



## Practical Leadership:

Inspiring *Action*, Achieving Results

### Jim Clemmer's Leader Letter

September 2005, Issue 30

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#### Bad Boss? Learn How to Manage Your Manager

My latest article in *The Globe & Mail* (Canada's largest national newspaper) appeared on August 4, 2005. This piece was a great opportunity to pull together the various facets of upward leadership I have addressed in my books, articles, and the *Leader Letter*. This "managing your manager" article outlines what I think are the six main reasons for bad bosses and provides eight "boss management strategies." To read the full article go to [http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/bad\\_boss.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/bad_boss.shtml).

#### More Articles on Upward Leadership

Below are a few additional book excerpts and articles from our web site directly dealing with managing your manager. The first article provides a broader context for upward leadership. "If It's Going to Be It's Up to Me" is the sub-title of my chapter on "Responsibility for Choices" from *Growing the Distance: Timeless Principles for Personal, Career, and Family Success*. You can find this book at [www.clemmer.net/books/gtd.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/books/gtd.shtml). When dealing with an ineffective manager, a key choice in deciding to be a leader or not is whether we are a victim, survivor, or navigator.

#### [If It's Going to Be It's Up to Me](#)

Life is an endless series of choices. Happy and successful people take responsibility for choices as well as the consequences of their actions. To read the full article go to [www.clemmer.net/excerpts/if\\_its.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/if_its.shtml).

#### [Being a Strong Leader Despite a Bad Boss](#)

Strong leaders don't allow themselves to be victims of a bad boss. We may not be able to choose our boss, but we can choose how to respond to him or her. To read the full article go to [www.clemmer.net/excerpts/being\\_astrong.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/being_astrong.shtml).

#### [Management Teams Often Handicap Themselves](#)

Strong management teams change and improve their organizations despite obstacles, handicaps and problems. It's called leadership. To read the full article go to [www.clemmer.net/excerpts/mgmt\\_handicap.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/mgmt_handicap.shtml).

#### [Many Managers Disempower Themselves](#)

Many managers unwittingly believe that leadership only comes down from the top. They give away their power by believing that they don't have any. To read the full article go to [www.clemmer.net/excerpts/many\\_managers.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/many_managers.shtml).



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#### **Stop Whining and Start Leading**

Less effective managers aspire to lead but end up demoralizing their own teams and frustrating themselves by choosing to be disempowered by their bosses. They unwittingly fall for the cult of heroic management -- the notion that leadership comes down from on high. To read the full article go to [www.clemmer.net/excerpts/stop\\_whining.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/stop_whining.shtml).

#### **Thoughts That Make You Go Hmmm...on Upward Leadership**

**"Few will have the greatness to bend history itself; but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation."**

- Robert F. Kennedy

**"A major drain on most managers' energy is the perception that they have limited influence. Purposeful managers, by contrast, are acutely aware of the choice they can make - and they systematically extend their freedom to act. They manage their bosses' expectations, find ways to independently access required resources, develop relationships with influential people, and build specific competencies that broaden their choices and ability to act."**

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

**"Leadership is distributed. It resides not solely in the individual at the top, but in every person at every level who, in one way or another, acts as a leader to a group of followers - wherever in the organization that person is, whether shop steward, team head, or C.E.O."**

- Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis & Annie McKee, *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence*

**"While the popular view of mentors is that they seek out younger people to encourage and champion, in fact the reverse is more often true. The best mentors are usually recruited, and one mark of a future leader is the ability to identify, woo, and win the mentors who will change his or her life."**

- Warren G. Bennis, "The Seven Ages of the Leader", *Harvard Business Review*

**"We often wait for someone to open the door. But the handle is on the inside."**

- Unknown

**"The best servants of the people, like the best valets, must whisper unpleasant truths in the master's ear. It is the court fool, not the foolish courtier, whom the king can least afford to lose."**

