

## Coach's Commentary

Inspired by the *The Five Temptations of a CEO: A Leadership Fable* by Patrick M. Lencioni  
By Michelle Cubas

As an executive tutor and enterprise coach, I constantly seek novel ways to handle management issues. This business fantasy, *5 Temptations of a CEO* by Patrick Lencioni, begins the conversation people—who are considering leadership roles, business ownership and managing themselves and employees—MUST consider. Let us begin with this question, “Can leaders afford to ignore the long term or are they already planning their exit strategy?” Are they sending the wrong message, not in for the climb, inconsistent values for the challenges, sell-out those around them?

We, as advisors and “players”, must question the veracity of decisions made in this jittery climate.

An easy concept I recommend is a “for the good of the house” mentality no matter who is at the helm. Even if you are not on the top rung, speaking to oneself on this issue can only help to serve put you on the best path. What will the legacy be? An emphasis on legacy ensures a detached view, provides a check against WIFE (What’s in it for me).

My mentor, Peter Thomas, shared a thought of moving from success to significance. How can we achieve it?

Something to consider: Like a significant document (Magna Carta, The U.S. Constitution, a fine art piece), we’ve lost the pride and value of putting our “mark” on our contributions, given there is a contribution made. Giving our “mark” top of mind can shape our decision beyond the immediate, knew-jerk reaction. Instead when we strive for a response, we then connect and can apply a conscious thought to our move.

This brings to mind the concept of sacrifice.

“We can distinguish short term pain (struggle) vs. long term pain (failure),” says Patrick Lencioni. Define the sacrifice so all can understand. It is astonishing how people rally around an authentic leader. Mustering support is powerful and can move forward even an unpleasant circumstance.

### What are we seeking?

Results, input or golf applause (light, non-committal clapping)?

Criticism vs. Counsel

Much of the response we receive stems from how the information is presented up front.

This segment must transcend ego-driven decisions. We can listen closer to what is actually said rather than spending time thinking of how we will defend ourselves.

As a leader, it is important to differentiate between encouragement and permission. By seeking counsel we are demonstrating our openness and breadth of scope in making a decision. Unfortunately, high-level executives fear they will be perceived as indecisive or weak when gathering consensus or sampling opinions.

### Why Is It Lonely at the Top?

Colleagues want to tie their tails to a high flyer. Being vulnerable is not a sign of weakness.

Hard line views limit access to what you need to know.

The old adage, “Familiarity breeds contempt,” is dangerous. Instead, familiarity can be founded on trust and credibility. Trust provides a level of confidence and a “reality” check. Credibility provides a filter to test our points of view.

Needs create distance rather than build confidantes. To the confidante, it affects the range of honest answers and input. The trust must go both ways.

Stymied

Even been stuck—in a thought, argument, debate? A step away from that can be to ask, “What/who am I waiting for?”

To get out of permission mode, ask, “What needs to happen to move forward? What alignments do I need to move forward?”

It's not personal

Where is our focus?

Stay on the issues vs. individuals. Finger pointing and blame are dangerous positions at best. The result is what matters and how to progress from mistakes.

Our positions can only evolve from clarity.

Self-Referred Key Questions

Here is a place to begin the inquiries without appearing weak. Dialogue can be wrapped about What's on . . .

- Anticipation
- Horizon line (do a drawing)
- Perspective (do a drawing)

Our convictions are often measured by our passion. “Passion is the litmus test of vision.” MCubas  
Clarity reduces conflict, but we have to be willing to state the case and be wrong or a possible target for adversaries. One goal is to create “productive ideological conflict.”