



WINTER 2017

ISSUE #44



RISING ABOVE THE FRAY



Dear Roxi

The beginning of anything new - like a new year, job, relationship - personal or business, and certainly a new era...brings with it an opportunity to reflect on the past and consider the possibilities of the future. And most importantly, something new can remind us to live fully in the present. This newsletter is about what is present, right now, right here in our workplaces and in our communities.

We can pretend that nothing has truly changed for most of us over the past few months. It's very tempting to think that our national politics don't actually impact most people on a day-to-day basis, and to think that for most, life will go on as before, one day at a time. It is predictably true that the sun will rise again, the rivers will flow, rain and snow will fall, and the mountains will continue to soar into the sky. All of this will happen without human intervention.

However, there's something very different today, and it is impacting our workplaces.

Leaders of people have the added responsibility of being "tuned in" to what's happening in their "responsibility pond" and to those they lead. I am writing this month to suggest each of us adjust our radio dial and tune into what's happening right now in our workplaces.

Humans automatically respond to significant positive or negative 'disturbances in the force' - within our environment. We can feel it rolling around in the spaces between each other and in the energy fields around us. We feel it because, similar to breathing automatically and instinctively, our bodies' nervous systems are hard-wired to sense and respond to energy shifts of any kind, even if our brains haven't figured it out yet, or are in denial. This capacity is what helps us to choose fight, flight or freeze responses. It's a primitive and critical part of our brain, and essential to help keep us from harm, real or perceived. We can't prevent the involuntary somatic (physical) responses to the things that happen to us. We can manage them once we are aware of what triggers us.

Not since 9-11, have so many millions of people been so disrupted by world events. It's interesting to me that the recent election was on 11-9.

Journalists, political scientists, historians, sociologists, and psychologists across the nation and the world, are seeing and reporting that - no matter who one supported - there is a measurable decrease in people feeling emotionally safe at work, with co-workers, with family and friends, and certainly with those whom they don't know well. There is diminishing trust, and a reduced belief that we can actually have civil discourse about differing points of view or opinions. Millions of people are having a hard time coping with the dissonance that abounds in our culture right now, regardless of how they voted.

Growing polarization along with a dramatic reduction in civil public discourse over the past two decades seems to have reached a crescendo in 2016. This affects everyone, no matter where they work or for whom they voted. This cultural phenomenon is upon us right now, and we deny or ignore it at our own peril; the impact of this will not and cannot stay outside our workplaces. We bring all of ourselves to work, intentionally or not, and like it or not.

What does this all have to do with you and with leadership...and why would I suggest that we pay very close attention?

The first thing to notice is how all this is affecting you, personally. The answer matters because human **emotions are as contagious as a flu virus**. That means how you feel will very quickly telegraph to the people around you, even on the telephone. Non-verbal communication is by far the largest percentage of how we communicate to one another - as much as 93% of human communication. It follows then that we can't hide much from those with whom we work closely, even if we try.

The second thing to notice is how the people around you are behaving. For instance, one of my clients was so distraught over the anticipation of a holiday dinner with a relative, that it was making him physically anxious and ill. Their political differences hadn't been a hot topic before, but this time around, they were front and center. At work, he noticed that people were pretending that nothing had happened, even as there were some sudden post-election changes in relationships. Normal conversation either decreased or stopped happening all together, and what once had been a bustling, energetic office of professionals...grew much too silent. There was no protocol for this leader to deal with a phenomenon like this. So he asked me...

Should I be concerned?

Yes, you should be concerned. Let's start with this premise - it is not business-as-usual even if it appears that it is. It isn't. People are disrupted in their relationships at home and at work. Here are a few alarming indicators: Suicide hotlines lit up, how to cope with post-election stress articles and web sites are popping up all over the internet, hyperbole has increased, teachers are reporting increases in bullying, therapists are reporting a huge increase in patients reporting anxiety about the impact of the election on their workplace, communities, and families. Even those whose candidate won the election are reporting fears and worries about how to engage in positive ways with those whose candidates lost the election.

Emotions are running high and are not likely to die down any time soon. When millions of people, more than 50% the voting population, are traumatized beyond anything they have experienced since 9-11, we have a situation that cannot be ignored. These folks are in your workplace and in your communities. There is even a name for what they are experiencing: "Post-Election Anxiety/Depression/Trauma" and it's real; it is showing up every day at work, at home, and at the local grocery store.

