

“Fairness is Overrated”
by Tim Stevens
Kindle Notes by Dave Kraft

It’s possible that the best thing you can do is disappointing someone in the short run so that you can serve him or her better in the long run.

The best leaders know what gives them energy, and they know what drains it away.

When I can’t find the time to write, I feel mentally constipated.

“An unguarded strength is a double weakness.” Oswald Chambers

When I was younger, I was more interested in image management.

I think the most attractive leaders are those who reveal that they don’t know everything.

When we choose the path of pride rather than humility, we keep people at arm’s length.

Don’t let the lies of Satan lead you to have a mistress called “Ministry”

We want what we don’t have. Until we get it, and then we want more.

Here is what I believe to my core: the success of leaders will rise or fall based on the decisions they make about the people around them.

Several years ago we worked together, and that is when I learned he had a high capacity for negativity and a low tolerance for hard work.

Chemistry is more important than skills, experience, or education.

We looked at chemistry, experience, and proven skills before we looked at education.

Pastor Dave Ferguson has also hired scores of church leaders, and he agrees: “The first qualification we look for in potential staff is ‘proven faithfulness,’ not formal theological education.”

You want long hellos and quick goodbyes.

But it’s crucial that the people we bring on our team do not have huge flaws in their integrity that could cripple their ability to lead.

In my experience, there are three big areas that seem to take leaders down over and over again.

Words

Money

Sex

Thomas Macauley, the nineteenth-century British historian said, “The measure of a man’s real character is what he would do if he would never be found out.”

You can't underestimate your organization's DNA

You can't underestimate chemistry

You can't overestimate authenticity

Seven advantages of hiring a person from among your base of volunteers or current employees:

1. You can observe his character before hiring.
2. You can observe his proven faithfulness before hiring.
3. You can observe her giftedness in action before hiring.
4. She understands and buys into your philosophy of ministry!
5. He understands and buys into your vision!
6. He loves your church!
7. She will offer a lot fewer surprises! *Dave Ferguson*

There are five categories that I think are important to include on any job description:

1. The type of person for this specific role
2. Personal values or character qualities that are important
3. A description of the job's duties
4. How success is defined
5. Reporting structure

You don't want staff to join because of money.

You don't want staff to stay because of money.

You don't want staff to leave because of money.

It's important that you don't have people making decisions about salaries who have a "vow of poverty" mind-set.

No one should ever determine his or her own compensation.

Here are twelve signs of a great culture in your organization, company, or church:

People are waiting in line to join

Turnover is low.

Top leaders are not insecure about other leaders succeeding.

Gossip isn't tolerated.

Lateral leadership is outstanding.

Team members are energized by the mission.

It's not just a job; people do life together.

The team believes they are more important than the task.

People are smiling.

Fear is missing.

Communication is strong.

Change is welcome.

No organization, church, government, or company can have a healthy culture and be run by a dictator, monarch, or single personality.

Some would say they have a team because they have multiple people on their staffs. But it's quite possible, even normal, to have a multi-staff organization with one person in charge and everyone else helping out.

I think I could count on one hand the organizations I know of that have a high-capacity, visionary, big-dog leader and that also operate as a team. It usually isn't the case.

Warning Signs of Poor Teamwork when strong personalities dominate every discussion:

- People agree on something as a team only to see it reversed later by senior leadership.
- No one dares to "speak truth to power" and disagree with the senior leader.
- Debate is not encouraged.
- The group meets, but the top-dog leader rarely comes.
- The senior leader can't be in a meeting that he or she isn't leading.
- There is a revolving door for high-capacity leaders who report to the chief executive. They never stay on the team for long.
- People feel as though the leaders don't want input, or don't listen when they get it. Their minds are already made up.
- Leaders take individual credit for the accomplishments of the team.
- Change is not welcome unless the top-dog leader initiates it.
- After decisions are made, you'll hear comments such as, "I don't agree with it, but here is what was decided."
- When a decision or new direction is communicated, people walk away hearing the "what" but rarely understand the "why." There isn't broad ownership in the decision.
- When someone messes up, he or she is often left to hang on his or her own.
- There are lots of good discussions, but no one can remember what was decided at the last meeting, and people aren't held accountable for tasks.

In order to have a healthy culture in your organization or business, you must believe the best about the others on your team.

If you want to develop a healthy culture, decide the non-negotiables, bring great people on your team, then get out of the way and watch them do great things.

The leader isn't disloyal; she is just wired by God as a leader and a developer. And you won't let her do either.

Authority is the ability to make decisions without asking someone else's permission.

