



JUNE 2014

ISSUE: 25



## INSIGHTS ON LEADERSHIP

Why Good Leaders  
Make You Feel Safe

Simon Sinek

A TED TALK WORTH WATCHING

Part One

**Ask Roxi**  
**JUNE**  
**Question**

Dear Roxi,

Since it's unlikely I can meet all my staff's summer flextime requests, am I better off meeting none of

Welcome to summer! I hope, like nature around us, you are rejuvenating and warming up (our friends in the north at least)! To kick off the season, I included a link above to a new **TED Talk** from Simon Sinek. He reminded me about a bottom-line leadership truth that we all know and sometimes forget in considering our own behaviors and actions. **Safety is THE** essential first step in any relationship. If we don't feel safe with each other, we cannot grow **trust**. And without trust, there is little chance that we will have or be able to sustain relationships of value.

That seems so obvious, and yet, it's almost like it hides in plain sight. Over the years, I have noticed many things about the leadership journey. In this and the next three newsletters, I will share 8 leadership insights I have included in the introduction to my book, *Lead Like it Matters...Because it Does* (McGraw-Hill October 2014). These eight "ahas" are overarching understandings that have significantly shaped the ways in which I teach, coach, write, speak, and live leadership in my work. I believe they are foundational in understanding the work each of us **must do** to lead well - at home and at work.

Let's get started with #1 and #2.

### **Insight #1: Knowing is the easy part. Doing is the hard part.**

The other seven insights are driven by #1. Some of the best-intended and least effective leaders I have known regularly read books on leadership and even more articles. They often know the buzz and the jargon, the latest trend in strategic planning, and the best way to build a new organizational chart.

Retaining this plethora of information in your brain is one thing. Integrating what you learn into your behaviors and actions and making it real for you and those you lead is a much bigger challenge. Why? Because changing our behaviors is one of the most difficult feats known to humankind. There will be days you might think it would be easier to jump across the Grand Canyon! Unlike jumping the Grand Canyon, changing behaviors *is* possible.

To do anything new or difficult, you must be truly motivated, and you must know exactly what you want to change. You need to identify what success looks like for you - not someone else's definition, but your definition. You also need to develop an ongoing focus, along with built-in reliable sources of feedback about your progress.

Once you combine knowing and doing, you are well on your way. Don't give up on something that matters to you. You can expect to slip and fall. You will screw up. I don't know anyone who rode a bike perfectly the first time. It's also important to celebrate your progress, because each step, no matter how small, gets you closer to your goal.

### **Insight #2: Leading people is messy!**

When we accept the role, assignment, or "mantle" of leadership, it is important that we know what we're really getting into. People are, and will always be, unpredictable. There is no "plain vanilla" workplace or workforce. Each person is unique, and that means leading people is complex, fun, interesting, frustrating, and yes, messy.

Life happens, and it's full of triumphs and tragedies, any of which can happen to any of us at any time. We can't predict surprises! Personalities, motivations and styles are all over the map. Leaders have to be ready for

them and saying 'no' to everyone?

### **ANSWER:**

No - you are not better off.

You are their supervisor, but the detail decisions are ones they should be making, not you.

Your job is to create and communicate the business needs and explain the boundaries and 'givens.' Then, simply expect your staff work within them.

Example,: let's say that during the summer you need your office hours to be 7:30-4:30 with a skeleton staff of 2 people before 9 and after 3.

Give the group a time limit and perhaps some guidance about how to "decide-how-to-decide" and then leave them alone.

Unless they are highly dysfunctional, they will figure it out themselves and happily OWN the results.

Whenever you can delegate a decision impacting your staff to them, it builds TRUST, engagement, and confidence.

As long as they stay within the boundaries you've laid out, congratulate them on making a good group decision.

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just about anything and everything.

Like it or not, every person brings their emotions to work. People are 24-hour thinking-feeling creatures. They can and often do behave differently from our preconceived perceptions and/or assumptions about them. Our values drive our decisions, which generates emotions that often show up in our behaviors. It's a kneebone connected to thighbone kind of thing!

Emotions, both happy and unhappy, are contagious and can spread like wildfire. We catch flyby emotions more quickly than we catch a cold. The idea that we can keep emotions out of the workplace is a lot of bunk.

Besides, we want people to feel when it suits us, right? We want them to be loyal, grateful, ethical, engaged, and nice to the people they work with and for. It's just the inconvenient feelings that we would like people to leave at the door. Sorry! It doesn't work that way. We all bring our 24-hour, lifelong selves into work, like it or not. In my experience, no matter how far under the surface those emotions are, sooner or later they will manifest themselves.

Leading is one of the most rewarding jobs anyone can have, if and only if leading is *joyful* for you. If you find that most of the time, you dread the messiness of leading people, stop doing it. Go out there and do something that you really enjoy. Don't try to lead people unless you have a passion for doing so. You'll make yourself sick and everyone else at work and home miserable. The human and business costs are far too high, and really - it's just not worth it.

**If you would like some ideas to help you apply each of these insights, click on the TIPS link below.**

**[TIPS TO HELP YOU APPLY INSIGHTS #1 AND #2](#)**

**STAY TUNED! LOOK FOR INSIGHTS #3 AND #4 IN JULY**

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**NEWS**

It's been a very busy spring and early summer for AskRoxi and Highland Consulting Group, Inc. Two books are well on the way, Executive Coaching needs are growing rapidly, while teaching and facilitating is continuous and fun. I am very much enjoying helping so many non-profit and higher ed leaders and their organizations. Exciting times!

[Highland Consulting Group, Inc.](#)

&  
[AskRoxi.com](#)

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## QUOTES

### QUOTES OF THE MONTH:

"To be successful, the first thing to do is fall in love with your work."  
Sister Mary Laurretta

"Try not to be a person of success, but a person of value." Albert  
Einstein

"Things which matter most must never be at the mercy of things which  
matter least." Johann Wolfgang von Goethe:

"Good treatment of workers results in similar treatment of customers."  
Ken Blanchard

## SPREAD THE WORD!

**I encourage you to share this newsletter with anyone you feel would enjoy it. Remember, past newsletters on a wide variety of leadership topics are located in the archive in the link above right. Just click and read. Enjoy!**

**See you in July!**

**Insightfully yours!**  
**Roxi Bahar Hewertson**  
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**HighlandConsultingGroupInc.com**



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