JIM CLEMMER

Practical Leadership:
Inspiring *Action*, Achieving Results

Jim Clemmer's Leader Letter

March 2006, Issue 36

In this issue...

- Changing Perspectives on Change: "Embrace Change" Is a Useless Platitude
- "Leading @ the Speed of Change" Workshop
- Three Reasons for the Dearth of Strong Political and Organizational Leaders
- *Growing the Distance* Still Growing Strong
- United Kingdom or European Speaking or Workshop Opportunities
- Favorite February Improvement Points
- Improving our Practical Leadership Resource Center: Please Share Your "In-Sites"
- Three Key Questions to Find Your Passion
- Thoughts That Make You Go Hmmmm...
- Feedback and Follow-Up

Changing Perspectives on Change: "Embrace Change" Is a Useless Platitude

Last month's major article on Navigating Change and Adversity (find it at http://www.clemmer.net/newsl/feb2006.html) detailed how I have come to believe that the phrase "embrace change" is a useless platitude mouthed by managers or motivational speakers who have not thought through its full implications - or they are masochists who enjoy suffering. Changes that bring new opportunities or propel us forward are easy to embrace. But many changes look quite negative and are tough - if not impossible - to welcome. This list might include loss of a relationship, a loved one, health, job, money, and such. We often don't choose the difficulties or negative changes that spring upon us. But we always choose how we respond.

For the past few years I have been using a simple Navigator-Survivor-Victim chart (find it at http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/navigating-change.shtml) to outline choices in dealing with difficult problems. Surveys and feedback from my workshop or retreat participants continually point to the few minutes we spend on this basic model as the most powerful part of our time together. It may be basic and seem obvious, but many of us seem to need constant reminders and help because it is so easy to sink "below the line."

The Navigating Change and Adversity article generated this response:

"I've enjoyed a couple of your books and talks. I'm impressed by how you've been open with your change in perception to embracing change. Not all change is good to embrace. We need to recognize what elements will help us grow or else we live in chaos as opportunity for change is simply swirling around us continually. Keep thinking, keep inspiring."
- Alain Gaudrault, Deloitte and Touche, Kitchener, ON Canada

"Leading @ the Speed of Change" Workshop

"My life has become very focused since your workshop in Orangeville for the Forestry Technicians at Hydro One (November 2005).

I have moved on reflecting on all of the tragedy in my life in the past year (the loss of a relationship and the death of numerous young, close friends in tragic separate incidents). Even my parents pondering divorce (after 43 years) is not disrupting my focus. I went and spent 4 days with my parents after their announcement, said

what I had to say and listened to their points of view. It was sad walking away from the situation, but on the way home I just thought 'this cannot affect where I am supposed to be'. I spoke my thoughts and listened and said to myself. That is all I can do.

The chips will have to fall where they may. Prior to your workshop, I would have let it consume me. Thanks for the help."

Mark, Hydro One

For the past twenty-five years I have been helping thousands of managers and management teams apply the practical leadership principals and practices that catapult them to peak personal and professional performance. I have taken that experience and the research from writing my five leadership and organization effectiveness books, and boiled it all down to a two-day high energy and intense workshop that I call 'Leading @ the Speed of Change.' It's jammed full of practical tips, tools, and techniques on how to align people, processes, and personal effectiveness for continuous success.

We only have one public session scheduled for all of 2006 (most of my work is internal to organizations). Please join me for my one and only two-day public session, right here in my hometown, Kitchener, Ontario, on May 30 - May 31, 2006. You (and possibly your colleagues) will be inspired to action and provided with practical 'how to' steps that dramatically boost personal, team, and organization results. Each day is packed with practical guidelines, powerful systems, and personal growth strategies.

Check out the session or download a PDF workshop brochure at http://www.clemmer.net/events/lsc/lsc.shtml. There are special discounts for bringing colleagues along so you can learn and apply these principles together.

Jim

P.S. - This workshop includes four valuable resources...at no extra cost. You'll receive signed copies of my recent bestsellers, Growing the Distance and The Leader's Digest as well as the extensive 'how to' workbooks, "Practical Application Planner" and "Personal Implementation Guide" with hundreds of practical application ideas. Check them out at http://www.clemmer.net/books_main.shtml.

P.S.S - You can read other participant comments at http://www.clemmer.net/events/lsc/lsc_reviews.shtml.

P.S.S.S - I run many half, one, and two-day customized versions of this "Leading @ the Speed of Change" workshop. Contact me if you'd like to explore this option for your own organization.

