

This book presents six Principles for becoming radically different at work and for managing workplace relationships with honesty and authenticity.

Management Courage: Having the Heart of a Lion

By Margaret Morford

Order the book from the publisher BookLocker.com

<https://www.booklocker.com/p/books/12952.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**



MARGARET MORFORD

MANAGEMENT
COURAGE
HAVING THE HEART OF A LION

Copyright © 2006-2023 Margaret Morford

Print ISBN: 978-1-958889-24-4

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

First Edition: 2006

Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., Trenton, Georgia, U.S.A.

Printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data

Morford, Margaret

Management Courage: Having the Heart of a Lion by Margaret Morford

Library of Congress Control Number: 2006928719

BookLocker.com, Inc.

2023

Second Edition

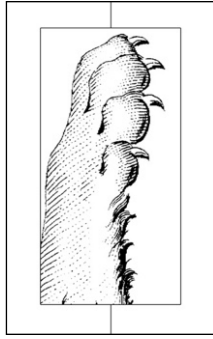


TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

FIRST PRINCIPLE

Be Painfully Honest 3

SECOND PRINCIPLE

Never Treat People Identically 23

THIRD PRINCIPLE

Don't Use Individuals or Policies as a Crutch 41

FOURTH PRINCIPLE

Ask For and Give Real Feedback 55

FIFTH PRINCIPLE

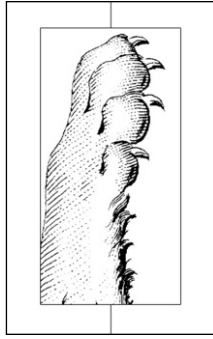
Take the Blame 69

SIXTH PRINCIPLE

Leave Soul-Sucking Situations 83

MANAGE COURAGEOUSLY

95



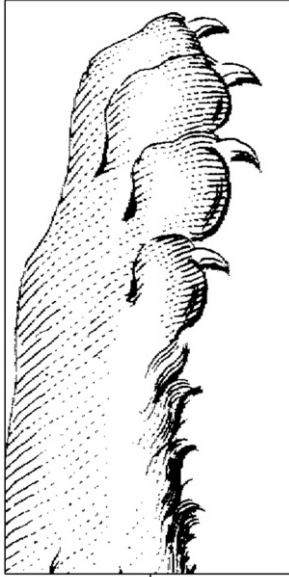
INTRODUCTION

I AM A BUSINESS HERETIC. Many of the strategies recommended in this book are contrary to what we are told by business experts today. The honesty and emotional involvement crucial to *Management Courage* are diametrically opposed to the “spin” and message-management we get in our daily lives — especially our work lives. It takes real courage to manage against the norm. *Management Courage* will make you different from your fellow managers. Some days, that will make you feel good about your job. Other days, it will isolate you. But make no mistake. Ultimately, your use of these strategies will pay huge dividends in your professional life. You’ll be the type of manager you’ve dreamed of being — and the kind of manager people dream of working for. So I invite *you* to become a business heretic too, and take your career to a whole new level!

On a personal note, I am humbled by all of you who asked if I had a book you could read — who thought what I had to say was meaningful. Now that the book is alive and

kicking, I suspect some may say it is too emotional or too spiritual to be a business book. That's exactly what's wrong with work today. It's not emotional *enough*, or it *wears* on the spirit rather than *feeding* the spirit. Others may say this book contains too many stories about my own career. Yet, if I'm offering examples of failing at Management Courage, whose career could I better use than my own? This book was created for experienced managers who need a resource that encapsulates the highest ideals for which they constantly strive. It also is for young managers who seek principles on which to launch their careers, who do not want to learn by trial and error as most of us have done. Finally, some may say *Management Courage* is too short to be taken seriously. I hope it is short enough that people will read it!

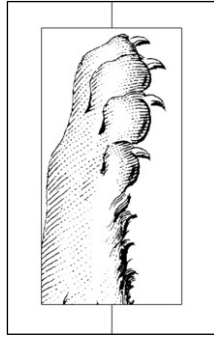
chapter



one

THE FIRST PRINCIPLE: *Be Painfully Honest*

“Management Courage requires not just honesty, but being the most honest you can be in every situation.”



CHAPTER ONE

TODAY'S WORKPLACE IS IN CRISIS. Thanks to absurd “one size fits all” strategies that dangerously lag behind our rapidly changing workplace, managers are demoralized, frustrated, and all too often, parties to conflict.

The result? Far too many workplaces are under-performing and at grave risk of stagnating or going out of business because they will be unable to attract or retain the people needed to lead their organizations forward.

