



Practical Leadership:

Inspiring *Action*, Achieving Results

Jim Clemmer's Leader Letter

November 2005, Issue 32

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More Gazing into the Boss Mirror

In the September issue of the *Leader Letter* I provided links to my latest article published in *The Globe & Mail* ("Bad Boss: Learn how to Manage Your Manager") as well as additional articles and other thoughts on upward leadership (to read that issue go to <http://www.clemmer.net/news/sept2005.html>). In October's *Leader Letter*, I reproduced an e-mail from a reader who felt I was doing too much manager bashing (to read the e-mail and my response go to <http://www.clemmer.net/news/oct2005.html#too>). I also reprinted Sherry Janzen's e-mail revealing how she tries to avoid being a bad boss and her amazement at how some people end up in those positions (to read her message go to <http://www.clemmer.net/news/oct2005.html#bad>).

Following are two new messages that continue the discussion and provide more useful personal reflection and thoughts on the topic.

Hi, Jim,

It's been awhile...but I've been reading you and recommending you all over the world! I am chuckling at the feedback as to your alleged "manager bashing." I am with you, Jim - creating discomfort is needed because unless one has a "visceral" reaction, there is ZERO motivation to change. I learned a simple model almost 20 years ago about changing behavior - 1) Awareness; 2) Breakthrough in Knowledge; 3) CHOOSING a breakthrough in thinking (motivated by the visceral reaction to the Knowledge); 4) Breakthrough in behavior.

Why does SO much literature "coddle" people? It is a privilege to manage and they should be fed back the consequences of their behaviors on their people. I also chuckle at people who actually believe that mediocre/bad managers will recognize themselves in "coddle speak." I've heard a good saying: "Jerks are like vampires...you hold up a mirror and they see nothing."

Not only does the person need to have the visceral reaction to become "conscious," but they also need to realize that their current behavior is NOT working and then need to CHOOSE to change their "belief system," which, as you also know, anyone can do for a day/week. It's when the belief system is truly changed long term that the "breakthrough in behavior" is observed. As always, regards and deepest respect,

- Davis Balestracci

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Hi Jim,

I was put into a supervisory position albeit a small department with few persons to supervise at a point in my life where I was still trying to figure out whom I was. My thoughts and actions were clearly (clear now that I look through the window that only time, experience and education provides) formed by ego and outside influences. Through developing mind, body and spirit I have begun to lead more through conscience than ego, feelings rather than facts and people rather than things.

My fear is that the people who need and can benefit the most from the numerous articles and books from the Clemmer's and Covey's of the world are the least likely to pick them up. They are not listening to the feedback they are getting and quite possibly are okay with okay. The purveyor's of the status quo who are in a position of leadership are the bad bosses; focusing on numbers and results while turning a blind, uninformed eye to the needs and wants of those who look to them for guidance.

Committing to life long learning and valuing feedback that we must seek from those we interact with is the only way we can go from "bad boss" to inspirational leader. I am enjoying immensely the process of leadership development and am excited by the positive changes in professional and personal relationships that have occurred over the last 10 years. The journey to the stage in life where we can impact others lives in a positive manner is wonderful and one without a final destination. Having a life partner and work partners that are enjoying the journey with you is invaluable.

Thanks for doing what you do Jim. It is inspiring and I sincerely appreciate your efforts to help.

- Ken Chisholm CSP, Corporate Sales and Marketing Manager, Great Western Containers Inc.

Key Notes about Keynotes

Recently *Corporate Meetings & Events* magazine asked me to contribute an article responding to the question **"How can the speaker's presentation go beyond leadership theories to provide practical applications for my audience?"** Following is my response. I will admit to more than a little bias in providing this advice!

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If you go to Amazon.com and search the books section on the word "leader," you'll be presented with a selection of over 240,000 books! That's a big reading list! The choice today can be equally daunting when it comes to choosing a speaker to help audiences improve their leadership. And like the selection of leadership books, speakers come in a wide range of styles and approaches. They also range from beginning speakers with little experience to grizzled veterans who have earned every one of their battle scars, grey hairs, or square inch of expanded scalp skin.

The big challenge for meeting planners is to match a speaker's style, experience, and approach to their audiences. Keynote speaking is in the midst of a major transition. Many audience members have heard and forgotten dozens or even hundreds of speakers. Some of the better ones have entertained and perhaps provided a welcome humor break from serious meeting business. Other good speakers have brought relevant experience that educated and stretched listeners to apply new approaches. But the best – and rarest – speakers have "edutained" their audiences with a rare combination of both humor and powerful insights.

