



Chapter 16

Tears: Your Power Drug

Sent: Friday, August 26 at 4:49 pm

From: CEO

To: Executive Team

Subject: Recent Feedback—Mandatory Meeting

Meet me in the conference room at 5:00 to discuss the conversations I've overheard all of you having about me. I'm not happy.

Whether you're a woman or a man, tears are your friend. Not so if you're some peon at the lower rungs of the corporate ladder, but if you're large and in charge, tears are truly your secret weapon.

Tears can be used so effectively and manipulatively that no one will ever catch on. When someone cries, most people feel the need to provide some kind of comfort or relief. The truth is they're secretly glad they're not the one crying, so everyone puts on a public show of sympathy. You want to use this phenomenon to your advantage.

If you're having trouble getting your team to come around to your point of view or if someone doubts your intentions (there may be a good reason for it, but let's not dwell on that), just begin to look down and cover your eyes ever so modestly. Don't say anything; let the silence do the heavy lifting. Then when you've worked up a good tear or two, slowly lift your head so they can see your red-rimmed baby blues. Once you've spotted the sympathy on their faces, you're on! It's show time, baby!

Keep silent for a few more minutes so it really sinks in that you're hurt, then do the

best that you can to fake genuine pain, and ask why anyone would question your integrity (remembering, of course, that it didn't have anything to do with your integrity, but you need to act as if it did). This will catch your audience totally off guard. Now you have the complete upper hand, so go in for the kill. Say something like, "I know what you've been saying behind my back about this, so go ahead and tell me to my face. I can take it." Your opposition will be so dumbfounded, they will completely forget why they disagreed with you in the first place. Of course, you didn't really hear what was being said behind your back because you just made that up, but you need to act as if you did to make this believable. They probably won't say anything because they have no idea what you're talking about. If, by chance, they do relay some gossip about you, so much the better. In either case, just look them directly in the eye and say, "I'm surprised by you and very disappointed and deeply ... hurt." (Pause and take a breath before you say *hurt*.) This always gets them and the rest of the team will be stunned, hoping you don't look in their direction next. They all know they've dissed you at some point and are deathly afraid you really do know what they said. Step one of mission accomplished.

Now for the coupe de grace: say, "I'm really disappointed in all of you. I had one simple idea I was trying to get through that would benefit all of you, and this is the reward I get. I'm deeply and profoundly hurt." Bingo! You will now get buy-in from the whole team for whatever you want. The biggest ass kisser in the room will suck up first and say he is so sorry and of course he supports you. One by one, they will all fall in line and presto changed! you win. See how easy that was? Tears are the magic elixir.

Another way to really use tears to your advantage is when you're faking passion about something. Tears are great at big gatherings when you're on stage to make a point about how passionate you are. Strategically stop midsentence as if you're choked up, so that you have the sympathy of the whole audience, and then tell them why you believe so passionately about whatever you are blathering on about. Touch your chest a few times, dab your eye once or twice; you'll have them eating out of the palm of your hand.

This is even more effective for a man because, when a guy cries we all stop and take a tenderhearted breath. Wow, this must be serious, and look how vulnerable he is? So listen, guys, work it; tears can be your best friend too.

Bottom line, tears are the ultimate tool to get your way. No one can say no to a crying boss, even if it's completely ginned up! And they will love your *sincerity*, which is really the kicker.

Let's Get Real

Never ever use tears or theatrics to manipulate people, it's a form of emotional abuse. Human beings are wired to have sympathy for others in pain, so when it appears as if someone is in pain, we automatically give up our own agenda for theirs. When authentic, this is an act of compassion and probably why we've survived as a species. But when used as a manipulative tactic, it's more than painful: it's painfully obvious.

Be real and be authentic. If you need to cry, do so, but if you're doing it in public make sure people know why. If you're upset about something from home and it bleeds into the workplace, say so. Don't let people assume that you're upset with them or with work. Ultimately, crying is not something you want to do on a regular basis; it's just not useful at work. If a situation warrants a genuine cry, whether you're male or female, it can be powerful. But, if used inauthentically, crying will leave you powerless.

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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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