What we resist persists, and things that fester rarely get better; in fact, they usually get much worse. So, to ignore what is or may be happening in your workplace during this in this unfamiliar and unprecedented new era, could be very costly to your enterprise - profit or non-profit. Productivity, mental health issues, hostile workplace issues, turnover, and even physical illness increases, to name a few, are all indicators to watch for.

RISE ABOVE THE FRAY - 6 Things Leaders can do:

1. Create and/or deepen a true sense of safety for your team members.
2. Be proactive in building and/or rebuilding trust within your teams.
3. Reinforce a healthy culture and work environment that honors all employees.
4. Clarify your behavioral expectations of the staff within the workplace

5. Use your own behaviors, words, and actions, to model what you expect from them and send a clear message that reinforces the workplace values and the dignity, talents, skills, and contributions of your people.

6. Explicitly demonstrate your appreciation for your people in meaningful ways as frequently as possible.

Use the **Step Ladder of Group Dynamics** to give you some ideas of creating Safety, Trust, and Group Cohesion and Synergy.

Helping yourself and others strengthen personal resilience will also demonstrate empathy and help build and increase trust. I shared the link to an overview of **7 Resilience Factors and 10 things to Building Resilience** with readers in the past. I am sharing it again now. Please 'pass it forward' to anyone you think might appreciate it.

I am also happy to help your organization by presenting my live Building Resilience Program (a half or full day). **Contact me directly** to set that up.

How we lead and navigate rapid change, unexpected external or internal events, sudden shifts of any kind, defines us as leaders. In times like these we are called upon to have great empathy, remember to listen deeply, and to dust off our conflict transformation skills. These ARE the times we must rise above the fray and respond in helpful ways.

I wish you all a 2017 full of possibility, discovery, and supportive relationships in all aspects of your life.

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QUESTION OF THE MONTH

"With so much going on at work and so many demands on my time, as a leader, what can I do to get more engaged with my staff?"

ROXI'S ANSWER

Being PRESENT is all it's cracked up to be. That means that when you have a meeting with one or more of your staff, you are 100% there, listening and interacting so they feel heard - whether you agree with them or not. We all need to be "seen" by those who matter to us and you matter to them. This is why "managing by walking around" works and is worth the time it takes - but you do have to do it regularly and make it happen. What you

learn by doing this is its own reward and of great value to all parts of your leadership role.

Get to know your people and learn as much about them as they are willing to share. People have full lives outside and inside of work. Pay attention to the little things and the big things, like major events in their lives.

Engage them in your thinking and your vision, and help them to feel like they each truly belong on your team and that you value them. Let them get to know you as a person as well as a boss.

Here are 4 things we all need at work:

To believe that:

- 1. we are appreciated by our leader and co-workers**
- 2. our day to day work has meaning and we are part of something meaningful**
- 3. we bring value to our job**
- 4. that our organization is a good one and is doing good things in the world**

Investing time in your people has a very high ROI, whether you are building your team, sustaining your team, or getting to know how each of them "tick" so you can support and help them develop to serve the organization with their best selves. It is a bottom line strategy, and you'll likely enjoy your job a lot more as well!

To have YOUR question answered personally and perhaps chosen for this spot, go to: www.AskRoxi.com.

Scroll down the webpage to: Advice for Leaders. Ask Roxi Your Question Today!

NEW NEWS!

Roxi will be the Key Note Speaker at the National School Nutrition Leadership Conference in May '17 in Baltimore, MD

[To book Roxi for your Event, Contact her here...](#)

Roxi has expanded her Personal and Executive Coaching Practice to include the ICF Accredited Presence-Based Coaching Process

6 and 12 month contracts are now available. [Read More...](#)

Recommended Book: *Presence-Based Coaching* by Doug Silsbee

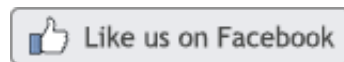
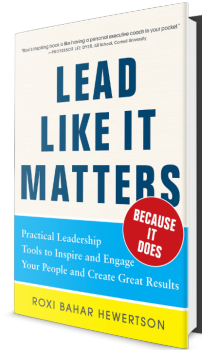
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MORE WAYS TO CONNECT WITH ME

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The [www.AskRoxi website](http://www.AskRoxi.com) is easier to navigate, and it's easy sign up for Roxi's **LEADING WITH IMPACT** course on-line, and get cool free stuff (i.e. 3 free course Chapters, and **FREE Couples Communication Survey**). I hope you'll visit and share all these resources with your network!

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