JIM CLEMMER

Practical Leadership:
Inspiring *Action,* Achieving Results

Jim Clemmer's Leader Letter

March 2006, Issue 36

Three Reasons for the Dearth of Strong Political and Organizational Leaders

A journalist asked me why competent people are refusing to pursue higher offices of either political leadership or industrial/corporate leadership. Based on my experience and observations, here are the three biggest reasons:

- Our post-secondary public education system is abysmal at teaching leadership skills in general and preparing people for higher public office in particular. Leadership, especially "soft" people skills, is often confused with the "hard" side of management, especially policy and planning. Most "political science" (an oxymoron if there ever was one) programs are far too academic and theoretical to be of any use other than to create critics and cynics who pick apart anyone brave enough to run for public office.

- Our organizations provide little to no leadership development. The quantity and quality of leadership training makes it highly unlikely that managers will learn from anything other than their own personal observation and experiences. Since most organizational leadership is so weak, what they learn are the bad habits that helped their bosses yell, manage, manipulate people as "resources" or "human assets"(often seeing people as objects or things), or outlast their way up the corporate ladder.

- We're not paying enough attention to the research on Emotional Intelligence and using this solid leadership framework in hiring, promotions, training, and performance management. This is exacerbated by increasingly frantic and busy schedules where overworked managers become victims of their Blackberrys, meetings, and conference calls. Many have allowed themselves to be totally overwhelmed by the daily pressures of dealing with an endless series of crisis and urgent issues. So critical Emotional Intelligence skills of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management are given little more attention than occasional lip service.

Growing the Distance Still Growing Strong

Last month I published feedback on *Growing the Distance* from a 13 year old reader. Dallas just sent me the comment below, but didn't reveal her age!

> ***"*Growing the Distance *is one of the best organized and inspiring collections of leadership advice I've ever seen! I must say that I didn't want the book to end! I bought several more copies for my friends and family!"***
>
> - Dallas Gislason, Regional Development Coordinator, Saskatchewan Rural Development

I continue to be very gratified by the continuous stream of positive feedback for *Growing the Distance*. I had tremendous fun writing it as my "spare time hobby" a few years (and hairs) ago. When I wrote the book, the "edutaining" magazine style, digest format was a big - and risky - departure from my previous books. With over 100,000 copies now in print and numerous foreign translations (a few now in progress), it's very gratifying to see how it's hit a nerve with so many people. If you haven't read, *Growing the Distance* (such amazing self-restraint), you can peruse sections of the book or get further background on it here:

Description: http://www.clemmer.net/books/gtd_descr.shtml
Comments and Feedback: http://www.clemmer.net/books/gtd_feedb.shtml
Table of Contents: http://www.clemmer.net/books/gtd_toc.shtml
Introduction: http://www.clemmer.net/books/gtd_intro.shtml
Chapter One: http://www.clemmer.net/books/gtd_ch1.shtml
Excerpts: http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/gtd.shtml
How this Title "Grew": http://www.clemmer.net/books/gtd_title.shtml
Corporate Buying Guide: http://www.clemmer.net/books/gtd_corp.shtml
How to Order: http://www.clemmer.net/books/order.shtml

The more recent *Growing the Distance: Personal Implementation Guide* was also a lot of fun to put together and is proving to be a very practical application self-study tool for many people.

United Kingdom or European Speaking or Workshop Opportunities

At the end of June, I am speaking at a leadership conference in Bristol, England. The session is organized for heads of colleges in the UK. Given the education sector, funding is tight and they can't afford to pay my full fees. I have agreed to participate because Heather is coming with me and we'll have a vacation as well.

However, I'd like to pick up another paid engagement or two while I am there. If you have been following my work and would like to explore me delivering a keynote presentation or tailoring a half, one or two-day workshop or management team retreat, this could be the perfect chance for us to connect and see what we might be able to put together. This could be a great win/win opportunity since I want to expand my presence and business in Europe and your organization could save on travel costs.

If you might be interested in using my services while I am there, please contact me to explore the possibilities. I can send you outlines of the various keynote, workshop, and retreat topics I cover. If you refer me to an association or organization that books me, I'll give you a set of my latest leadership books, workbooks, new CD - and a thank you post card!

Please send me an e-mail at Jim.Clemmer@Clemmer.net.

Favorite February Improvement Points

Improvement Points (check it out at http://www.clemmer.net/improvement.shtml) is a free service providing a key thought or quotation from one of my articles 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 Points, 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.

Normally in this section of "The Leader Letter" I choose my three favorite Improvement Points from the previous month. This month I will choose my two favorites from February and feature one from January that especially connected for a reader. Marleen's e-mail is an example of what I envisioned when we began this complimentary subscription service four years ago.

