



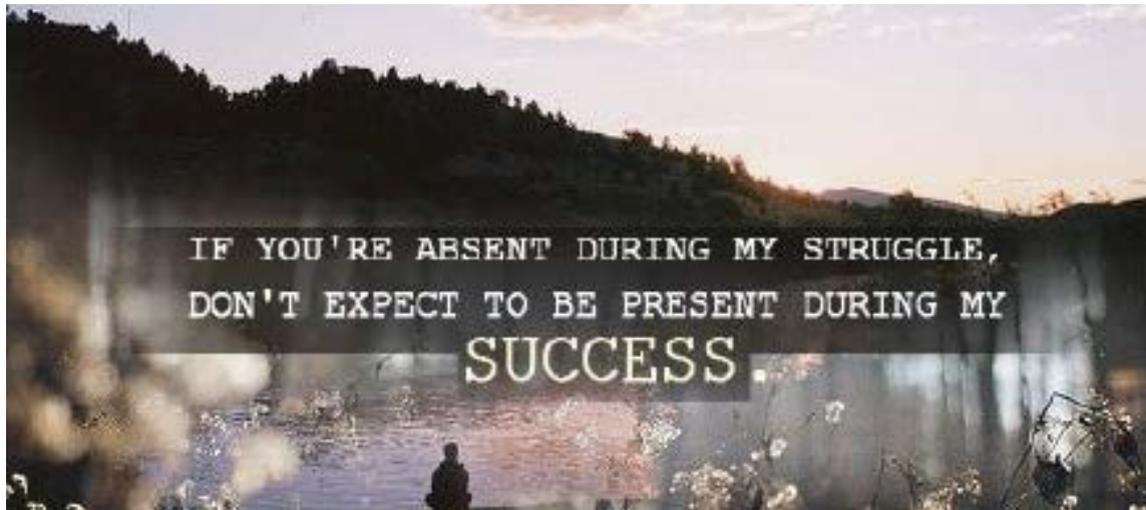
ARE YOU A VICTIM OF ABSENT LEADERSHIP? SPEAK OUT OR STEP OUT!

BY JOS WEESJES. INTERNATIONAL TRAINER

Throughout my career, both as a leader of teams and as a recipient of leadership, I have experienced the good, the bad and the ugly of leaders.

THE ROLE OF A LEADER IS FIRST AND FOREMOST TO CREATE AN INSPIRING ENVIRONMENT FOR PEOPLE TO GROW AND TO DEVELOP THEMSELVES

Despite all the corporate focus on employee engagement scores and metrics; there's an awful lot of leadership pain in organizations. My advice to people who are suffering from bad leadership is to either speak up or step out. There's nothing in between. Infinite complaining amongst colleagues, gossiping, or wishing times will magically get better will not do the trick.



Here's my angle: creating an inspiring environment. This has always been the key task of leaders and definitely in today's reality in which Millennials have no issue with challenging authority. In my work, I encounter and witness a lot of what I call 'absent leadership' in all echelons of organizations. From CEO's to managers who are leading teams of people; often they are just not present at times where their real leadership is needed. Examples are: not giving accurate feedback, leading team meetings by telling rather than listening, asking people to write their own performance evaluation, inability to show sincere interest in people on the actual work floor and the list goes on.

As a leader are you creating that inspiring environment? Here's a few suggestions:

1. ONE--ON--ONE TIME

Often I get a sad response from people when I ask what was the last time you had a meaningful and regular personal development conversation with your leader?



“Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others.”

—Jack Welch



Travel Tip of the Month:

1. Don't pack valuables in your checked bag. Among the items that were stolen out of checked bags over the past few years are a \$5,000 watch, gold rings, iPads and cameras, according to a CNN report



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This is not a once in a year thing. It's ongoing and at regular set times. This will give each of your team members the clarity they need to understand what it is you want from them. Only via one-on-one coaching feedback you are able to actually understand in which direction your team member is going and how to further develop.

2. ADJUST YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE

One way to see your star players exiting your organization is to micro manage them and conversely, newly hired talent will leave fast if you don't give them the guidance and direction they need from the start. Your role is to identify and understand the development stage for each of your team members and apply that collaborative, coaching, mentoring or directional leadership style to match their individual needs.

3. BE PRESENT

No more "my door is always open when you need me". This is so yesterday 'leadership' speak. Very often leaders are telling me that they can't attend their team's training session because they have to prepare a budget presentation or do something for 'corporate'. You will need to actually engage by truly listening what your team is telling you, get out of your comfort zone (e.g. your office) and walk the floor and just talk to people to hear what is going on. It is true that I actually have coached senior executives teaching and showing them how to do this! Learn from your team, yet make them accountable to execute their own ideas.

4. INSPIRE

Are you truly inspiring, supplying that 'fresh air' to your team, your meetings, your organization? Or is it same? How much do you know about your people, their dreams, what makes them tick or what pisses them off? Are you able to share inspiring stories and place yourself in a vulnerable position so that they can see the real person, you!

So...what to do if all of this is not really happening? Remember that I started by saying that as an employee you should be given the right environment to develop yourself. As a recipient of leadership you are truly in charge of your own development to never stop learning and this means that if this gets blocked because of bad leadership you have these options:



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SPEAK OUT

Make yourself part of the solution and speak out to your leader about what is not going right. Come prepared with suggested solutions to the problem and be ready to take on accountability to execute ideas. In case your leader is acting way out of line, not lined up to the company's or your own personal values you need to speak up to your leader's boss and HR to report your observations. Too often executives get away with this because everyone 'talks' about the issue yet nobody wants to speak up. Afraid to lose your job over this, guess what? If you speak out and nothing gets done or worse you'll lose your job. You now know for sure this organization isn't right for you.

Do not just gossip about leaders and what they should be doing, how they missed the mark at that recent meeting or how they lock themselves up in their offices all day. If you observe this in your leader, take a risk and ask if he or she is open for feedback. You might be surprised how this may open eyes and creates a realization like "I never knew I came across like this..". Don't be a part of the gossip crew.

STEP OUT

If all of the above is not working, you have to be honest to yourself and make that judgment call. Indeed a key reason people are leaving a job is because of bad leadership. If your personal growth is blocked because of non--inspiring leadership and you did take time to influence things yet nothing is changing, you owe it to yourself to make that decision to leave.

Don't underestimate the power of making a decision and how much energy that will give you...



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