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It's the lazy days of summer - and I hope you are able to take a little time off to smell the roses, walk along the beach, or just sit on a park bench. We live in a world where there is so much to do...and "so little time." We have the same 24 hours in the day as everyone else. It's all dependent on how we choose to "spend" our time...or is it better to look at it as an "investment" of our time?

I'm looking forward to strolling on the beach...without my cell phone in my pocket. What about you?

Kristin

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#### HOW SELF-ABSORBED ARE YOU?

Last week, at the MPI World Education Congress, I went to the "Rendevous" Foundation event featuring the band, Train. (I'm a huge fan... the ringtone for my husband is a lick from the hit song, Get to Me).

There was one song (can't remember what it was) where the lead singer, Pat Monahan, took "selfies" using audience members' phones during the entire song. He must have done 50 or so. I remember thinking, "This guy is really talented. Not only is he singing the song perfectly, but he's able to reach out, grab a phone, position it so that his face and the owner's face is visible, take the picture, hand it back to the correct person. Rinse and repeat. One after another and not miss a beat! Now that's audience engagement!"

Ah, but it got even better...or worse, depending on how you look at it. Monahan then brings up two audience members - a man and a woman in their early 30's - to sing the two parts of the iconic Journey song, "Don't Stop Believin'."

They actually had pretty decent voices, which I think surprised Monahan. Yet, rather than enjoying the moment singing on stage with Train, both of them were absorbed with the joy of taking pictures and video with their phones. It was weird to watch.

At the end of the song, even Monahan said something like, "Hope you took enough pictures." [Disclaimer - I don't remember what he actually said, but it was something like that].

Now, I find great utility in my smartphone, but I realize it is like cocaine. Quite habit-forming with its alluring pings and notifications. Gosh, someone loves me! And when I have a free moment, it's easy enough to check my email to see what messages await. Glory be! More people want my advice and opinion! Someone liked my Facebook post!

As I sat on our deck in the summer breeze last night, I was watching the waves crash on the beach - doing absolutely nothing. I picked up my phone to....you got it, check my email. Automatic reflex. Pavlov's dog with a spare moment of time. Did I really need to check my phone? No. In a world where we are plugged in 24/7, with information at our fingertips, and Ellen Degeneres setting the tone that selfies are the new normal, when do we unplug?

Can we even allow ourselves the time to think, to be present with others? To enjoy the moment, whether we are singing with Train, breaking bread with our brethren, or taking in the beauty of the world?

Are we so self-absorbed that we don't even notice what is going on around us - in our family, our team, the workplace, our community or even the world? I'm resolving to put my phone down more often. How about you? #beinthemoment.

## **NAVIGATING NATURAL CONFLICT: THE NEW MANAGER'S DILEMMA - Joe Sherren**

After reading my last article, my niece Belinda Campbell Roth remarked: "Conflict is a result of the most important diversity - diversity of thought. Without diversity of thought, creativity is stifled. When we realize conflict isn't innately negative, and we learn to move past it, we will be rewarded with creativity and innovation."

How right she is. What a boring world we would have if not for differing opinions. But, it is also necessary to understand how that causes conflict. In my practice of leadership studies, I find that conflict is more paramount among new managers. The transition from being one of the associates to leading the frontline is a balancing act that can test the best of bosses. Often it is during this period I hear many managers ask- Did I make the right decision?

However, new managers should not fear conflict. They should embrace it as a part of the development process. Nevertheless, conflict must be resolved immediately and effectively. The more it is avoided, the worse it becomes, undermining company morale and effecting business results. Resolving internal conflicts effectively is one of the biggest challenges in today's business world.

One of the initial conflicts new managers experience right after being promoted is being torn between their relationships with people now reporting to them and their obligation to the organization and senior management.

My friend Charles Stout, a retired successful corporate executive, observed: "There are three sources of conflict which become quite challenging for new leaders."

1. **Shifting Loyalties.** New managers discover that life within the inner circle of leadership is often quite different than what it appears when looking in. When the chatter around the water cooler about management suddenly becomes about them, new managers struggle.
2. **Personal Relationships.** These are perhaps the most gut wrenching and the greatest cause for sleepless nights of a new manager. The initial conflict new managers experience right after their promotion is the tug of war between their personal relationships with people who are now reporting to them and their obligation to the

organization and good business acumen.

3. Maintaining a Balance Between Customer Versus Employee Satisfaction. The rub here is when the frontline says - I have done all I can. The customer says – But that is not good enough. Conflict arises when the influencing factors involve profitability or dollars from the customer. This leaves little choice where the compromise must take place.

