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July is a good time to find a quiet beach, back yard, cottage, garden, or take advantage of a long walk or drive time to reflect on the first half of the year (six months have zipped by already) and prepare for the rest of 2008 before Santa is suddenly here again.

Reflection and renewal is a critical counter balance to the crazy-busy vortex that sucks us in if we're not paying attention. It's a vital pause that can refresh and refocus.

Living in the moment – or just becoming aware of what's happening around us – is critical to enjoying our life as it unfolds and it's a great way to strengthen leadership.

The Challenges New Managers Face

A workshop participant from Denmark who'd attended an international management development forum I facilitated contacted me because he was taking on a new assignment in South America. He wrote:

"Based on all the new managers that you have met and provided with guidance though the years, what are then the 5-10 most significant challenges these new managers face?"

It's hard to isolate the most significant challenges a new manager faces because there are a lot of them. Here's my quick stab at listing the key ones:

Knowing Thyself – It's natural for new managers' egos to become a bit inflated. After all, it's a big deal to get promoted. But it's important after coming down from that "high" to ask yourself "is this what I really want and does it fit my strengths and passions?" Too many managers accept a promotion because there may be more money, or they covet more power. Taking a hard look in the managerial mirror would result in many more happy offices.

Servant Leadership – Highly effective managers serve and support the people on their team. Too many new managers see their role as command

and control.

Navigating Change – It's easy to be pulled "below the line" and feel victimized by major changes in an organization. Strong leaders make people hopeful. They help their teams navigate through tough times. It is the leader's mood that most impacts the team.



Coaching and Developing – I agree with Peter Drucker; the central role of a manager is developing people. This is where a new manager may have a real challenge because his or her natural strengths may be to do work and handle problems. Making the transition from solving problems to making sure people have the skills to solve problems is a big change.

Tame the E-mail Beast – Technical tools are great for informing, staying in touch, and operational management. But we don't lead through e-mail. Most people are overwhelmed with data, analysis, and the sheer volume of daily e-mails. New managers must counterbalance IT tools with verbal communications.

Deal with the Moose-on-the-Table – It's often easier to avoid tough conversations or touchy topics. That's like ignoring a moose standing in the middle of the meeting room table. Everyone knows it's there and is annoyed by it. It takes courageous leadership to initiate those difficult conversations or to hear the team point out that leadership behaviors are doing more harm than good.

Upward Leadership – Many new managers think their main role is leading people on their team and perhaps influencing peers. But strong managers also work hard to lead their own boss or influence the bigger organization. They refuse to be victims of weak direction from above.

Helping a Team Gel Again

Dear Jim,

Just over six years ago I e-mailed you to let you know I had been successful at an interview for a Deputy Headteacher post. The presentation used one of your quotes regarding "leadership is persuasion power, not position power."

I now find myself in the position of applying your work to another interview. This time I am not the interviewee. I have been successfully appointed to the post of Headteacher at the school where I am Deputy Headteacher. It is an exciting time to be in a position to appoint my own deputy. I have large shoes to fill but I equally think my own shoes are large to fill as well.

I am aware that I have maybe two or three colleagues who will test me - these are namely my weakest members of staff. They often say the weak wield a lot of power.



I often find I receive an e-mail with [Improvement Points](#) just at the right time - could you recommend anything for me to view, read etc... to start the year with a new deputy and make the 'team' gel again? We had quite a destructive local authority inspection and staff morale is low and we are on OFSTED alert for September this year. I have already organised a 'fun team building/problem solving/thinking skills' session for staff during half an INSET day - I hope staff will be able to laugh at themselves and each other.

Kind regards,

Rachel Orr
Shotton Primary School, Co. Durham, England

Hi Rachel,

Good to hear from you again! Congratulations on your successful career progression.

It's hard to give you a precise prescription for making your team gel when there are so many variables to team effectiveness. If you go to http://www.clemmer.net/articles/subject_13.aspx you'll find a selection of articles on teams and team leadership that you can browse through to find ones that might be most applicable to you.

It sounds like you certainly need to keep yourself and your team "above the line." You can get ideas for doing that from "Choosing to be a Navigator, Survivor, or Victim" in the [April 2008 issue](#).

All the best in your new role!

Jim

Leading @ the Speed of Change Workshop

Fresh off my [Breaking Through the Bull](#) series of workshops, I'm facilitating a [Leading @ the Speed of Change session](#) for The Canadian Society for Training and Development Conference & Tradeshow on October 15, 2008 at the Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel.

