



# DESPERATE

## Chapter 18

### **Be Best Buds**

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Sent: Wednesday, October 18 at 11:29 am  
From: Suzanne, VP Global Sales  
To: John, Regional Sales Associate  
Subject: Lunch? And Ouch!

Hey there,

How were your morning sessions? Mine were boring. This conference is a bust. Do you wanna skip the luncheon and just go out and get lunch on our own? At least this thing is in a fun city. But man, those margaritas last night were killers. I had a massive hangover through most of the speakers this morning. As usual you were hilarious John ... and I promise I won't tell anyone about your choice of karaoke song if you don't tell anyone about my missing shoe! Ha ha ha! Total walk of shame this morning through the hotel though, seems that guy didn't mind a little overtime with the one-shoed chick.

By the way, I can't have dinner tonight, I have to work on your review because I blew it off last night. It's due to the C.E. "HO" by Monday. She's such a skank I hate her.

Me

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This is the kind of special bond that makes an employee/employer relationship last. Not only is it an example of getting on the same level and seeing eye to eye with your direct reports, it shows that you're human, just looking to have a good time like everyone else.

It's true that it's lonely at the top. When you're a great leader, people distance themselves from you because they don't feel like they're on the same level as you. If you're really effective, they will even fear you. But great leaders need friends just like everyone else, so there's no reason not to reach out and forge a few of those friendships yourself. Bonds and friendships in the workplace can also offer you inside information from the desk-level workforce. Once you have their trust, they can tell you where to find performance problems, give you a better sense of the culture you're creating, and best of all, help prop up your confidence by reminding you how great you are and how much everyone adores you.

Business travel is the most effective method for creating some of these bonds. When scheduling business travel, be mindful of who will be joining you on the trip and use this opportunity to create lasting memories and tight bonds with a special employee who you already think highly of or are attracted to. Sharing a *what happens on the road stays on the road experience* with a subordinate is a sure-fire way of creating a bond that will result in a lasting friendship and give you an outlet for sharing details about your personal life that you wouldn't be able to share with just any employee. And hey, you only live once, so if it feels good in the moment, don't hold back. Once they realize that you have bestowed the gift of friendship and your most intimate secrets (or more!) upon them, they will be even more loyal to you and a better steward of your vision throughout the organization.

Remember, no one is immune to top down scrutiny, so when the heat's on you from above, it's important for your boss to see how much your team adores you. In the workplace, intimacy is hands down the best currency with which to buy loyalty!

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## Let's Get Real

Do not confuse stupidity with authenticity. Yes, leaders should be accessible, approachable, and authentic, but if you are in a leadership position, you should show some self-respect and self-restraint when it comes to developing intimate friendships and relationships in the workplace.

Creating healthy boundaries for yourself and making them known through your actions doesn't create distance between you and your employees, it creates the space you need to remain objective. You can be friendly without being *friends* in the traditional sense and certainly without exchanging knowledge or information that compromises the organization or damages your credibility. You can also be familiar and fun without being *one of the gang* by appreciating that those friendships do and should exist in the workplace, they just shouldn't exist with you.

When you buddy up to an employee, single someone out, and put your special rapport with them on display, it may satisfy your need to feel liked, to feel relevant, to feel wanted, but it puts them in a terribly awkward situation with both you and their peers. With you, they no longer have the space they need to challenge you, to earn your respect, or even to enjoy a genuine sense of success when recognized for their achievements. Recognition is one of the best drivers of productivity, but only when it's recognition for the right rea-

sons. With their peers, the results can be even more catastrophic when they are labeled a suck-up, which they undoubtedly will be thanks to you  
So be friendly, but find your own friends.

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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.

*Available now from [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) in print and Kindle formats.*

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