

EXCERPTS FROM THE BOOK

Stepping Forward Together: Creating Trust and Commitment in the Workplace

by Mac McIntire

How to Know You've Made the Right Decision

The following is an excerpt from chapter one of Stepping Forward Together, pages 21-23

“One thing you need to know about me is I try to reduce everything to its simplest, most basic form. I believe in making things as easy to understand as possible. That’s why I develop systematic tools and models to help people grasp how things work — particularly how organizations and human beings work — at the most basic level.

“So you will hear a lot of simple concepts and pithy statements from me — but that doesn’t mean we aren’t navigating complex territory. Making a complex concept easier to grasp improves the likelihood people will internalize what they learn and use that knowledge to improve their performance.

“The first thing you need to understand is real learning takes place internally,” I said, motioning up and down my body with both hands. “Learning is an internal process, not something that happens externally. Deep, personal, profound learning comes only after serious introspection and contemplation. I believe most managers and employees have a wealth of experience and knowledge already stored within them. They’ve been collecting information consciously and subconsciously all of their lives. Consequently, sometimes the best place to look for answers to your problems is by searching within your own mind, heart or intuitive senses. Serious introspection can often disclose what is right or wrong or effective or ineffective.

“That’s why, as we talk about your business tonight, I’m going to tell you over and over again to ‘go inside yourself.’ When I say that, it means I want you to process this information in the context of what you believe, how you think, and what you feel is appropriate or inappropriate. To manage others effectively you need to gain a firm understanding of your core philosophies, your values and your personal beliefs – because until you know and understand who *you* are, you can’t know and understand others. You cannot manage others effectively until you can manage *yourself*.”

Paul was listening intently.

“As we sit here and discuss these concepts, I want you to constantly go inside yourself to search your mind, your heart, and your intuition for the answers you seek. When these three processing centers are in harmony – your head, your heart, and your intuition – you’ll know when you’ve come to the right conclusion. This is your innate system of internal checks and balances. If something seems right intellectually, but your heart tells you otherwise, you probably should listen to your heart. If your heart tells you to go in one direction and your head tells you to go in another, you should pay attention to your head. And, if something feels right or wrong in your stomach, your intuitive hunch may be correct. Therefore, the best way to know what is right or wrong is to confirm it in your head, your heart, and your intuitive senses.”

I told Paul the process for moving others is the same as it is for moving oneself. “To get people to move in the direction you want and to do what you want them to do, you have to appeal to people’s heads, hearts, and intuitive senses. When you align all three of these decision centers, the odds are higher people will commit to whatever you ask of them.”

I needed Paul to fully grasp the significance of what I was saying. It was critical to his knowing whether the tool I wanted to share with him would work for him. While discussing the model, I wanted him to constantly evaluate the usefulness of what I was saying based upon the validation he received in his head, heart and intuitive senses.

“Paul, I’m telling you this very important point before I explain anything else to you for two reasons. I’m assuming you’re sincerely interested in learning how to move your employees to do what you want them to do?”

“Yes, I’m interested,” he confirmed.

“OK. But before I can help you move your employees, I have to first move *you*. I have to convince you that whatever I tell you is true so you’ll commit to doing the things I tell you. And I won’t get you to believe me unless I can convince you in *your* head, *your* heart, and *your* personal intuition.

“Then, once I’ve convinced you, I have to teach you how to convince your employees and managers so they’ll also get it in *their* heads, *their* hearts and *their* intuitive senses. This is the key to moving people. If you want to get people to do what you want them to do the way you want them to do it, you have to convince them in all three locations. Again, when you tap all three decision making centers, the odds are higher your workers will commit to whatever you ask of them.

“What I’m about to explain to you is the internal process people go through before they will commit to a specific course of action,” I continued. . . .

Conscious Management and Managerless Management

The following is an excerpt from chapter one of Stepping Forward Together, pages 27-32

“*Conscious management* is a process that ensures every employee is constantly focused on the things that matter most,” I explained. “It is how you get every single manager and employee to be alert, attentive, and adamantly focused on doing the right things right for the right reasons. It’s how you get everyone in an organization moving in the same direction at the same time.

