



All serious
daring starts
from within...

~Harriet Beecher Stowe

Book Corner : *Courage, The Backbone of Leadership*

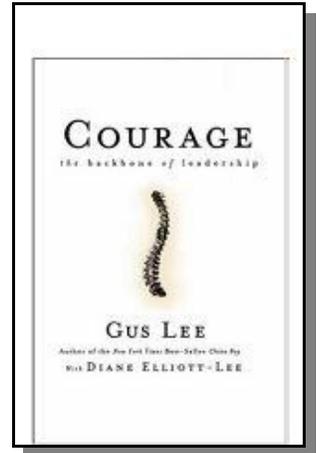
Courage, according to Gus Lee, is “facing fears, acting for what is right, correcting wrongs in oneself and addressing problems.” Courage can be developed and strengthened through practice -- so it’s something we all can have.

According to Lee, courage is one of only three high core values; integrity and character being the other two. He challenges us as readers to identify our core value and encourages us to consider these three.

By sharing stories of people who have learned courage, Lee helps us to see what it takes to be courageous. He shares specific tools for

- courageous communication
- courageous leadership
- courageous problem solving
- resolving high end conflicts

This book is a good one to add to your library on leadership!



Working with Skeptics

Question: *I work with a couple of very skeptical people. Nothing is ever good enough, nor taken without some doubt. It drives me nuts. What advice can you give me?*

Collaborations: To make sure we are on the same wave length, our dictionary defines *skeptical* as “1. *tending not to believe things but to question them*, 2. *marked by a doubting attitude*.” If that is the same as what you are encountering, here are several thoughts as to how you might more effectively work with a skeptic.

Indeed the burden is on you to figure out how to be more effective working with people. Asking questions such as yours is an excellent start. It indicates that you are searching for how **you** can be more effective. That is enormously different than trying to figure out how to change another person.

We all tend to be creatures of habit, working in the same ways and trying the same things over and over again. Try something new. Try something different. There are many, many more ways to go about doing our jobs than we ever imagine. Besides, you are aware of the definition of insanity that says: “insanity is doing the same things over and over and expecting different results.”

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Working with Skeptics

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Our first suggestion is to honestly examine yourself and the quality of work. Have you earned credibility by the thoroughness and quality of your work? Or have you produced less than complete research, less than well thought out and logical work products, etc.?

Probably all of us occasionally and some of us repeatedly have earned the skepticism of others. It is important to know ourselves and to own criticism that is valid. And, if it is a valid criticism, then correcting incomplete or sloppy work habits is the first course of action. If that is the case, earning others confidence will not happen overnight so be committed to it for the long haul.

Most people are happy with a good idea no matter where it came from. Skeptics seem to be concerned not only with the idea, but also with its origin, or its pedigree so to speak. Start by discussing this issue: not just the idea but its origin, history, relevant background.

Rely on primary sources of data. Can you quote studies; do you have research to back up your points? Anecdotes, stories and hunches are fine for parties but skeptics are usually really good at discounting stories and secondary research. Learn to rely on primary research.

If you have done your homework and your work product is of good quality, then stand firm against the blitzkrieg of questions. Defend your points, argue your case... and “don’t let them see you sweat.”

Give credit to the skeptic for the focus on quality of work, and quality of data their questions and doubts have produced in the past. Value the contribution from their questions. The key, as in all relationships, is to acknowledge and genuinely value the other person’s position. That is the starting point from which to work. In other words value and identify with their position.

Additionally give them as much credit for the idea or work product as is possible. It’s a smart strategy

since most people are reluctant to criticize their own ideas.

Many skeptics are, or can get, quite emotional. The irony is that they generally hate emotional arguments. Therefore it is important to remain professional, dispassionate and super rational when you present your arguments. Resist any temptation to scream, or worse yet to attack – those are polarizing tactics and will only worsen the situation.



There is no reason to get upset; it is just the way of doing business with this person. In order to be more effective you must start from where they are. If they don’t believe you, bring in reinforcements or someone they do tend to believe. If there is no one in that category, bring in someone they respect.



