



# LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP

*The Keys to Being Contagious in Life & Leadership*

by Monica Wofford



## Leadership includes growth in AND out of their current position

Sometimes growth happens inside the company, in one's current position. Yet, sometimes growth needs to occur with a new opportunity.



The phrase is "Freeing someone up for new opportunities" and I think you know what it means, but do you know how to make it happen, if it the best solution for all concerned and so it doesn't remind employees of the apprentice?

New leaders are often ill equipped to carry out company policies when it comes to letting someone go. And some companies have no solid rules on termination at all.

If you find that an employee's performance is unacceptable follow these guidelines to ensure that the conversation goes smoothly.

## Leadership Decisions: Fix It, Accept It, or Leave.

There is complaining and there is complacency. There is whining and there is whimsical talk about why we can't fix others or fix our boss or fix the co-worker that you saw flying in on her broom. It all adds up to the three decisions that we each have to make and they are clear, simple, and less than easy.

The three overwhelmingly clear decisions that we always have are Fix It, Accept It, or Leave. Okay, they seem easy and they seem clear, yet I also mentioned that they might be less than easy and I would even go so far to say they are deceptively easy, yet the truth of the matter is that these are the choices we all have when faced with a situation at work, a person at work, or a scenario at work that you don't like or feel compelled to grumble over or wish to fix when it involves another person. Contagious Leaders fix it, accept it, or leave. Now, let's dissect these in proper form.

Have you ever tried to fix someone? Have any of you ever been married? I mean really. Isn't there an old adage that says "You can't fix someone unless of course, they want to be fixed?" It exists for a reason and remains true an untold number of times. In fact, situations cannot be fixed, but situations can. If you have a situation that is troubling you that you can somehow influence, control, or modify, then by all means, do so. Don't complain about the problem, create a solution.

"Grant me the wisdom to accept the things that I cannot change..." is a line found in many sources, one of which is the Serenity Prayer often directed toward God. To whomever you might utter the saying, remember the point, those things which you cannot change, must be accepted. If you were to look up jerk in the dictionary and find the clear picture of your boss, then why do you become bothered when that person does exactly what a jerk does. Let's look at this differently. If you saw a dog on a leash walking down the street with his owner, would you get mad at the dog for walking on the leash? Silly enough, no probably not. Isn't this similar in that we wouldn't get mad at something for doing exactly what it is supposed to do? So why would we get mad at someone for doing exactly what we expect them to do. Try not to complain about someone being who you say they are, try to look at them, be fascinated and accept them for what and who they are.

I have always said that if you do not like the situation, cannot fix it, and choose not to accept it, then it might be time for you to consider the option of looking at the possibilities of maybe one day contemplating the

1. Incorporate your HR department, if available, at the first sign of problems.
2. Make sure you have communicated your expectations clearly and that the employee clearly understands you.
3. Outline what the consequences are for the employee's behavior if it continues.
4. Follow your company's precedents and guidelines.
5. Implement a verbal warning.
6. Provide a written warning requiring an employee signature. Place a copy of this document in the employee file.

thought of looking at the option of maybe thinking about alternative chances that you may have to somehow someday find another job. Please don't misunderstand what I am saying. I am not telling you upon completion of this article that you should print it and take it to your boss and tell him or her that you quit. That is not the message and if you believe it is then please change my name above to "Cindy" as many of you have heard me mention in seminars. What I am saying is that if fixing and accepting are not options, then leaving is your lasting choice. If you choose to stay then it is conscious choice and what you are really then complaining about is your choice or your lack of ability to make a tough decision. Keep in mind leaving could easily mean leaving the situation and does not always mean leaving a job.

Most of these have multiple interpretations and I by no means have all the answers or am vacant of thoughts around the fact that there are variations on the clarity of all three. Nonetheless, there are always these three decisions and the choice is yours. Contagious Leaders make the most of the decisions that they have.

---

### **Contagious Leadership Lesson –From *Contagious LEADERSHIP*, the book**

Look around you today and see what it is that you complain about. The people, the inability to delegate to them, the conditions in which you work, the hours in which you choose to inhabit an office, the places you go, the travel you choose to take, the accommodations you choose to accept. Like it or not they are all your choices and the choices are clear, yet remember I never said easy. What choices are you making and are they productive or more like the ones the employees you hear complain about that you choose to keep and continue to complain about instead of approach? Did you catch all that?

---

### **Lead your Customers with Contagious Customer Service**

There seems to be an overwhelming increase in the amount of non-caring, nonchalant, non-concerned for your needs, customer service folks and I have to ask why? But, at the same time, this realization and consistent experience causes those who provide Contagious Customer Service to stand out more than ever before.

This Friday, I flew out of Cincinnati to Dallas to speak at a conference. I was a day early for the conference, yet a dollar short, to use an old saying, for my flight out of Cincinnati. The traffic was heavy, the timing, at five o'clock, was tough at best, and the seminar participants came first, which meant I left after the last one left and they wanted to talk a bit. Thus at 4:45 when I am headed to the Cincinnati airport and I realize that I must cross a busy downtown to catch a flight that leaves at 6:00pm, I think I might not make the plane, a first in Monica history. So, I thought what the heck and called the Hertz center to which I was headed first to turn in my rental car. It occurs to me that I might not have time to do both, return the car and make my flight. So, I asked a silly

7. Provide a conversation in which the employee is able to make a decision on improved behavior or termination. Give them the option to resign or take a decision making day off.