Just as customers today are demanding "just in time, just for me" from companies, audiences are losing patience with speakers using overly theoretical or purely entertaining approaches. It's often useful to learn "what's new." But it's even more useful to learn "what's working." The most powerful keynote presentations today are well researched, relevant, and tailored to the audience's industry, organization, or profession. These presentations are delivered by professional speakers who are currently working with individuals, management teams, or organizations to implement their ideas. This experience can then be brought to the platform to illustrate key messages with current examples and humorous anecdotes or insights. "Edutaining" speakers go beyond theoretical concepts or general principles to practical applications that audience members can use the very first day they get back to their workplace.

Effective professional speakers bring an outside expert's view and voice to reinforce and inspire the changes needed inside the organization. The better ones speak, train, and facilitate dozens of times per year with a wide variety of groups across industries and countries. They rarely give the same presentation, workshop, or retreat twice. When coupled with extensive writing of books, articles, or columns the credibility and depth of expertise shines through to audiences and deepens the impact of their presentation.

To avoid being burned by a speaker who looks great on a demo video clip or has an impressive looking background, effective meeting planners dig deeper into the speaker's experience and referrals or testimonials. Do his or her keynotes, workshop, retreats, or consulting draw from a core of simple and practical frameworks that have evolved over years of extensive research, writing, and application? Does the speaker tailor his or her presentations to the audience's needs or meeting themes? Can the meeting planner review a list of presentations showing the ways the speaker has tailored presentations in the past?

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One way to assure that a speaker is relevant and practical is to establish his or her track record of repeat Clients and long term consulting or training relationships. Are his or her approaches and material good enough to continue working with? Or is the speaker's client list a series of one-time engagements?

Another way to assure the quality of a speaker is to determine if he or she is a Certified Speaking Professional (CSP). The CSP is the only earned designation for professional speakers. It signifies "exceptional achievement through a proven record of speaking experience." CSP speakers meet rigorous requirements for a number of fee-paid presentations, number of clients, continuing education credits, and consecutive years of successful business experience. Less than 3% of the estimated 15,000 speakers in the world have the CSP designation.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the word "practical" as "relating to, or manifested in practice or action: not theoretical or ideal." Speakers that connect with and impact today's audiences blend inspiration and an entertaining style with highly practical applications that move listeners to action.

Pet E-mail Peeves

As I continue my campaign to tame the e-mail beast (to read the September 2004 issue dedicated to this BIG and growing problem go to <http://www.clemmer.net/news/sept2004.html>), I find that so many managers in the audiences I work with vigorously nod their heads at the need to develop e-mail ground rules within their organizations. But most seem to feel powerless to do much about it and are content to point fingers at "they" to fix the problem. That's classic victim behavior. It sure ain't leadership!

An item in the September 23, 2005 *Globe & Mail* entitled, "Less is more for office e-mail: poll" reports that "twenty-nine per cent of 250 advertising and marketing executives polled cited being copied on superfluous 'reply all' messages as the most irksome e-mail practice." Overly long messages annoyed another 16 per cent in the survey and 13 per cent were irritated by typos or grammatical errors.

What are your e-mail peeves and suggestions for taming the beast? Send me (you can even cc the entire CLEMMER Group) an e-mail (as long as you'd like with typos or grammatical errors if you want) to Jim.Clemmer@Clemmer.net (you will need to have my address correct or the Great E-mail Guardian will disgustedly hurl it off into cyberspace).

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Defining and Living Organizational Values

The CLEMMER Group has been working with the Canadian division of an internationally owned services business. The company has been in Canada for just ten years and growing very rapidly. This spring, we started working with them to define and more effectively shape their organizational culture, after one of the senior executives read my *Globe & Mail* article on "Team Spirit Built from the Top" (to read the article go to http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/team_spirit.shtml).

A key part of any culture shaping is clearly defining and living a core set of four values (there should never be more than five). We started the process during a two-day off-site retreat (that included other assessment, priority setting, and strategic planning activities). The CEO and EVP then put together a lengthy first draft refining rough vision, mission, and values we did at the retreat. Following is my response to this draft as we got ready for the next steps at a follow-up retreat.

We had another follow up day with the full management team in October where the values were finalized and we directly or indirectly focused our discussions on living the values through their ongoing organization improvement and business planning processes. The CLEMMER Group is now working with them to refine core competencies, extensive communication strategies and processes, leadership training programs, a "(ABC) Way" cultural awareness program rolled out through the whole company, project teams developing and steering detailed implementation plans around the company's key business and culture shaping objectives, and the like. All of this will revolve around their core values.