If you want a great culture in which leaders are excited, then do six simple things:

1. Train them so their blood pulses with the mission, vision, and values of the organization.
2. Set them up to succeed. Lend them your credibility by telling everyone they are the leaders, and they have your full confidence.
3. Give them the authority to make decisions including spending money, hiring and firing staff, and setting direction for their areas.
4. Get out of the way and let them lead.

5. Connect with them continually for evaluation, values review, and rare course corrections. Be available as a sounding board to process decisions. Remember, they don't need you to tell them the answer. Rather, they need you to ask questions and help them process the right course of action.
6. Celebrate their wins publicly, and reward them with greater responsibility as appropriate.

Find a leader you know who is great at empowering and releasing other leaders—and watch him or her closely. Within that leader you will likely find someone who is great at producing a healthy culture.

You have to walk in stupid every day. Don't be afraid to say I don't know

Walk in stupid, and you might learn something.

John Maxwell said, "The greatest enemy of learning is knowing.

Maxwell offered these ten questions to self-assess whether you are a learner:

1. Am I open to other people's ideas?
2. Do I listen more than I talk?
3. Am I open to changing my opinion based on new information?
4. Do I readily admit when I am wrong?
5. Do I observe before acting on a situation?
6. Do I ask questions?
7. Am I willing to ask a question that will expose my ignorance?
8. Am I open to doing things in a way I haven't done before?
9. Am I willing to ask for directions?
10. Do I act defensive when criticized, or do I listen openly for truth?

As author and management consultant Peter Drucker put it, "The leader of the past was a person who knew how to tell. The leader of the future will be a person who knows how to ask.

If you are trying to create a positive culture that is unified in vision and purpose, you want people on your team who are all in—100 percent. Nothing held back.

When initiating change, make an APA list. Put three columns on the board. On the left column, write everything you want to Avoid when you make this change. In the middle column, write everything you want to Preserve. And in the right column, write everything you want to Achieve through this change.

Signs of an Unhealthy Culture

Insecurity and nervousness

Empty desks, quiet hallways

Lack of communication and trust

Unhappy families

I have found that change works best when following these six step

1. Make the case for the change
2. Create urgency for the change
3. Make the decision for the change
4. Communicate the change
5. Implement the change
6. Consider changing the change when needful

Too often leaders get sidetracked by the no people. We cater to their whining, we spend all our energy trying to keep them happy, and we do damage control because of the side conversations they are having.

Demonizing someone who is no longer on the team does nothing to build the body of Christ and does little to create unity going forward.

MOST termination conversations fall into one of these four categories:

1. They resigned.
2. They were fired for lapses in character or moral judgment.
3. They were fired for attitude or loyalty issues.
4. They were fired for competence or capacity limitations.

Bill Hybels calls the inability to let people go a case of “terminal niceness.

Just remember: your organization does not exist to employ people. As a pastor or leader, you do not owe anyone a job.

I’ve long believed that more leaders mess up because of bad communication than because of bad decisions.

I’d say 20 percent of leadership is making the right decisions. The other 80 percent is appropriately communicating those decisions.

You can make a great decision and lose the battle because your communication is weak.

With any big decision at our church, we would typically sequence the communication like this:

1. Senior leadership team
2. Board members
3. Entire staff
4. Key leaders, influencers, and stakeholders (We would take the time to write their names out and determine who is going to talk with them.)
5. Other invested volunteers
6. Entire congregation (in a business, your client base)

Pay attention to these simple communication principles:

Start with a written communication strategy.

Don’t delay your communication.

Be straight with people.

Ask people to help you.

Plan time for conversations to help people process.

I try to remind myself of these points:

- I don’t have to say everything that comes into my head.
- I don’t have to have the last word.

- It actually helps if I seek first to understand rather than to be understood.
- E-mail is a bad tool for resolving conflict. It almost always escalates the tension.
- Phrases such as “you always” and “you never” are rarely helpful.
- Questions are almost always better than statements.
- I really don’t know it all.
- The issue is probably not the issue. If I listen, I might learn the real issue.
- It doesn’t matter how obvious it seems to me; I do not know the other person’s motives.

We will not be the team that is afraid of risk.

- We will not be the team that doesn’t listen to the voice of God because we are too tuned in to the whining of people.
- We will not be the team that leads an organization so big and flabby that it is impossible to move.
- We will not be the team that misses an opportunity because we are in an endless cycle of risk-management assessment.
- We will not be the team that keeps waiting for the right time to lead the church to the next challenge.

If you are afraid of making mistakes, you should not be a leader. If you fear the day you have to stand in front of others and tell them you were wrong, you should pump gas or sell knives.