



## Chapter 12

### **Drop Your Integrity**

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Remember to jot down what you said to Jen so you can practice it a couple of times when repeating it.

—BB

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There is a lot of loose talk about integrity as a defining characteristic of a good leader. It's just not true. It's a bunch of BS and the word itself is significantly overrated. If you look at any astoundingly successful leader, it's not integrity that's gotten them all the promotions, raises, and accolades from countless employees and clients. In fact it's just the opposite!

When you look closely at successful leaders, the more they've said one thing and done the opposite, the more they win! Regularly dropping integrity has been a cornerstone of the meteoric rise of so many great leaders in the corporate world. The reason this works so well is that most people want to believe what you say, so it's pretty easy to fool them. The key is to remember what you've said to whom so you can back up your stories and keep track of them.

Dropping integrity can be a tricky when you're leading a team, so some stealth has to go into it. Let's say you know an idea is a dog and you want to use this to further your own career. Get the team together and explain that you want everyone to appear to be working on the project, but, because you are concerned about their careers, you don't want them to work too hard on it. You know it's going to fail but you want to protect all of them. They'll

appreciate your sincerity and thank you for saving them from this loser of a project. Of course you don't really care about their careers, you just want to make sure that this thing sinks to the bottom of the bay faster than the *Titanic*. More importantly though, make sure you're not on it when it goes down. And if for some reason the damn thing floats to the top, you can blame the team for doing such a crappy job on it and fire a few of them for good measure. It's a win-win strategy for you and integrity didn't play any part in it.

Of course for this type of strategy to work in the long term, you will need allies, but you have to be very, very careful about whom you choose. Make sure it's someone with big ambition and no integrity as well. This can be a bit of a problem if you're trying to screw each other, so just make sure it's not a peer and always someone lower on the food chain than you. Someone in HR can be a good pick as they always have the dirt on the entire company, and with very little effort, you can almost always get it out of them. Ultimately, however, you have to be or at least act like you are better at this game than your ally. You have to be ready to drop your integrity at the first sign that the ally might be dropping theirs to screw you. You have to be ready to rat them out at the first sign they might be disloyal. This cannot be tolerated in anyone. Also, keeping rivals warring will serve you better in the long run. They never know who's screwing whom (sometimes literally). Do remember to keep notes or a journal or diary so you can remember what to use when you need it!

The higher than normal turnover will happen because you will have to fire anyone who has the temerity to question your integrity. Even if you have to make something up to fire them, the risks of keeping them are greater than a potential wrongful termination. Your truth can never be exposed. It's yours and for you alone to know. If indeed anyone figures out what you have done, remember: denial is not a river in Egypt, it's your first and last line of defense. Deny, deny, deny and blame someone else. Then act very hurt. Your basic lack-of-integrity defense strategy is deny, blame, feign hurt. Works every time! Look at all the leaders who have used this strategy and moved ahead in their careers! Unbelievable!

Of course, dropping your integrity can be used for all sorts of good. If the company is cash rich, figure out how you can use some, all in the name of business. Planning a trip to Italy with the family? Just figure out some client or business purpose why one of those days might be business, then expense the whole damn trip, first class of course, on the company. Seriously, you're having to interrupt your vacation to do business. It's the least the company can do. Oh, and be sure to put everything on one of your personal credit cards, then submit for reimbursement so you can get all those points! Even if the company frowns on it, you're in a leadership position, you do what you want. Don't ever let those damn bean counters try to shut you down. Fire their asses if they get too uppity. There are always more to fill that role.

Ultimately, there is no advantage to having integrity as a leader. It's just a stupid, chump move. And it's weak. Dropping your integrity for your own benefit is by far the harder move and takes more leadership skill. But the benefits far outweigh the downside. Be a leader, drop your integrity!

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## Let's Get Real

Regardless of what you read in the news about rich or successful leaders who regularly drop their integrity, it's not true. Their success is temporary. Their reputation as a cheater or liar is baked, and no amount of PR is ever going to cover up that ugly mess. They live in fear that someone is out to get them, and rightly so because of all the harm they have caused. You will also see those deceitful leaders who seem to defy logic, whose outright lies and outlandish, unethical behavior are jaw-dropping and there seem to be no consequences. Just wait, there will be. There are also those who will follow these leaders to the ends of the earth because these leaders have selectively tuned out all that does not fit their truth and have explained away the rest. This is called a cult. Sometime it takes awhile for them to be called out, but it always happens.

Integrity is yours. It's the calling card of good leadership and successful teams. Don't treat it lightly. Care for it and guard it with your life. You'll need it not only as a leader but as a person.

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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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