- Walter Lippman, author, political advisor, and editor

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**Why Aren't Common Sense Leadership Principles Common Practice?**

A web site visitor from England sent me the following e-mail:

*"I'm astonished at how good basic common sense reads as a revelation; even more confusing to me, is why it is so difficult for me to share such good practice with managers who are operating with an altogether 'different' philosophy and getting it wrong!? I'm hoping your publication will give me some ideas."*

I have wrestled with your question for a couple of decades now. I am often baffled by why common sense leadership principles aren't common practice. There is now a mountain of evidence showing that strong leadership leads to healthier leaders and people being led, higher team/organization performance, elevated job/life satisfaction, greater happiness, and so on.

The reasons that basically good people are often bad leaders are numerous and complex. The two central ones that I keep coming back to are confusing management and leadership, and knowing with doing.

The balancing of management and leadership (and technical/technology) are foundation components of my work (*The Leader's Digest* (to obtain more information about this book go to [www.clemmer.net/books/tld.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/books/tld.shtml)) and *its Practical Application Planner* (go to [www.clemmer.net/books/tldpp.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/books/tldpp.shtml)) are built on this base) and The CLEMMER Group's services. Here are a few articles on our web site that may be helpful:

**Balancing Technology, Management, and Leadership**

In top performing organizations, each area of the "Performance Balance Triangle" is strong and constantly improving, allowing technology, systems, and processes to serve people. To read the full article go to [www.clemmer.net/excerpts/balancingtech.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/balancingtech.shtml).

**Managing Things and Leading People**

To manage is to control, handle or manipulate. To lead is to guide, influence or persuade. To read the full article go to [www.clemmer.net/excerpts/balancingtech.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/balancingtech.shtml).

**Management vs. Leadership**

One key distinction between management and leadership is that we manage things and lead people. When dealing with things, we talk about a way of doing. In the people realm, we're talking about a way of being. To read the full article go to [www.clemmer.net/excerpts/management\\_leadership.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/management_leadership.shtml).

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**Stop Managing and Start Leading**

Truly good corporate leaders know how to remove barriers between themselves and their staff. To read the full article go to [www.clemmer.net/excerpts/start\\_leading.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/start_leading.shtml).

There are even more articles on this topic area at [www.clemmer.net/excerpts/m\\_leadership.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/m_leadership.shtml).

The problem of knowing versus doing is a complex one. It seems to be especially hard for us to recognize when we've fallen into this trap. Variations on the theme are mixing up strategy or planning with implementation or confusing content and process. Many managers spend a lot of time and brain power developing a plan/budget/strategy and when it's done try to be like Jean Luc Picard on the Starship Enterprise and get someone else to "make it so." Rarely does that happen.

The discipline of execution or implementation is sorely lacking in many organizations. Managers are so busy cooking up more plans or handling today's crisis that they rarely follow through and follow up. At a personal level, managers often confuse learning theories (knowing) with developing skills or habits (doing). Because they know, they think they automatically do. Our academic system, bestseller lists, and consulting firms add to the confusion.

**Reader Perspectives on Upward Leadership**

I received the following e-mail from a reader. Since he's still with the company that he's referring to, he asked to remain anonymous.

*"Just a quick note to say how much your article in The Globe & Mail today brought back memories. We were going to get T-shirts printed up with M.W.D. Managing with Dinosaurs with the one manager we had - ideally with a graphic artist to do a conference table with a T-Rex at the one end. One of those projects that never got done....Generated a few laughs."*

I'd love to get your perspectives and experiences on upward leadership. Send me your thoughts at [Jim.Clemmer@Clemmer.net](mailto:Jim.Clemmer@Clemmer.net).

**Becoming a Professional Speaker**

I get many inquiries from people who would like to become a speaker, workshop leader, or consultant. Here's a typical inquiry and my response:

*"My personal dream is to be a motivational speaker..... do you have anything on that for me to work toward?"*

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I am often at a loss to provide useful generalized advice on how to be a professional speaker. This profession is very broad and diverse with as many pathways into the business as there are people doing it. Most people looking to become a professional speaker are surprised at how much work and time it takes to become established and fulfill their dreams.