This session is open to the general public and it's a full-day workshop running from 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Participants can register simply for the workshop for \$599. If you are registering for the whole conference the workshop rate is an additional \$399.

https://www.cstd.ca/conference/registration/conference_registration.html



Everyone's a Leader: Workshops for Frontline Staff

A web site visitor recently asked:

"Is there a workshop that would be good to include everyone in? It seems that your workshops are primarily for 'managers' and I agree that change starts from the top, but wouldn't everyone in the company benefit from learning how to be a good leader?"

Most of my workshops are with management groups. However, I do provide a number of customized in-house sessions for frontline staff or a blend of management and frontline. My core definition of leadership is "leadership is an action, not a position."

The last two workshops (scroll to the bottom of the web page) outlined at <http://www.clemmer.net/workshops> are sessions for mainly frontline staff. Let me know if you'd like to explore a customized workshop for your organization and we can set up a time for a phone conversation.

Implementing What Works Is More Critical Than What's New

A recent workshop participant who has attended a few of my sessions in the past expressed disappointment from her experience. She hoped to be "wowed" with brand new insights and "thought leadership" from my session.

Her feedback was an excellent chance to sit back and reflect, once again, on the focus I've taken with my life work in the leadership field. I have never seen myself as a "thought leader." Our focus when we built The Achieve Group during the 80s/90s was "When Theory Is Not Enough" and a key motto was "knowing isn't doing," and now with The CLEMMER Group, the focus is on practical applications of timeless leadership principles. Rather than trying to create or chase the latest "new" trend in leadership, I've focused on applying proven leadership, team, and organization effectiveness tools, techniques, and approaches.

I wrote a short piece on this approach entitled "What's New? Who Cares? What Really Matters is What Works!" in the December 2003 issue of *The Leader Letter* at <http://www.clemmer.net/news/dec2003.html>. Too often we've found that people searching for what's new are really searching for shortcuts or quick and easy solutions that require little effort or personal change. Whether it's "fad surfing in the boardroom" or chasing the latest diet or fitness fad, many of these "trend seekers" don't want to do the hard work of building basic habits.



Free Articles for Your Company Newsletter

Do you find yourself forwarding Improvement Points or *The Leader Letter* to friends or colleagues in your organization? Does your company have an employee newsletter or intranet? One of the free services I offer to publishers of newsletters, e-zines or blogs is a monthly article mailing.

Each month I send two specially selected articles out to various publishers around the world. It's the best way to get practical leadership content to people in your organization. Simply send our Marketing Director, Aidan Crawford (aidan@Clemmer.net) a note and he'll add your publication to the monthly distribution list.

Bringing Values to Life

"Post your values on the wall at all team meetings. Begin the meeting with everyone reflecting on how he or she has lived the values personally. Or they might give recognition to someone else on the team for a strong example of signaling the values. End the meeting with a team assessment of whether your values were alive and actively used in the meeting."

- from Jim Clemmer's article, "Pathways and Pitfalls to Living Organizational Values"

[Read the Full Article Now!](#)

<http://www.clemmer.net/articles/articles.aspx?article=35>

Upon receiving the above [Improvement Point](#), a subscriber asked:

"How do you feel about values having clear definitions at the behavioral level as to inform staff expectations? I.e. the word 'Integrity' is interpreted quite differently from organization to organization. In other words, staff is expected to demonstrate this 'value' differently. Also, we think it important not to define values with other values e.g. 'Ingenuity' with 'Inventiveness' without explaining what staff can do to demonstrate the same (because it won't help staff to live out the organizational expectations associated with our values)."

We've seen values definitions used fairly effectively with a few of our Clients. They are especially powerful when used in conjunction with a competency model. [Our consulting group](#) has helped many Clients develop orientation/experiential sessions, leadership training programs, performance management systems, hiring/screening, and promotion processes around values-based competencies. To do that, behavioral descriptions do need to be quite clear and descriptive.



More Media Interview(s) Now Available Online

During my cross-Canada "Breaking Through the Bull" workshop series, I was a guest on radio and television programs around the country. One of my favorite interviews was on Breakfast Television in Calgary. I've posted the clip on my media page: <http://www.clemmer.net/media>

You'll also find links to some of my other appearances on television, radio and newspapers.