> **"Look for every opportunity to recognize and celebrate significant accomplishments and milestones reached. Model and encourage simple "thank yous" and reinforce positive behavior whenever you see it."**
> from Jim Clemmer's article, "Team Spirit Built from the Top"
> Read the full article now!
> http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/team_spirit.shtml

> ***"Just the article I needed on a Friday afternoon - the end of a very busy week in which I worked with a small staff team of 3 to prepare for month-end and fiscal year end. We cleaned our office/desks of old files that are now no longer required. Although the task seemed hugely daunting and was to be done in addition to our regular work, I made sure to praise every small step toward achieving our goal of an organized office space with our office history securely stored away before the "new year". We worked hard, we pulled together as a team, we laughed a lot and we finished! Everyone feels incredibly proud and energized as to how much was accomplished this week. We are ready for our customers and the new fiscal year. Plus, we have a clean, welcoming and organized office AND a genuine smile on our faces. Praise, motivation and a manager working alongside staff go a very long way. Thanks for your confirmation! Have a great weekend."***

- Marleen Gomes, Unit Manager, Canadian Cancer Society Lanark, Leeds & Grenville, ON

Here are my two personal favorites of the Improvement Points we sent out in February:

> **"'Change management' comes from the same dangerously seductive reasoning as strategic planning. They're both based on the shaky assumption that there's an orderly thinking and implementation process which can objectively plot a course of action like Jean Luc Piccard on the starship Enterprise and then 'make it so'."**
> from Jim Clemmer's article, " "Change Management" is an Oxymoron"
> Read the full article now!
> http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/oxymoron.shtml
>
> **"E-mail is a great way to share information but a poor way to communicate. Weak groups spend more time interacting with their computer screens than with each other."**
> from Jim Clemmer's article, "A Coach's Playbook for Workplace Teams"
> Read the full article now!
> http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/coachs_playbook-teams.shtml

Improving our Practical Leadership Resource Center: Please Share Your "In-Sites"

The CLEMMER Group web site is a very large and growing practical leadership resource center. The site contains over 300 articles and excerpts, nearly three years of past *Leader Letters* archived, an archive of the hundreds of Improvement Points we've sent free to subscribers over the past four years, archived teleconference, extensive sections on my books, workbooks, and CDs available for purchase, assessment tools, and lots of material on our customized training/consulting services along with outlines of my speaking, workshop, and management team retreat programs and services.

Over the years we have debated whether to move a lot of this free content to a subscription model. Our decision not to do that continues to be reinforced by comments like this one we were sent by a site visitor in February:

> ***"Your site allowed freedom to choose and not have to pay to move forward. That tells me you believe in your service and if I am happy with the results I will move forward and use the other services you offer for a cost. You have confidence."***

That's exactly what has been happening - many visitors have moved forward and purchased our products and services after visiting our site. We are now in the midst of a major overhaul to expand,

update, and upgrade our site. You'll be getting more details on that over the next few months. At this point, we plan to continue providing full access to the entire site and its e-mail services without any fees.

I would really appreciate your feedback on what you like best about our web site that we should clearly keep, what you'd like to see us start providing that we aren't now, or what we might expand upon. Please send your "in-sites" to me at Jim.Clemmer@Clemmer.net.

Three Key Questions to Find Your Passion

How does one go about finding their passion?

I have found from personal experience and decades of coaching and consulting work that the centre of our passion comes from our answers to these three questions:

- Where am I going (my preferred future)?
- What do I believe in (core values or principles)?
- Why do I exist (what's my purpose)?

The more clear we are about our answers to these questions and the more we align our lives around those answers, the higher our passion will be.

Scan my library of Focus and Context (Vision, Values, and Purpose) articles at http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/values.shtml.

Thoughts That Make You Go Hmmmm…on Leadership

"If you think you are leading and no one is following, you are only taking a walk!"
- Benjamin Hooke

"In almost all cases, the leaders became living embodiments of the cultures they desired. The values and practices they wanted infused into their firms were usually in display in their daily behavior: in the questions they asked at meetings, in how they spent their time, in the decisions they made."
- John Kotter and James L. Heskett, *Corporate Culture and Performance*

"Being powerful is like being a lady. If you have to tell people you are, you aren't."
- Margaret Thatcher, British Prime Minister from 1979 – 1990

"The signs point toward spirit and soul as the essence of leadership...heart, hope, and faith, rooted in soul and spirit are necessary for today's managers to become tomorrow's leaders, for today's sterile bureaucracies to become tomorrow's communities of meaning, and for our society to rediscover its ethical and spiritual center."

- Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, *Leading with Soul: An Uncommon Journey of Spirit*

"Level 5 leaders, inherently humble, look out the window to apportion credit - even undue credit - to factors outside themselves. If they can't find a specific person or event to give credit to, they credit good luck. At the same time, they look in the mirror to assign responsibility, never citing bad luck or external factors when things go poorly. Conversely, the comparison executives frequently looked out the window for factors to blame but preened in the mirror to credit themselves when things went well."

- Jim Collins, "Level 5 Leadership, The Triumph of Humility and Fierce Resolve," *Harvard Business Review*

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."

- John Quincy Adams, the sixth President of the United States (1825-1829)

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.
If you received this newsletter from someone else, and would like to subscribe, click here:
www.clemmer.net/subscribe.shtml

Copyright 2006 Jim Clemmer