The Revolutionary Solution “Management Courage”

The solution to today's demoralized, unmotivated workplace is a powerful shock therapy I call Management Courage.

What is Management Courage?

First, let me tell you what it *isn't*. It *isn't* about avoiding pain, going through the motions, or doing things “because

we've always done it this way," simply so you don't rock the boat.

You know those TV ads for the U.S. Marine Corps? They stress that they DON'T want just anyone to enlist. Rather, they're looking for "a few good men."

Well, Management Courage is a lot like that. It's not for the complacent or faint of heart.

It's for those with the good old-fashioned gumption to choose a harder course of action in the short-term — one that guarantees unpleasant short-term results — so you, your organization, and your employees can profit from a MUCH better result in the long-term.

Why You *Need* to Take "The Road Less Traveled"

In the following chapters, I'll shed clear, powerful light on the six Principles of Management Courage. I'll show you exactly why each is crucial to this revolutionary management action plan, and how each one will help you transform yourself and your employees into passionate, empowered, highly-energized performers who will absolutely maximize your organization's potential.

I'll also show you how you can become the type of manager people WANT to work hard for, one who brings out the absolute best in everyone you supervise and one whom the very best employees refuse to leave, even during the most challenging of circumstances.

Let's face it. Courage is in short supply today. But because it's so rare, it's highly valued — by employers, managers,

and employees alike. When I ask people to discuss the most courageous thing they have ever seen a manager do, they speak of these acts with reverence and awe.

Manager's Mantra:

People spend more time at work than anywhere else. They want the experience to be meaningful. They want to work for managers who want to make a *difference*.

Remember — people yearn for more value in their work than their paycheck. This deep-seated need has never been more acute than in today's marketplace. With the recent scandals in corporate America, employees are crying out to work for managers they trust, managers who step up even when it's hard.

How Principle One Led to the Larger Concept of “Management Courage”

The birth of the concept of “Management Courage” came without the proverbial “bang” that normally heralds the beginning of something big. It came from an off-hand remark made in a class I teach called, “Effective Performance Appraisals — The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly.” One day, a particularly hostile manager in the class asked, “So tell me . . . How do I motivate my star employee, when all my company allows are 3% raises?”

A deafening silence fell over the class and everyone froze. Before answering, I asked the class members for clarification of their company's raise process. "Do I understand that while you get 3% for raises, you aren't *required* to give everyone 3%? It's actually 3% of your entire annual payroll? And you get to decide how to disperse those monies. Isn't that right?"

Everyone nodded.

So then I asked, "So you actually *could* give a star employee 5%, right? This would be 2% more than the majority of your employees get and would reward the star performer for excellent performance. In addition, it would send a clear message to the rest of your organization about how valuable he or she is to you."

The class confirmed they were allowed to do this, but no one ever did. Why? Because that would mean another employee would only get 1%.

So I asked, "Do any of you have employees who just barely do enough to get by . . . or who only do what you tell them to do — and no more?" Again, practically every manager nodded. "So what do they get as a raise?"

Almost every manager said those employees got 3%, or maybe 2.8%, to make the point that they needed to work harder.

"And does losing just two-tenths of a percent motivate these employees to do better, or do you get the same effort from them year in and year out?" I asked.

All the managers knew the answer, so then I asked, "If you are going to have an employee who will be unhappy with his or her compensation, shouldn't it be your *least productive* employee and not your *star* employee?"

Looking around the room, I saw my point had hit home. But I wasn't quite finished. I needed to put a finer point on it.

“The person who merely does an adequate job year in and year out should be given a raise that keeps him or her current with the cost of living, nothing more. But that doesn't usually happen because we, as managers, lack the Management Courage to be painfully honest with these employees. In this case, we lack the Management Courage to reward our best employees — by giving them 5% raises — because we don't want to have the unpleasant conversation with the employee who will get only 1%.”

Manager's Mantra:

When managers lack the courage to be *painfully* honest, everyone in the organization suffers.

A Star (Management Plan) is Born

We moved on through the class, but during the break and afterwards, several managers pulled me aside to tell me what they were doing about raises.

“Do you think I lack Management Courage by doing the following?” they would ask me, before offering details. Then two managers stopped me afterwards and asked me what Management Courage was. They asked if I could give them some examples of Management Courage so they would

understand what they must do to demonstrate it.

Because these managers challenged me to articulate what Management Courage was, I began to crystallize my thinking about it, and to look for examples of Management Courage among the managers and executives with whom I worked.