Hi "Mike,"

You have put together a very strong draft to work from here. I have helped hundreds of management teams develop and live values over the past few decades. I've found that the process of developing your values and the discipline of living them are ultimately more important than the final document itself. Below are a few articles on our web site I recommend you read. Most of this material comes from my *Pathways to Performance* book.

[Bridging the Rhetoric-Reality Values Gap](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/whatwe_get.shtml)

(to read this article go to http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/whatwe_get.shtml)

Show, do not just tell what the organization stands for. Senior management must work as a team to lower the teamwork snicker factor when declaring teamwork to be a core value.

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[Bringing Values to Life](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/bringing_values.shtml)

(to read this article go to http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/bringing_values.shtml)

A key test of whether core values are alive and real in an organization is to ask team members at random to recite those values. If they can't do it without referring to a piece of paper, there are either too many values or they aren't being used in daily operations.

[Pathways and Pitfalls to Clarifying Organizational Values](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/pp_orgvalues.shtml)

(to read this article go to http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/pp_orgvalues.shtml)

Effectively using values to care for the context and provide focus to a team or organization can be very difficult leadership acts. Discover the Clarifying Organizational Values approaches that can help you to avoid the pitfalls and pave your organization's pathway to success.

[Pathways and Pitfalls to Living Organizational Values](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/pp_livingorgvalues.shtml)

(to read this article go to http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/pp_livingorgvalues.shtml)

Core values are critical to effectively leading people. Discover the Living Organizational Values approaches that can help you to avoid the pitfalls and pave your organization's pathway to success.

[Two Keys to Adding Values](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/adding_value.shtml)

(to read this article go to http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/adding_value.shtml)

Designing statements, putting them into action and consistently showing what the organization stands for.

Here are a few suggestions I'd give you based on this draft:

- ❖ Boil all this down to a one page summary. The full explanation you have here is excellent for giving more depth and richness to what's intended. But you need a simple statement to capture your vision, 3-5 values words or short phrases, and a statement of your purpose. This "one pager" can then be the poster of (ABC's) Vision/Values/Purpose that you hang on the wall, put in plans, reports, etc. and is top of mind for everyone.
- ❖ Rather than using general philosophical quotations you might drop them altogether or put in statements from your family's founders/heritage to show how the traditions/philosophies continue.

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- ❖ I don't clearly see the connections between the notes from the vision and values session of our retreat last spring and this document. I am sure you and "Joe" built on this work in putting this together. You should show the connection or use some of the words (possibly could be in the discussion with the management team) from this session.

Now that you have developed this draft – and once you have the one page summary – we need to get the management team involved in debating and discussing what's meant by what you've written here. The session in October would be the ideal retreat setting for this. As I've outlined in some of the articles above, the second part to this exercise is to discuss what living these values would mean for everyone in management. We could do a version of Keep/Stop/Start doing in discussing management behavior for that discussion. We would likely have them read the above articles in preparation for this discussion.

Great start! I look forward to working with you to further refine and bring alive this document. It will be the centerpiece of the culture you want to build for (ABC).

Thoughts That Make You Go Hmmm...on Values

"I have opinions of my own -- strong opinions -- but I don't always agree with them."

- George W. Bush, *American President*

"We did not find any specific ideological content essential to being a visionary company. Our research indicates that the authenticity of the ideology and the extent of which a company attains consistent alignment with the ideology counts more than the content of the ideology. "

- James C. Collins and Jerry Porras, *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*

"Mission and vision statements have almost always given me a sense of sadness because they are written without insight and, consequently, have the spiritual depth of a dime. How many employees in your company have the corporate mission statement taped to their refrigerator at home because it excites their soul into action on Monday morning?"

- Ian Percy, *Going Deep*

"But in order to reap those rewards, we must begin our research for meaning when things are going well. A tree with strong roots can withstand the most violent storm, but the tree can't grow roots just as the storm appears on the horizon."

- The Dalai Lama and Howard C. Cutler, *The Art of Happiness*



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"Arthur Andersen, Enron, and Salomon Brothers were all brought down, or nearly so, by the rogue actions of a tiny few. But the bad apples in these companies grew and flourished in the same kind of environment: a rotten corporate culture. It's impossible to monitor the actions of every employee, no matter how many accounting and compliance controls you put in place. But either implicitly or explicitly, a company's cultural code is supposed to equip front-line employees to make the right decisions without supervision."