The Arizona-based National Speakers Association (NSA) has found there are eight competencies needed to make a successful career in this business. These are:

1. Professional Awareness
2. Professional Relationships
3. Topic Development
4. Platform Mechanics
5. Presenting And Performing
6. Authorship And Product Development
7. Sales And Marketing
8. Managing The Business

You can learn more about these competencies and the speaking business at [www.nsaspeaker.org](http://www.nsaspeaker.org).

Whenever anyone asks me a question like yours, I recommend he or she join the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers (CAPS) in Canada, the National Speakers Association in the United States, or the International Federation for Professional Speakers in other countries. Members are made up of people learning about and wanting to get into the business, people getting established in the business (who may be doing it part time or on a semi-retired basis), and those who have been earning a good living as full time professional speakers for many years. This latter group can most quickly be identified through their Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) designation.

If you're serious about wanting to become a motivational speaker I would highly recommend you attend the CAPS annual conference. You'll meet 400 members and have a plethora of educational workshops, motivational speeches, and network opportunities. It's always the first Thursday evening, Friday, and Saturday in December. This year it's in Ottawa-Gatineau. Check all this out at [www.canadianspeakers.org](http://www.canadianspeakers.org). The NSA conference is in July each year. It's in Orlando, Florida July 22, 2006 - July 25, 2006.

Hope that helps.

Jim

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**Reader Feedback on *Growing the Distance* Two Years in the Making**

Deb showed remarkable restraint to have one of my books on her desk for two whole years and resist the temptation to read it cover to cover in one sitting! After sending me the message below, she is now moving on to *Growing the Distance: Personal Implementation Guide* and the companion book, *The Leader's Digest: Timeless Principles for Team and Organization Success*. I am sure she'll get to this workbook and book much more quickly!

*Jim,*

*I just finished reading your book, Growing the Distance. It sat on my desk for two years and I didn't pick it up. I am currently taking a certificate course through the University of Regina in Health Leadership and am working on a project we titled, How to Grow Leaders. Finally, I read the book. It was a wonderful journey and has helped me to finally apply some of my learnings to the issues in my own nursing units (I am a nurse manager for 2 very busy surgical units). Something in your book about knowing all the things to do but needing the courage to actually do them...thanks for giving me the courage to make a difference.*

**Deb Kosabek, Nurse Manager, Regina Quappelle Health Region**

**Top Improvement Points from August**

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:

**"My decades of speaking and writing about leadership have reinforced that people "get it" most often through a good story, metaphor, or analogy. I know I have connected with an audience when people tell or send me their stories. I enjoy this immensely and have added to my bag of stories along the way."**

- from [Speaking Of Success: Informing versus Communicating](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/speaking_success.shtml)  
[www.clemmer.net/excerpts/speaking\\_success.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/speaking_success.shtml)

**"Despite pious declarations about the importance of people, leadership and values, many managers treat people in their organizations with about as much care as they would attach to office equipment."**

- from [Leaders Inspire Their Teams With Optimism](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/leaders_inspire.shtml)  
[www.clemmer.net/excerpts/leaders\\_inspire.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/leaders_inspire.shtml)



**JIM CLEMMER**

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**"Leaders tend to each person on their team and coach them to change habits or prune overgrown methods that may prevent further growth. They are consistently moving team members around to avoid overcrowding and to bring out the best in each person."**

- from *Leaders Give People Space to Grow*

[www.clemmer.net/excerpts/leaders\\_space.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/leaders_space.shtml)

Subscribe or view the archives by topic area here: [www.clemmer.net/improvement.shtml](http://www.clemmer.net/improvement.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](mailto:Jim.Clemmer@Clemmer.net).

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I hope to connect with you again next month!

Jim

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