First, I started gathering examples of Management Courage and looking for a common theme. It quickly emerged:

Management Courage is the transforming force demonstrated when managers choose a harder course of action *in the short-term* — one that guarantees unpleasant immediate results for the manager — so they can create a better result for the organization and its employees *in the long-term*.

When heroes in emergency or combat situations speak later about their amazing acts, they rarely are aware of how remarkable their choices were. They speak in terms of “doing the right thing” and acting for the greater good.

That’s precisely what Management Courage will accomplish for you, your employees, and your workplace.

By exhibiting Management Courage, you can make a genuine difference in the lives of the people with whom you work and the organization for whom you work.

While Congress can require certain business ethics, the bone-deep character of Management Courage cannot be legislated. You must want it, strive for it, and live it — one management act at a time.

Behind-the-Scenes at Your Workplace: Other Examples of Painful Honesty Making a Difference

I tell stories of Management Courage throughout this book because they are illustrations of each of the Principles as they occur in real life. (The names have been changed, but the situations are real.) Each Principle will be illustrated with examples so you can begin to see Management Courage opportunities as they occur in your work life. To further encourage you to practice each Principle, there are thought-provoking Management Courage questions at the end of each chapter. These should help you understand not only what Management Courage is, but how to begin to see opportunities to practice it.

Honesty in the Management Courage context goes beyond the old adage your parents quoted about honesty being the best policy. That adage only requires that everything you say be true, it doesn't require you to do (or be) more than that. But Management Courage honesty is entirely different, in that it requires you to speak *the painful truth* even when you don't have to. However, Management Courage honesty stops short of being cruel or mean. I always recoil from people who say, "I just tell it like it is." Often, I find this to be an excuse to be brutal to another human being — guilt-free. Being the most honest is a balancing act, an art that few managers attain. Those who do engender great loyalty in their employees that others admire but seldom understand.

Most likely, you have been the victim of a lack of

Management Courage honesty at least once in your career. You have probably applied for a job, made it to the short list of candidates, and then not been hired. If you are at all savvy, you call whoever was in charge of the interview process and ask in an artful way why you were not the candidate selected. You will almost always get an honest answer which goes something like this, “We found a better, more qualified candidate.” Certainly that’s truthful. (Obviously, the other candidate was better or he or she wouldn’t have been selected.) But the answer is not particularly *helpful*. Had the person told you one of your answers to a question was weak, or even that you “blew” a question, you could work on that answer and not repeat the mistake in another interview.

Displaying Management Courage During the Job Interview Process

Most people will not be honest about why you weren’t selected because the hassle of being that honest is rarely worth the trouble it causes the person you’ve asked for the feedback. After 25 years in business, I find that if I give candidates honest feedback on why they weren’t selected for the position, they want to argue with me about why it wasn’t the way the interview panel viewed it, or they make excuses for what they did in the interview process. It becomes a monumental waste of time for me, and the candidate benefits very little. Since becoming a believer in Management Courage, I now step up and am the most honest I can be to help the candidate. However, I preface my remarks by saying that I’m happy to

provide feedback, but when I have done this in the past, those requesting the feedback wind up arguing with me about our perceptions in the interview process or about the credentials of the selected candidate. I then ask, “If you’re sure you want the feedback, I’ll give it to you, but you may find it painful to hear.” Sometimes individuals will thank me for my honesty, but not wish to trouble me further, and sometimes they show their own brand of Management Courage and ask what I can share with them. (Which candidates do you think do better in their next interview?)

Real-Life Examples of “Management Courage Honesty” Benefiting Both Employers *and* Employees

An interesting employment law case arose in the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago. An African-American woman, working as a “road maintainer,” had repeatedly asked for different work assignments, believing it would advance her career. Her supervisors assigned some of the work she requested to other male employees, who happened to be white. Because she kept getting evasive answers from her supervisors about why the other (male) individuals got these assignments, she concluded her supervisors were biased against her because of her race and gender, and sued her employer. The Court of Appeals finally dismissed the lawsuit — but only after the employer produced much documentation demonstrating that the males were better qualified for the tasks assigned, and after spending a great deal of money defending their managers’ decisions.

Why didn't the supervisors simply sit down and talk with the woman about why someone else was selected for these assignments? Because they were afraid they would get sued. But they got sued *anyway!* Although it can't be stated with certainty, being "Management Courage honest" with the woman might have helped the employer avoid a lawsuit and minimize the frustration and bad feelings the employee suffered throughout this process. At a minimum, it would have kept the employer from treating the woman unfairly by never giving her a straight answer as to why she wasn't being offered new assignments.