As a corporate manager, I developed a ritual when promoting workers into their first management position. After their promotion was announced, I would walk them to their new office, tell them to take a long look, then shut and lock the door. I told them they are not getting the keys until they came in to my office and could discuss, without notes, what they knew about each employee who now reports to them. This forced the manager to truly get to know their people.

If a friendship already existed with someone now reporting to them, I asked the new manager to discuss their feelings with the individual about the new reporting relationship and develop a constructive way they could work together. Doing this reduced potential conflict and made a significant difference to morale.

When coaching new managers, I tell them to remember this phrase: “Firm, friendly, but not familiar.” It is OK to go to lunch with old coworkers, but not to go out drinking or socializing.

My question this week: “As a new manager, how are you going to balance your obligation and loyalty to senior management without destroying established employee friendships?”

## **WHERE SHOULD THE PANEL MODERATOR STAND?**

I am often asked where the moderator should be stationed. While there is no “right” place to be located, make your decision based on the the pros and cons of each:

- Standing at a Lectern. Although you have a place to put your notes, the lectern is a barrier between you and everyone else.
- Stand On the Side. The moderator stands stage right and is free to move about the stage. It may be harder to get eye contact and intervene with the panelists.
- Seated Among the Panelists. The moderator sits (rather than stands) stage right. It can be difficult to intervene.
- Seated Between the Panelists. Perfect for a debate format, this style enables you to intervene easily in either direction. It also makes you the focal point for the audience, splits the panel in half and makes it harder for the panelists to interact with each other.
- In the Audience. Often referred to as Oprah-style, this style makes you the center of attention. It is best when there are significant audience questions and interaction.

My preference is the last. While standing in the audience, the panelists tend to talk to the moderator, ergo to the audience. It's easier to involve the audience and gives me more latitude to change up the format when needed.

## **FROM THE BOOKSHELF: HOW A GROUP OF HACKERS, GENIUSES, AND GEEKS CREATED THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION**

Since I speak about innovation, a client bought me [Walter Isaacson's "The Innovators: How a Group of Hackers, Geniuses, and Geeks Created the Digital Revolution."](#) I was thinking it was going to be a dense treatise on the birth of computers, the Internet and the World Wide Web, but I was pleasantly surprised.

While I am sure the computer savants and pundits will quibble with the details, Isaacson weaves a compelling story for the layperson. That would be me. I still can't figure out how silicon chips work, but I have a better understanding of how they were invented. Better yet, this is a book about the process of innovating - that those who collaborate with others with a wide array of specialties are far more commercially successful than those who don't. Which, as a teamwork expert, is music to my ears!

In the telling of the story, Isaacson also serves up a dollop of a cast of characters involved - trying to show us the WHO behind the innovations and WHY they did what they did. Sometimes it's just a quick peak, but for the most part it's a nice balance between the technical descriptions and the personalities. And in fact, that's what keeps it interesting! Here are some other interesting tidbits:

- Al Gore never proclaimed that he "invented" the Internet. He "took the initiative in creating the Internet." He sponsored the Gore Act which allowed commercial networks (think AOL) to connect with the research network run by the National Science Foundation.
- The Internet is not the same as the World Wide Web. I had always thought the words were interchangeable!
- Innovations are layered with ideas that are handed down from others. To define "the inventor" was and will continue to be problematic.
- While collaborating with others, physical proximity will always be preferred.
- The most successful teams were led with people with complementary styles: a visionary and an implementer.

And the list goes on...

One other note: It's not a book you can read from cover to cover. It's pretty dense. I would read a chapter (maybe two) and then mull it over for awhile. The stories are still a bit "sticky" which is the sign of a good book!

**UPCOMING WEBINAR** Thursday, September 29, 2016

### **A Better Alternative to the Annual Performance Review**

Ahhh... the dreaded annual performance review. Bosses hate the paperwork and employees resent "the meeting." Why wait until the end of the year to give a performance review? In this webinar, international business transformation specialist, Joe Sherren, CSP, HoF, FellowGSF, will share his alternative to the annual performance review. Dozens of his clients have implemented this process with stellar results!

If you are responsible for writing annual performance reviews OR are the direct supervisor of an employee, then this webinar is for you! [Register here](#) today at [www.ExtraordinaryTeam.com/webinar-series/](http://www.ExtraordinaryTeam.com/webinar-series/)

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