



Call

Thoughts on leadership
by Karl Pister



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A short, true story... My client gave me permission to share, but I will be vague on the details and location.

My surgeon client, a national-class physician with impeccable resume and decades of in-the-trenches highly- delicate surgeries, is a hands-on, 'let's figure it out' type of individual. She is highly demanding of herself, expects others to keep pace, and is sought after as a teacher and mentor, which services she extends willingly.

Sadly, her competence can be threatening at times to others who see life as a competition and not as a collaboration. This results in more than her share of nasty emails sent to her on procedural and protocol issues, usually sent by individuals who can find the time to blast away in writing, but 'can't find the time' to call?!?!





Just the other day she received such an email. And made some decisions that we can all learn from.

- 1.The email was antagonistic and accusatory. She easily could have responded in kind. She didn't. Instead...
- 2.She called the person. Surprising, I know, in this busy world. And what happened?
- 3.They talked for a bit. And my client, this superb and busy surgeon, connected.
- 4.And "I made her laugh". Laughter?!? Yep. And what did that result in...more connection. And agreement. And the person on the other end of the line changing her perspective of the person and the problem.
- 5.And now they can work toward resolution of the problem, since the personal agenda of discord isn't challenging anyone anymore. She diffused that by connecting.

Nice, Karl...and I suppose this ends with ...'and they lived happily ever after'??

OK, I will take that at face value for the first response from those that might have allowed cynicism to taint common sense.



However, I know the people I send this to. And you are not like that!

Admittedly, you can get busy sometimes and pop off an email that causes you grief and subsequent time to repair. But it is not generally your first response.

Common sense says that when there is a breakdown, that the first logical response would be to talk with the person on the other end of the situation. Note the word "with". Not "at", not "over", not "down to". No...."with".

Use email to establish a paper-trail that documents agreements, not just errors. And use it not to CC the world to make your points, but to build foundations of leadership which are, again, relationships.

In conclusion, back to my exemplary client...

Did she get on the phone, saying to herself, "I am making this call as a foundation for future leadership and influence"?

Of course not. She did it because it was the common sense and the best way to diffuse the situation.



And, as a consequence...she began to establish, with this individual, the foundations for future collaboration and influence.

That is how leadership works...the individual touch...one person at a time.





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