Two Eye-Opening Experiences from My Own Career

I've had two experiences with Management Courage honesty that had a profound effect on my management style. I joined a manufacturing company as the head of Human Resources. We drew workers from some of the more rural parts of the counties around our plant. The work was hard, hot, and tough, but the employees were good and generous people. I had a staff of five, most of whom had been with the company a number of years. I was very definitely the outsider — city girl with a law degree. One of the people who worked for me was particularly bright, but only had a high school diploma. She was one of the most effective people in Human Resources with whom I have worked. She had been in the same job for years and had never gotten promoted. I quickly figured out why. Her grammar was poor and she sounded uneducated. We were owned by a parent company based in

the North, so you can imagine how “simple” they thought she was merely because of the way she spoke.

No one had ever talked with her about her grammar. I admired and depended on her, and knew she was capable of doing more if she was just given the chance. It took me a month or two to work up the nerve to talk with her about her grammar because I liked her so much, valued our relationship greatly, and knew I ran the risk of offending her.

Finally, the moment arrived. I opened the conversation by saying, “Greta Grammar, you think like a professional, you act like a professional, you strategize like a professional, but you don’t speak like a professional. Because of this, people have a tendency not to listen to what you have to say. It’s also what I believe is holding you back from being promoted. I can help you if you want some help with this.” At first she looked like I’d slapped her, but she recovered quickly and said she wanted to improve her grammar so she could be promoted. At that point, I offered to send her to a grammar course, and bought her an easy-to-read, entertaining grammar book.

In true eye-to-eye Greta fashion, she directed an insightful question at me: “How did you learn to talk so good?” she asked. I thought about it and told her my mother had always corrected my grammar. (She still does, by the way!) Greta then asked if I would correct her grammar the same way. We agreed that when it was just the two of us, I would correct any grammatical mistakes she made.

It was a grueling experience for both of us. Some days Greta had a hard time getting through two sentences without my interrupting her to correct her grammar. I can remember at least twice asking her if she wanted to quit doing this.

(A definite lack of Management Courage on my part!) She refused to give up and we continued to work together in private. The result? When I left the company five years later, they promoted Greta into my position.

My second experience with Management Courage honesty came when a woman who worked for me displayed Management Courage in dealing with *me*. Cathy was in the process of hiring an individual to work in the finance area of our company. It was an entry-level position, but the Vice President of the area (Archie) wanted final say in who would join his group. Cathy asked me to talk to Archie about a particular candidate — an odd request because normally she, not me, handled this discussion. I asked her why she didn't simply talk to Archie herself. Instead of making an excuse, she looked me squarely in the eye and said, "Everyone knows and talks about the fact that Archie doesn't like minorities, doesn't like women, and doesn't like fat people. You're only one of those and I'm all three. In addition, his boss is your peer and he will understand you have more power than he does. If you recommend he hire this person, he will do what you ask because he is very politically astute. She's a great candidate — much more qualified than anyone else we've interviewed — and will do an exceptional job. Oh, and by the way, she's an African-American female."

How Archie (Bunker) Saw the Light

I called Archie and, with some urgency, told him I needed to see him as soon as possible. When I entered his office, I

shut the door and told him I had something very distressing and painful to share with him. I prefaced what I was about to say by telling him I would expect him to share something like this if he had come by this information about me. I went on to explain that I was going to tell him what people said about him around the company, and that it was going to be hard for him to hear. You can imagine how tense he was at this point. I then said, "People say you don't like working with women, you don't like working with minorities, and you don't like people who are overweight." I wish I could tell you that he had an epiphany at that moment, fell on his knees, and confessed to being a chauvinistic bigot. Instead he got mad, said it wasn't true, and that he wanted it stopped immediately. I reminded him no one can stop the grapevine from saying whatever it wants. I went on to suggest that if his next hire was an African-American female, people would have a hard time continuing to say those things about him. He then asked me if we could find an African-American female candidate for his open position. I presented him with the resume Cathy had given me. I cautioned him that if he hired the candidate, he had to make sure it worked out or it would only make him appear to be even more chauvinistic and prejudiced.

The African-American woman he hired was still with the company (and happy) when I left several years later. Each hire Archie made after that changed the make-up of his department. It only happened because Cathy was "Management Courage honest" with me, and I was painfully honest with Archie.

