



The Leadership Letter

Mythical Thinking

How your tried-and-true modes of thought may be holding you back

According to Jim Nightingale, author of *Think Smart, Act Smart*, intelligent people can sometimes fall into the dangerous trap of “mythical thinking.” In this state of thought, one adheres so strongly to a belief system that they often miss the obvious. Here are some things that can happen when you rely on “mythical thinking”:

- You **commit yourself to a specific way of thinking** and it becomes difficult to see things from any other perspective.
- You may find you only have two options when working with a group: **agree to group think or chance being shunned.**
- Your **personal gain** from the myth –your ego, status with the group, and perks– lend power to the myth.
- When a particular myth has enjoyed long-time dominance and brought you **previous success**, it becomes that much harder to let it go.
- You need clear and objective

data to break free from the myth. For example, if you firmly believe that only Swiss watchmakers can create a good timepiece, you might never recognize the ability of other countries’ manufacturers to craft exceptional watches. **Any data contrary to the myth would seem unconvincing**, and you would only see the data that support your myth.

As a leader, it is important to sometimes put all of your experience, wisdom, and myths aside and act as if you have just entered the field of early childhood care and education for the first time. If you had no background and only your future ahead of you, what would you do? How might your perspective change? If you haven’t asked yourself those questions in a while, give it a try and see what you’ve been missing!

Source:

Business Management Daily, <http://www.businessmanagementdaily.com/articles/9906/1/Avoid-the-mythical-thinking-trap/Page1.html#>

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Tips for Non-Profit Boards

1. **Make your meetings time efficient.** Start and end on time. Stick to your agenda and table discussions for the next meeting if necessary.
2. **Serve the people you lead** by rolling obstacles out of the way of decision making. Provide the necessary resources so informed decisions can be made.
3. **Follow up** in the days after to insure that everyone stays positive and energized. Make sure that promises made at the meetings were kept and followed through on.
4. **Monitor membership satisfaction.** By creating a blog on which people can share anonymous comments about what it is like to be a part of your organization. A blog will quickly provide more useful feedback than a suggestion box.
5. **Eliminate errors in your written documents** by changing the font and increasing the type size before proof-reading them. You will detect errors more easily.
6. **Express your concerns outright.** When you go into a meeting, clear the air by saying what is in your mind. The purpose of meeting is to get things done, so put everything out on the table.
7. **Keep your organization on the leading edge** of new trends by doing business with other organizations who are cutting edge. The forces they exert from the outside will keep you from going stale.
8. **Show your board members that you know what it is like to be in the trenches.** Effective leaders know it is hard at the top, but they also remember what it was like at the bottom.

Source: Hindery, L. (2005). *It Takes a CEO: It's Time to Lead with Integrity*. New York, NY: Free Press.

How to Make a Keynote Address Your Own

Are you nervous before addressing a large group? Here are some pointers for calming those jitters and having a good time.

- **Be prepared!** Rehearse before every talk. Talk in front of a mirror, ask a friend to critique your speech, time yourself. Practice a minimum of an hour for each speech.
Relax first. Take a deep breath, go into the restroom and yell! Listen to classical music, whatever it takes.
- **Visit the room before-**

hand. Visit early to get a feel for the location, the set up, the equipment. Test all of the technical aspects to make sure they are working. Know who can help you if they aren't.

- **Begin with getting your audience's attention.** Start with a startling fact, gripping piece of news or a historical anecdote all relevant to your topic. Don't begin by thanking a bunch of people.

- **Make it your own style.** It is truer and more compelling.
- **Use your own stories.** Your audience is more apt to trust you and what you have to say.
- **Bring passion.** If you care, your audience will. Aside from your content, your passion is the most important ingredient.

Source: Nycz-Connor, J. Top Public Speaking Don'ts. *Washington Business Journal*.

8 Questions for Potential Board Members

When evaluating potential Board members, it's important to remember that a resume can only tell you so much. To get a firm grasp on how a particular person will perform on your Board, try asking them these questions:

1. What amount of time and effort are you willing to contribute to this organization?
2. What sacrifices are you will-

ing to make?

3. Where does joining our board fit among your other priorities?
4. What experience and intuition with our members or the field of early care and education do you have?
5. What contributions are you willing to invest?
6. What relationships and key

contacts do you bring with you?

7. What special knowledge and expertise do you have?
8. What areas of synergy do you see with us that will allow us to work well together?

Source: Pinkett, R. (2007). *Campus CEO*. Chicago, IL: Kaplan Business.

What to Expect from Generation Y

According to several studies, as many as 70 million young people will be entering the multigenerational work force. This generation, who are not yet thirty, perceive the workplace as no generation before it.

Generation Y, also described as echo boomers, and millennials were born between 1977 and 2002. As they graduate from college and join the workforce, they bring with them values and expectations that differ from their predecessors. According to a study by Bruce Tulgan, of Rainmaker Thinking, they hold high expectations of themselves and others. They want to be treated fairly by their managers and co-workers, they expect to work faster and better than previous generations, and view work as a lifelong learning process.

This group, unlike those who preceded them, have been raised by "helicopter parents" who have pampered, nurtured and programmed them with a slew of activities since birth. Tulgan describes them as "both high performance and high maintenance. As a result many of the traditional management techniques used in today's workforce are not effective with this group. They can be unresponsive to commanding supervisors. They often question, don't know when to stop talking, and often speak their mind. They are not afraid to challenge the status quo, they have technological savvy and value independence.

Gen Y's have financial smarts. They were raised during a time of financial insecurity, layoffs, and the dot.com bust. They are savers and investors. Purchase, a New

York based Diversified Investment Advisors group, conducted a survey which showed 46% of those working over the age of 25 are already saving for retirement, 49% say retirement benefits are an important factor in their job choice. Among those eligible, 70% contribute to a 401K plan.

Work-life balance is real to this group. They want jobs that are flexible, with telecommuting options with an opportunity to go part time or leave the workforce when children are born. They believe that life is short and value it.

This group is very skeptical of employee loyalty. They expect to change jobs. This is a generation that can easily multitask –they were raised with e-mail, BlackBerry phones, and cell phones.

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*Promoting Quality Care and Education for
Young Children and Their Families*

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The Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA) is a regional organization committed to promoting quality care and education for young children and their families. SECA is committed to providing leadership and support to individuals and groups by:

- *Enhancing the quality of young children's lives through early childhood care and education.*
- *Supporting families in their roles of caring for their children.*

Fostering the professional growth and status of individuals working with young children and their families

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According to Tulgan, "Gen Y's are like Gen X's on steroids. If you thought there was a clash in the workforce when Generation X came into the workplace, that was a fake punch. The haymaker is coming now.

Many conflicts are occurring over Gen Y's casual dress. Resentment can arise over a host of issues, but this generation is accustomed to flip flops, tattoos, and Capri pants. This group has grown up

getting constant feedback and recognition from parents and teachers and now demands instant feedback from management. They often feel resentment and lost if feedback is not given on a regular basis. This is the most child-centered generation ever! Their expectations are different than previous workforces. They expect to be told how they are doing.

More than 60% of employers say they are experiencing tension be-

tween employees, according to a survey by Lee Hecht Harrison, 70% of older employees are dismissive of younger workers' abilities and nearly 50% of employers say that younger employees are dismissive of the abilities of older employees.

Source: Armour, S. (Nov 6, 2005). The new workplace mix. *USA Today*. Retrieved from http://www.usatoday.com/money/workplace/2005-11-06-gen-y_x.htm

Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things.

-Peter F. Drucker