



NARCISSIST

Chapter 5

It's All about You

Sent: Tuesday, December 31 at 4:00 pm

From: CEO/President

To: Gary B., VP Sales & Marketing

Subject: My feedback

I understand that you wanted me to wait for you on this, but that didn't seem like a good idea to me. So while you were on vacation I went ahead and had the agency present me with their concepts for the spring campaign you asked them to work on. I'm leaving you this feedback since I'll be on my semi-annual cruise when you get back—this way you can make revisions for me to look at once I've recovered from what I'm sure is going to be a nonstop party!

Frankly, I hate the creative. I get that it's strategic and the messaging targets our new demographic, but I just don't think the ideas are good ideas. The headlines sound like something my ex-wife would say and I just can't get that out of my head. Also, I've never liked yellow (studies show that most men don't so I'm not sure why you chose it) so the color scheme has to change.

Also, I haven't had the time to tell you this, but I'm up for a Marketing Innovation Award this year. I thought it would be more impactful to have the CEO on the nomination instead of VP of Marketing. I'm sure you'd agree. That said, it's important that they get this creative where I want it. I can't be embarrassed by shoddy creative at this prestigious award ceremony. The one category missing from my awards list is marketing, so I'm planning on winning this year.

Make it happen for me buddy!

Now this is putting your best leadership foot forward! It takes courage to tell it like it is. Ask for what you want. Better yet, demand what you want and expect nothing less. Remind yourself daily that this organization would not be what it is today without you—your intuition, your gut, your determination, and your selfless commitment to excellence. Your people need to know that the organization is a direct reflection of your exacting standards and yours alone. So make sure everyone knows where your bar is, then revel in watching them try to reach it.

As the ultimate leader, it's also important to make sure that your team understands that your calendar comes first, and you need think time first and foremost. Once you've established this, it won't be a surprise to them if you are unavailable when they need you or if they are forced to reengineer schedules for their own teams, vendors, or others. These are the problems you pay them to solve, so let them solve them. You simply don't have time to do their thinking for them.

Recognition—your recognition—is an important way both to secure the hierarchy you've worked so hard to achieve and to keep your competitors and other industry leaders believing that you are running the show (see Chapter 14: Managing Your Personal Brand), so be careful to give credit where credit is due: to you. You've paid your dues to get where you are, now reap the rewards!

Remember, it's all about you. If it wasn't for you, there would be no them.

Let's Get Real

Narcissistic Personality Disorder: People with narcissistic personalities really believe that the world revolves around them. They lack all ability to empathize and they have a deep and desperate need to keep the attention and focus on themselves.

This disorder is expressed through arrogant and self-serving behavior, and a lack of empathy for others. Narcissists need to be admired, revered, and respected at all times and often display overly confident, egomaniacal, and manipulative behavior. People with this disorder often times have lofty unattainable goals of fame or fortune, and they demand that those around them also work toward those goals.

Congratulations! If the email at the beginning of this chapter sounds like you, we've just saved you a ton of money in therapy fees trying to figure out why nobody really respects or likes you. And, if you don't recognize and change your behavior, that won't be the only expense you're likely to incur. Narcissistic behavior in leadership is one of the most common causes of dissent amongst employees. Where it's present, more often than not an employee may love the company, love their job, but ultimately their disrespect and dislike for you causes them to run for the hills.

Empathy is the key word here, and lack of empathy is at the center of narcissism and narcissistic behavior. Great leaders are empathetic in that they have the capacity to understand, share, and prioritize others' feelings and emotions. Your level of empathy is directly related to your ability to understand not only the needs of your employees but the needs

of your customers. In the case of your organization and those you lead, you will not be able to build a cohesive team or gain trust if you lack empathy. In the case of your customers, without empathy you will not be able to create business strategies for products or services that satisfy them.

So maybe it is all about you. Because if you're a narcissist, it's your lack of empathy that will lead to the failure of others and your business.

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(How Not to) Be a Leader

by Mary E. Marshall & Kim Obbink

(How NOT to) Be a Leader is the first in a series of how-not-to guides for newly minted leaders looking to avoid becoming feared or hated losers in the ivory tower or veteran leaders looking in the rearview mirror wondering where and why they ran off the road. Irreverent and hilarious, *(How NOT to) Be a Leader* shines a big bright spotlight on the oh-so-common mistakes that many leaders make when they plow forward through life and business without taking the time to really consider the effect their leadership is having on others. We've all seen and heard the horror stories of bad leadership, and hopefully many of us have been lucky enough to have been the benefactor of truly great leadership. Either way, if it's your turn at the top, *(How NOT to) Be a Leader* will help you understand what you can do to be a better leader by first understanding what you should never ever do; and if you are, why you should back up the truck, take another look at yourself and your leadership qualities, and do the work and self-reflection needed to get back on track.

Why this book series? Having been in the leadership trenches for a combined fifty years, we've seen a lot. Some good, some bad, and some really, really horrible. There was no guide for us, and we want to help all those leaders who will come after us. Not with a boring manifesto about a fictional leader who only exists in a book, but with real-life stories we've experienced or even perpetrated ourselves and vow never to repeat.

This book consists of twenty-four characteristics that you don't want to be known for. Not all twenty-four will apply to you and a few might resonate louder than others. What was it you heard in your last 360? Micromanaging doesn't work? You aren't listening? You want everyone to do it your way? You might have a few to work on, and our challenge to you is to choose three or four that seem the most immediate and start working on those. Once you've mastered them, take on a few more. And certainly share the book with those around you whose leadership styles need a little polish.

Should you accept this leadership challenge, you will be able to quickly identify twenty-four ineffective leadership traits and make changes to positively address them. Through the stories in this book, you will learn how to avoid the pitfalls of leadership, how to be a better leader, and, most importantly, how to pass good leadership on to those you lead.

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