Unsettling Questions To Test Your Management Courage

1. Of the people I manage (or interact with regularly), with whom have I not been the most honest?
2. Am I preparing the people that work for me for promotion? If not, am I moving them to jobs where they can be promoted?
3. Is there anyone I manage (or interact with regularly) whom I believe is not promotable or is in the wrong job? Have I told them this when we discussed their job or a promotion?
4. Have I ever discussed a suspected drug or alcohol problem with an employee or with a co-worker? Or do I just address their lack of performance and eventually fire them or let them get terminated?
5. Is there anyone I manage (or interact with regularly) who should be coached about a behavior pattern that is impeding his or her professional development?
6. Do I pay people what a job is *worth* or merely the salary for which I think I can hire them?



ABOUT MARGARET MORFORD

MARGARET MORFORD is President of *The HR Edge, Inc.*, a national management consulting and training company. She is often quoted as a management/workplace expert by America's top newspapers, including *The Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, and the *Chicago Tribune*. She appears regularly on ABC, CBS, and Fox-TV affiliates. She twice has been rated one of the top five speakers at the Society for Human Resource Management national conference (2004 and 2005). She also is the host and author of the nationally-distributed video *Running with the Big Dogs: How to Make HR a Strategic Player*.

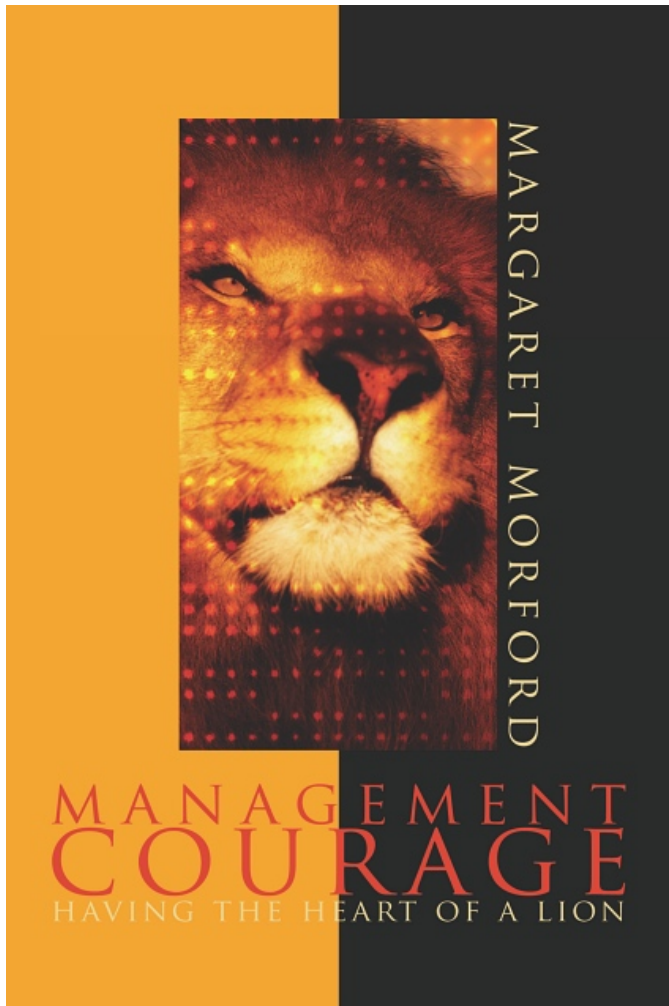
Her clients have included Lockheed Martin, Chevron, Time Warner, Sara Lee Foods, Home and Garden Television, Deloitte, Allied Insurance, NAPA Auto Parts, New York Presbyterian Hospital (Cornell & Columbia Medical Centers), U.S. Marine Corps, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Fox Broadcasting, Schwarz Biosciences, Northwestern Mutual

Life Insurance Company, SAS (computer software), The Nashville Predators hockey franchise, The Peabody Hotel, The Hartford, AmSurg, Quorum Health Resources, U.S. Naval Nuclear Submarine Group, and various local and state governments.

Prior to owning her own company, Ms. Morford was Sr. Vice President, Human Resources Consulting, for a national consulting firm out of Winston-Salem, North Carolina. She has served as Vice President of Human Resources for three large companies. She has a BS degree from the University of Alabama and a JD degree from the Vanderbilt University School of Law. She also has worked as an attorney, specializing in employment law.

**Margaret Morford offers seminars, workshops,
presentations, and speeches to organizations and
business groups across the U.S.**

For more information, please visit www.thehredge.net.



This book presents six Principles for becoming radically different at work and for managing workplace relationships with honesty and authenticity.

Management Courage: Having the Heart of a Lion

By Margaret Morford

Order the book from the publisher BookLocker.com

<https://www.booklocker.com/p/books/12952.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**