may be helpful.
- Review the September 2005 issue of *The Leader Letter* at <http://www.clemmer.net/news/sept2005.html> for tips and ideas on working with your boss or senior management.
- Find out if your organization has established manager competencies or criteria for effective management/leadership. If this isn't explicit, ask your boss and/or mentor to identify what he or she thinks they are. Put together a personal assessment and learning plan to strengthen the areas that need work and align projects or potential promotions with your greatest strengths. The VIA Signature Strengths Questionnaire at www.authentic happiness.com is a great tool to use.
- Review Dick Bolles' career tests and advice at <http://www.jobhuntersbible.com/library/counseling/counseling.php>.

Reflections on Managing Life's "Retirement" Transition

Last month I published Layton Fisher's advice and experience on shifting into the retirement phase of life (read the article at [here](#)). After reading Layton's insights, Marilyn Jess from Bennington, VT sent me this e-mail:

"Wow! What an insightful and thoughtful article on the concept of retirement in your latest Leader Letter. I'm some years away from this period of life but am already planning for it. The concept of a leisure filled retirement is the last thing I have in mind. If people can begin to think of this time of life not as a decline, but as another stage, we will be using a great resource better. The suggestion on having friends of all ages, including younger ones, is a great one. One of my goals is to organize a youth speaking club, passing on my skills to them. Beats playing golf..."

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Favorite June Improvement Points

[Improvement Points](#) is a free service providing a key thought or quotation from one of my articles, provided three times per week, directly to your e-mail inbox. Each complimentary [Improvement Point](#) links directly into the full article on our web site that spawned it. If you'd like to read more about that day's [Improvement Point](#), you can choose to click through to the short article for a quick five-minute read. This is your opportunity for a short pause that refreshes, is an inspirational vitamin, or a quick performance boost. You can circulate especially relevant or timely articles or [Improvement Points](#) to your team, Clients, or colleagues for further discussion or action.

Here are my personal three choices of the [Improvement Points](#) we sent out in June. The first one is followed by reflections from Joyce, a strategic business planner.

"Leadership is emotional. Leadership deals with feelings. Leadership is made up of dreams, inspiration, excitement, desire, pride, care, passion, and love. The areas of our lives where we show the strongest leadership — including our communities, families, organizations, products, services, hobbies, and customers — are where we're most in love."

- from Jim Clemmer's article, *The Power of Passion*

Read the full article now!

http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/power_passion.shtml

"Thanks so much for this improvement point. Most so-called 'rational thinking' is merely justifying actions that start with our feelings. We often make decisions that 'feel right' then start looking for the 'facts' to support them." This has mystified and sometimes frustrated us as we work through our plans, but putting the perspective on it makes everything fall into place."

- Joyce, **Strategic Business Planner**

"Many organizations are falling into the trap of letting specialists, consultants, or executives reengineer processes in isolation. Managers, supervisors, and frontline improvement teams must be totally involved in moving this improvement activity beyond an improvement project to an ongoing management task."

- from Jim Clemmer's article, *Process Reengineering and Improvement: Not an Either/Or Choice*

Read the full article now!

<http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/reengineering.shtml>



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"By not slowing down to savor successes along the way, each accomplishment becomes less fulfilling. When I have paused to savor and celebrate, life becomes richer and much more satisfying. I also find that it's a great 'battery recharger.'"

- from Jim Clemmer's article, *Celebration is the Pause that Refreshes Processes*

Read the full article now!

<http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/celebration.shtml>

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@Clemmer.net.

Keep learning, laughing, loving, and leading -- living life just for the L of it!

Jim

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