Harnessing the Power of Visualization

"The "power of positive pictures" is a skill, habit, and technique often called visioning, imagery, and visualization. It has a power for change, improvement, and energy creation that we're only beginning to understand."

- from Jim Clemmer's article, "Visioning Harnesses the Power of Our Pictures"

[Read the full article now!](#)

<http://www.clemmer.net/articles/articles.aspx?article=298>

Visualization continues to fascinate me as one of the most powerful – and underutilized – forces we have at our disposal. After getting this Improvement Point, a new subscriber asked where to get more of my material on visualization. The best source of my material for visualization is my book *Growing the Distance: Timeless Principles for Personal, Career, and Family Success* and its Self-Study System. You can also find a number of excerpts and articles on this topic at http://www.clemmer.net/articles/subject_17.aspx

Another subscriber responded to this Improvement Point by telling that his wife recently attended a presentation on cognitive psychology (she's a professional in that field) given by an astronaut. He said that beyond all the hours in simulators and hands-on practicing and briefings, they spend hours visualizing as well. The reader commented, "So when they are out on the space walk – they have been there before, the neural pathways are already developed."

Thoughts That Make You Go Hmmm...on Reflection and Renewal

"He felt that his whole life was some kind of dream and he sometimes wondered whose it was and whether they were enjoying it."

- Douglas Adams, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*



"We can make our minds so like still water that beings gather about us, that they may see, it may be, their own images, and so live for a moment with a clearer, perhaps even with a fiercer life because of our quiet."

- William Butler Yeats, Irish poet and playwright

"One reason that purposeful managers are so effective is that they are adept at husbanding energy. Aware of the value of time, they manage it carefully. Some refuse to respond to e-mails, phone calls, or visitors outside certain periods of the day. Others build 'think time' into their schedules...purposeful managers are also skilled at finding ways to reduce stress and refuel. They commonly draw on what we call a "personal well" - a defined source for positive energy."

- Heike Bruch and Sumantra Ghoshal, "Beware the Busy Manager," *Harvard Business Review*

"The leader who knows how to be still and feel deeply will probably be effective. But the leader who chatters and boasts and tries to impress the group has no center and carries little weight."

- John Heider, *The Tao of Leadership: Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching Adapted for a New Age*

"True silence is the rest of the mind; it is to the spirit what sleep is to the body, nourishment and refreshment."

- Sir William Penn, English admiral

"Why should we ever go abroad, even across the way, to ask a neighbor's advice? There is a nearer neighbor within us incessantly telling us how we should behave. But we wait for the neighbor without to tell us of some false, easier way."

- Henry David Thoreau, American author, naturalist, and philosopher

Most Popular 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 the three most popular Improvement Points we sent out in June:

"It's much easier to give in to the victimitis virus. It's less painful to believe that anger, jealousy, or bitterness are somebody else's fault or beyond our control. But that makes us prisoners of our destructive emotions. We hold grudges, let resentments build, and become cynical. We stress ourselves out. We stew in our own deadly juices."

- from Jim Clemmer's article, "Growing with Change"

Read the full article now!

http://www.clemmer.net/articles/article_58.aspx

"Years ago Zenger-Miller co-founder, Jack Zenger, used a metaphor that's always been very powerful for me. He explained that goldfish will grow larger, or stay smaller according to the size of the fish tank or pond they're in. I've since come to think of the influence and expectations of leaders as the Fish Tank Factor."

- from Jim Clemmer's article, "People Live Up or Down to a Leader's Expectations"

Read the full article now!

http://www.clemmer.net/articles/article_32.aspx

"Learn how to lead effective meetings. Poorly run meetings cost you and everyone else an enormous amount of precious time. There are few excuses for not starting and finishing on time, not having clear meeting outcomes and agendas, not keeping discussions on track, not minimizing disruptions, or not handling conflict effectively. It's a skill issue. Improve yours and you'll free up time for everybody."

- from Jim Clemmer's article, "Personal Goals and Priorities Pathways and Pitfalls (Part 2 of 2)"

Read the full article now!

http://www.clemmer.net/articles/article_145.aspx

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

Please post or forward this newsletter to colleagues, Clients, or associates you think might be interested – or on a 'need to grow' basis. If you received this newsletter from someone else, and would like to subscribe, click here: http://www.clemmer.net/newsletter/leader_signup.aspx

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