- Ram Charan and Jerry Useem, "Why Companies Fail," *Fortune*

My New Appointment at University of Waterloo

This summer I was appointed as a Practitioner in Residence for the masters (MAsc) and doctoral (PhD) students in the University of Waterloo's Industrial/Organizational Psychology program. Part of what I will try to bring students is a chance to see the theories they study applied in real organizational situations through live case studies. That certainly fits with my focus on practical leadership. My first worry about the title was that I would have to live in residence at the university (having visited the residence of our two oldest kids in their first years at another university). I was relieved to learn that won't be the case! Since this is a new position, we're still trying to define the ways I can help the program. After an initial meeting with the faculty and students, I am looking forward to contributing to this fine school and program.

You can get more information on the UW program by going to:
http://www.psychology.uwaterloo.ca/gradprog/programs/phd/ind_org/index.html.

Coming Events

Navigating Adversity - very low cost (\$25 per person) presentation in Kitchener, ON Canada - November 19 and 20, 2005

It's been a few years since I have delivered any low cost fund raising sessions in my hometown - the Kitchener-Waterloo area. I am especially excited to provide this two hour presentation on Navigating Adversity. For **only** \$25 you get a ticket to the presentation **and** a copy of *Growing the Distance: Timeless Principles for Personal, Career, and Family Success* (that retails for \$25 alone) - and ALL the proceeds go directly to the High on Life Challenge to help teenagers in our community (everyone's time, the space, and all materials are donated)! To order this book go to <http://www.clemmer.net/books/gtd.shtml>.

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This presentation is a unique chance for me to talk about my personal growth approaches that are rapidly evolving and resonating with audiences, relate a recent health challenge (where I got to intensely practice the mind/body/spirit connections I have been preaching for years), raise funds for a very worthy cause, introduce people to the Unity Centre and its principles that have been so helpful to Heather and I for the last 16 years, and provide how-to approaches for harnessing the power of visualization and affirmations.

If you're familiar with my approaches and have heard me speak before, this is a unique chance to get an update and a recharge. It's also a rare chance to bring loved ones, a spouse, friends, or co-workers who may be struggling with difficult challenges or could use some inspiration and practical tools for looking at their situation - or life - in a new way.

The great thing about the Unity Centre is that it's small and intimate. That also means we don't have a lot of seating available. We are expecting sell outs for all sessions. So register early to avoid disappointment. It could be a few more years until I do something like this again.

For more information and to register, go to <http://www.unity-kitchener.org/unity/acitivity.html> .

Top Improvement Points from October

Of the short quotes with links to full articles that were e-mailed out as complimentary **Improvement Points** last month, the most popular with subscribers were:

"Influencing is as much a process of listening, learning, and negotiating, as it is of convincing and selling. This comes from a core value of looking for the common ground that will produce a win/win outcome."

- from *Strong Leaders Use Language to Paint Word Pictures*
www.clemmer.net/excerpts/str_leaders.shtml

"Changing them won't succeed unless it is preceded by changing me. As Mahatma Gandhi said, "We must be the change we wish to see in this world." It's all too easy to come up with changes I'd like to see in others. It takes a lot more leadership courage to change me in order to change them. Strong leaders, seeing beyond their own immediate concerns, are not faint-hearted."

- from *Leaders Go First*
www.clemmer.net/excerpts/leaders_first.shtml

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"Despite all their pious declarations about the importance of people, leadership, and values, far too many managers treat people in their organizations with about as much care as they would attach to an inventory of office equipment. They are just one more set of assets to be managed. These just happen to be breathing and have skin wrapped around them."

- from *Leaders Invest in Growing and Developing People*

www.clemmer.net/excerpts/leaders_invest.shtml

Subscribe or view the archives by topic area here: www.clemmer.net/improvement.shtml

Putting the VIP in *The VIP Strategy*

A reader from Tunisia writes,

*"I really would like to know what VIP stands for in *The VIP Strategy*."*

During our Achieve Group days in the mid 1980s, Art McNeil and I put this book together, structured around the firm's "Vision Integrated Performance" model for team and organizational leadership. When Key Porter published the book in 1988 (my first), we all decided it would be fitting to also talk about The Very Important People Strategy. So the title has a double meaning.

Feedback and Follow-Up

Hello Jim,

*I just wanted to say that your e-mails and web site are fantastic! I met you at the Ontario Police College in Aylmer last fall when you presented on the LEADER Course. Your book, *The Leader's Digest* (to order this book go to <http://www.clemmer.net/books/tld.shtml>) was inspiring! Your experience and examples have helped me in my profession!*

Thanks!

Ivan L'Ortye, Dundas, Ontario



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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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