

Chart Your Change Now Newsletter

Change Your Thoughts and Change Your Life

November Issue 2009 - Vol 4, Issue 9

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MY THANKSGIVING STORY

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Dear Reader,

"God grant me the courage not to give up what I think is right even though I think it is hopeless." ~Chester W. Nimitz

Below the Waterline Behaviors



Have you ever come across someone at work whose behavior is quite rude and appalling and yet he/she passes under the radar. It's as if the behavior is not seen and yet it takes a distressing toll on the workplace. Below the waterline behavior has been defined as "actions such as making false accusations, glaring, discounting others' ideas, backbiting, gossiping, constantly criticizing, giving people the silent treatment, making impossible demands, etc. All are examples of not treating people with the respect they deserve." Bullies, in particular, tend to single out their intended targets when no one is watching. A bully is someone who has found a behavior that works because he or she has identified opportunities and others as victims. As my mentor would say, you cannot have a tyrant without a victim. This speaks to a victim mindset. We have all read stories and have seen movies where one day, the "victim" stands his/her ground and confronts his/her harasser.

In the "Shawshank Redemption," the "victim," Andy Dufresne, took about 20 years to achieve his deliverance from his aggressors, the warden and a guard. There were mitigating circumstances. In the end, he not only escaped, but made it possible for others to be freed from all future transgressions by the aggressors. It was beautiful to watch.

The hero, Andy, defies the warden and is repeatedly punished. He figures out another way to release himself from this tyranny and this has a profound retribution effect on his bullies. He escapes, reaches the river and is washed clean of his past by the rain - above the waterline, while his nemesis is symbolically drowning below the waterline (his bad behavior takes a toll). The lasting take-away from this tale, is that redemption works both ways. There is a kind of karmic dust sprinkled on both villain and hero.

Sometimes confronting the bully takes on a more indirect approach. Breaking the chains in which tyrannical bullies encircle the workplace require a commitment to self. How important is it to your well-being and happy state of mind?

In the book "Crucial Confrontations," there's a piece about deciding when to speak up and there are three questions to

help you decide. We can always find reasons for remaining silent and we know that it often leads to unresolved problems. Ask yourself the following to make sure you're not avoiding something you should confront:

- Am I acting out my concern?
- Am I telling myself I'm helpless?
- Is my conscience nagging me?

Taking action may require support from others, and external resources to help you. When you do take action, remember your triumph and congratulate yourself on standing your ground.

November has now included a Freedom From Bullies in the Workplace Week -- a national awareness movement sponsored by [Workplace Bullying Institute](#) to eradicate bullying by combining public education, help for individuals, employer solutions and legislative advocacy. In many workplaces this bellow the waterline behavior is not easily identified. It does not fall into the category of sexual, racial, gender orientation harassment -- but we know it exists!

One of the tenets of coaching is to respect the client's humanity. This goes beyond giving the respect people deserve. It embraces the concept that we see the foibles, flaws, issues and behaviors of others in the light of the journey we are all taking and know that we are all at different intersections and even on different roads and to respect where people are at any given point in time. **Nevertheless**, we can set boundaries and teach others not to cross them.

I welcome your thoughts, and/or your story of a journey you have made or are making regarding bullies in the workplace. Go to my blog [Chart Your Change](#) and leave your comments.

Check out my Thanksgiving story, The Banquet Parable, in this issue.

NOVEMBER IS GET ACQUAINTED MONTH. Join me in a free teleclass to discuss the biggest concerns people have about their jobs, their workplace and their future. [Contact me for dates.](#)

Are you laid off, transitioning, in job search mode and feel stuck? You're not alone. Get yourself into my small group coaching program and get the help to propel you forward with masterful coaching, valuable tips and support throughout your journey. [Contact me for the next group start date.](#)

To experience a complimentary coaching session, click on [Coach Me.](#)

A Thanksgiving Tale **The Banquet Parable**

"The line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between political parties either - but right through every human heart. ~Alexander Solzhenitsyn

I heard this story over 30 years ago and never forgot it.

A banquet is being held in the neighborhood of heaven, while a similar banquet is being held in the vicinity of hell. Each long table is covered in white damask table clothes. There is an abundance of roasts, casseroles, soups, spreads, a variety of fish, crustaceans, delectable grilled, sautéed, and dressed vegetables with scrumptious international foods and pastries to put a French patisserie to shame.

In each banquet hall, there are 24 seats at the table, 12 on each side so that guests are facing each other. All the guests, both in heaven and in hell, unfortunately have their arms in casts (from their shoulders to their wrists), and positioned in such a way as to have their arms extended out in front of them.

The guests in hell are really miserable. They can reach for the food, but they cannot bend their arms to reach their mouths. They couldn't be more wretched. They just sit there looking at all the delectable food and starve.

The guests in heaven also have casts on their arms, but they figured out that while they can't feed themselves, they can feed someone else and that someone else can feed them. They all have a good old time feeding each other enjoying the great abundance of food.

So, the question is, in which one of the above zip codes are you living? Are you a Bedford Falls resident or do you live in Pottersville?

Have a comment, join me on my blog, [Chart Your Change.](#)

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Have a Joyful Month,

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