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Personality Styles in Meetings

Many of you are familiar with psychological type. You may know about it through familiarity with Interaction Styles™, the Myers Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI) or some other tool or model. One particular aspect of these models relates to the way people process information.

Some of us process information verbally (externally) and others process silently (internally). This difference can create challenges and frustrations as we interact with others, particularly in meetings.

This article will clarify how people process information and will offer tips to make space for both types of processing in your meetings.

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Different Ways to Process

People with a more external process tend to “think out loud.” What this means is that they literally think as they talk. When they make a statement, it may be just an idea or hypothesis – it is not necessarily, and frequently isn’t, a final conclusion. By contrast, people with an internal process are much more likely to think things through before making a statement. So, when they make a statement, it is more likely to be their conclusion.

The frustration for internal thinkers comes when a number of people in the meeting repeat information already stated. Verbal thinkers find it easier to know what they think if they say it. In meetings, you will note a number of people repeating the same thing – this is each individual’s way of processing.

Verbal thinkers get frustrated when the internal thinkers don’t speak. Internal thinkers are more likely to think things through and then speak when they have a clear response. So, the dynamic is – verbal thinkers typically use more of the “air time” in a meeting and internal thinkers use less.



Since the purpose of a meeting is often the exchange of ideas to solve a problem or make a decision, this imbalance can favor the ideas or input of the external thinkers.

How do you adjust your meetings to hear from everyone?

- Provide an agenda in advance so internal thinkers can prepare for the meeting. Be sure each agenda item also identifies what will happen during the meeting on that item (brainstorm, decision, share information, etc.)
- Ask each participant that you haven’t heard from, “Do you have another view or anything to add?”
- If you are an external thinker, consider writing your thoughts on paper instead of repeating what someone else has already said.

- If you are an internal thinker, alert the facilitator when you have something to contribute, rather than waiting to be called on.
- External thinkers: Start by saying, “I’m just thinking out loud” This lets others know you haven’t reached a conclusion yet.
- Internal thinkers: Speak before you have finished your thinking, and say “I haven’t thought this all the way through yet, however” This puts your thoughts into the group for others to build on.
- Consider having two meetings instead of one.

Meeting one can identify the issues and generate ideas. Meeting two can bring the issue to closure. The break between allows time for processing.

Try these tips. You’ll be pleasantly surprised at the results of your meetings!

Susan Gerke

is the president of Gerke Consulting & Development and “helps people work better, together.” Susan's focus since 1989 has been in designing, customizing and implementing leadership and teamwork programs meeting the needs of executives, managers, and employees in a wide number of companies and industries.

Application of her skill and knowledge has been in facilitation, consulting, curriculum development, and coaching. Susan has developed and delivered experiential programs in the areas of *group dynamics, team basics, mentoring, and facilitation skills*. She has worked with global teams and has certified facilitators around the world to deliver management, leadership, and team offerings.



A recognized expert on remote leadership and teaming, Susan is the co-author of *The I in Team ... Accelerating Performance of Remote and Co-located Teams*, and *Quick Guide to Interaction Styles and Working Remotely*.

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A graduate of the United States Naval Academy, Dave is a retired Navy Captain. As a Navy pilot he was shot down and spent 5 & 1/2 years as a POW in North Vietnam. His book *The Ways We Choose: Lessons For Life From A POW's Experience* is in it's third printing.



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Holiday Stress

The holidays are upon us! For many people the winter holiday season is a very stressful time of the year. Some of the stress is psychological, such as missing loved ones, having unrealistic expectations, experiencing family conflict, etc. Some of the stressors are physical – eating and drinking too much and skipping regular exercise. Some of the stress is due to the financial impact of buying gifts and decorations, and the expense of entertaining both friends and family. Here are a few tips to manage your holiday stress:

Food and Drink:

- o Take the edge of your appetite by having a small healthy snack before attending a party.
- o Visit the buffet table just once.
- o After one or two drinks, switch to water or a diet drink.

Finances:

- o Create a budget and manage to it.
- o Create an envelope for each person you are buying gifts for and put the budgeted amount in the envelope. When the money is gone, stop buying for that person.



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