

“The Five Temptations of a CEO”

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Notes by Dave Kraft

It wasn't complicated—running a company, I mean. He used to say that people make it complicated because they're afraid to look at the simple issues

#1 You may be more interested in protecting your career status than you are in making sure your company achieves results The temptation to focus on my career and my status above my focus on the company's results. It is the temptation to reward people who contribute to their ego, instead of those who contribute to the results of the company. Don't hold the company and the people you work with hostage to your ego

#2 Wanting to be popular with those who report to you, instead of holding them accountable. The need to be liked and popular with my staff, at the expense of holding them accountable. No one had the guts to tell them what was expected of them Work for the long-term respect of your employees, not for their affection. It's not supposed to be complicated. You make it complicated because you're not facing your own issues

- Does it bother you to the point of distraction if your people are unhappy with you?
- Do you water down negative feedback to make it more palatable?

#3 It's the temptation to ensure that your decisions are correct, to make correct decisions to achieve certainty. We don't like to decide things without perfect information, because we don't want to be wrong. It's the temptation to choose certainty over clarity. I think that having a great vision and mission is only important if you know how to execute. I'll take a well-executing company over a visionary one any day. I think you are afraid to be criticized. To look bad or, they don't want to hold people accountable because they're afraid to be unpopular. They don't hold people accountable because they haven't bothered to be clear about what they expect from people. If he couldn't be comfortable being wrong, he wouldn't make tough decisions with limited information. You can't move forward in the face of uncertainty if you aren't willing to make mistakes. Make clarity more important than accuracy It's your job to risk being wrong. The cost to your company of not taking the risk of being wrong is paralysis

#4 Is the desire for harmony. You're confusing the fear of being unpopular with the fear of your group being in conflict with one another. If no one gets a little pushed out of shape during a meeting, I feel like we probably didn't put all our issues on the table. Do they like me? I guess so, but they don't respect me as much as they would if I were consistent. Most people, including CEO's believe that it is better for people to agree and get along than disagree and conflict with one another. Harmony sometimes restricts “productive ideological conflict”. Tumultuous meetings are often signs of progress. Tame ones are often signs of leaving important issues off the table. Guard against personal attacks, but not to the point of stifling important interchanges of ideas

#5 The desire for invulnerability. Actively encourage your people to challenge your ideas. Trust them with your reputation and your ego.

- 1. Choose results over status**
- 2. Choose accountability over popularity**
- 3. Choose clarity over certainty**
- 4. Choose conflict over harmony**
- 5. Choose trust over invulnerability**

LEADERS FAIL BECAUSE THEY ARE UNWILLING TO PUT THEIR TEMPTATIONS ON THE TABLE FOR OTHERS TO SEE. WHAT THEY PERCEIVE AS CRITICISM IS ACTUALLY INVALUABLE COUNSEL. THE KEY IS TO EMBRACE THE SELF-EXAMINATION THAT REVEALS THE TEMPTATIONS AND TO KEEP THEM IN THE OPEN WHERE THEY CAN BE ADDRESSED