8. Following the above steps if the employee's behavior does not improve, you must proceed with termination of employee's employment.

Termination is never easy, yet the result of long term employment by someone who is not performing can be worse.

A problem employee who is left to continue behaving or performing in ways that are not acceptable, can give other employees reasons to display:

Entitlement  
Resentment  
Fear of Favoritism

Any of those in mass quantities and large doses are far worse than the difficulty found in a termination conversation.

question "could the Hertz counter possibly send someone to curbside pickup at the airline to retrieve the car?" Okay, first, let me say, I was completely serious and also told the kind young woman who answered the phone that I knew it was insane to ask and that I knew this was highly unusual. She referred me to the manager to which I humbly made my plea again. The manager was kind and laughed as I must have sounded completely desperate and like a living lunatic. She said "We don't normally do this, but I tell you what... "

Then she said "I will hop on the bus, we are not that busy here, and meet you at the airline curbside check in. Where are you now? And your flight leaves at six, right. We'll help you however we can." She then described herself, told me to drive safe (or rather fly safe as I said I was flying to the airport in their car) and said she would see me soon.

I pulled up to the curb at break neck speed, she waved, smiled a friendly smile and said "Toss me the keys and you are good to go. Have a safe trip and good luck on your flight." That day I did several things. I took a risk, made my flight, experienced Contagious Customer Service, and became a loyal Hertz customer for the rest of my life. Thank you Edie, of Hertz at the Cincinnati airport, for being a Contagious Customer Service Provider!

---

## **Lead your Life and Those of Others with Contagious Confidence**

You're in the middle of a conversation with an employee who has traveled outside the bounds of acceptable performance and you are sharing the guidelines yet again. In fact, you are listing those times when this employee has been late, has breeched professional conduct standards or has spread unnecessary gossip and then you hear the words, "Well, what about Suzie? She did the same thing" and you freeze. What do you say? How do you convey credibility and keep the conversation on track?

The words are "that is outside the scope of this conversation." Simple, poignant and not stifling. The rude response would not gain you any respect and possibly start a conflict; the passive response would not get you forward in the conversation and would stifle progress where you stood; the phrase above simply paints a box around the conversation that you can define and stick within. You may have to repeat it, but a series of repetitions nonetheless would not squash the spirit of the one who hears them. Contagious Confidence means you maintain yours and avoid taking away it away from others. Everything you do rubs off on others, including your confidence and the way you portray it. In disciplinary conversations, the behavior is the issue, theirs and not others', yet yours does not go unnoticed and must maintain a sense of credibility and professionalism. Stay Contagious!

Don't get me wrong, termination is certainly not your first line of defense and certainly not the preferred method of employee development, but the bottom line is it is better to give someone who is not performing the opportunity to perform elsewhere.

Leaders who make tough decisions grow themselves and learn from the experience. I once had a former employee stop me in the hall of a store and tell me she had always wanted to thank me for letting her go so many years ago.

She said it was just the wake up call she needed, probably one of the best things I could have done, and really turned her life right side up. I about fell over and I am not telling you that they will all turn out that way! No how, no way. But, I am telling you leadership has responsibilities to both the business and the employees. Sometimes that means making the tough decisions.

## Have You Hired a Coach to Improve or Are You Still Saying I Can Change, Year after Year?

Coaching is no laughing matter and the right one can make all the difference. There are life coaches, team coaches and yes, even leadership coaches. A leadership coach will:

- Give you a safe sounding board with which to discuss delicate situations
- Suggest new skills for your unique circumstances
- Customize a solution just for you and the team you lead
- Make you look good with your boss when you appear to have the solutions that you didn't have to ask him or her for

Jackie O had an etiquette coach, Princess DI had a speaking coach, and professional athletes have coaches that are the key! What are you waiting for to take it to the next level and make that transition from manager to leader more smoothly?

The Contagious Leadership coaching program is waiting for and will cost you less than the five visits to Starbuck's you made last month. Join the host of future successful and famous leaders who have become a part of the Contagious Leadership online coaching program and join the path to success in your leadership journey.

**Sign up TODAY at**

**<http://www.monicawofford.com/coaching.php> !**

*Monica L. Wofford*



Toll Free: 1-866-382-0121 / Fax: 407-877-8366 / email [monica@monicawofford.com](mailto:monica@monicawofford.com) / [www.monicawofford.com](http://www.monicawofford.com)

P.O. Box 6833316 Orlando, FL 32868-3316

[Monica Wofford Website Home](#) [Topics](#) [Books and CDs](#) [News and Articles](#) [Contact Us](#)

Copyright Monica Wofford and PresentersPlus Inc © 2006, All Rights Reserved

You are receiving this email because you are a client or friend of Monica Wofford. To unsubscribe, [click here](#)

Are you having trouble seeing the newsletter below? Click the hyperlink [here](#) to go to our website!