“You see, Paul, the reason why you are conscious about specific things at your plant is because of what you know, what you think, what you see, what you hear, what you feel, and what you intuitively sense. You know what the company’s goals are and why they are important. You think about what is best for the business. You see inefficiencies on the production line and want to fix them. You hear customers complain and you take quality failures personally because of your concern about the business. You feel bad when the company is not as profitable as it could be. When you sense something is wrong, you dive right in and try to figure out what is going on.”

“That’s right, I do,” he confirmed.

“So now, try to imagine what would happen if all of your employees responded the way you do to the situations in your company. Imagine how productive your plant would be if every manager and employee knew what you knew, thought what you thought, saw what you saw, heard what you heard, felt what you felt, and sensed what you intuitively sensed. Because that’s the real issue, isn’t it? If you could be assured that every single employee on the line and every manager in every department at your company were as conscious – or conscientious – about the same things you are, your life as the general manager would be a whole lot easier.”

“You’re right,” Paul said, obviously pondering my premise. “That’s an interesting thought!”

“That’s what conscious management is,” I declared. “Conscious management is a systematic process whereby you consciously transfer what you know, think, see, hear, feel and intuit into your employees and managers so they can know, think, see, hear, feel and intuit everything the same way you do. The only way your employees can do what *you* would do, the way *you* would do it, is if they process things the same way you do.”

“That’s a fascinating notion,” Paul exclaimed.

“And that leads us to another critical management concept I’m constantly promoting in my seminars. I call it: *‘managerless management.’*”

“This one sounds even better than conscious management.”

“Yes, I’m sure you’ll like this one too. The question I ask managers is this: Who do you really want to manage your employees?” I asked, expecting Paul to answer.

Paul was stumped for a moment. He then rightly declared he wanted his employees to manage themselves.

“You’re absolutely right, Paul. The best form of management is where employees manage themselves.”

“That would be nice,” Paul said facetiously. “But that will never happen.”

“It has to happen!” I declared.

“Why’s that?”

“It *HAS* to happen,” I said, emphasizing my words even more strongly, “because the only way you can truly be a successful manager today is if you can raise the commitment level of your employees to a point where they manage themselves.

“Most managers today don’t have time to manage. Unlike fifteen or twenty years ago when a manager spent a great deal of time in the office, most managers today are ‘working managers.’ They’re out on the line. The majority of supervisors today perform the same front-line tasks as the employees they supervise. They work the front desk of the hotel while managing the front-desk staff. They supervise the production line while operating one of its stations. They cook with the cooks, design with the designers and write while managing the writers.

“The problem with this,” I continued. “is that when you’re a working manager, and push comes to shove and there’s not enough time in the day, which of these two responsibilities falls by the wayside: working or managing?”

“Managing,” Paul rightly surmised.

“Why?”

“Because the work has to get done,” Paul suggested.

“Right. The work has to get done. So when do managers *manage*?”

“In their spare time. Whenever they can.”

“Hence the problem,” I said. “Managers are managing whenever: whenever there is a crisis, whenever a problem comes up, whenever they have a minute, whenever they get around to it, whenever a situation forces them to deal with their employees.

“The biggest problem with management today is managing is a spare-time, whenever job – not the primary focus of the manager. It’s no wonder there are so many management problems in so many businesses. Employees are being neglected because management is too busy *working*. Managers everywhere make sure the pressing production needs are met, but when the whistle blows at the end of the day they’ve neglected to manage their people. That’s why they fail to generate the enthusiasm and commitment necessary to achieve high levels of performance and greater profitability. By being singularly focused on results, they actually produce fewer results than they could if they’d take a greater interest in their employees.”

Philosophical Alignment is Key to Success

The following is an excerpt from chapter 14 of Stepping Forward Together, pages 241-244

There are certain conditions that must be met in every element of life if one wishes to be successful. There are specific *imperatives* that must be achieved at work, school, home, marriage, parenting, and in other life situations. There are *goals* that need to be accomplished, *roles* one must fill and *expectations* to meet. There are *boundaries* that cannot be crossed and *authority* that cannot be over-stepped. And, to truly succeed, one must be receptive to honest *feedback* at work, in school, at home, in a marriage, or as a parent.

“One of the important things people need to learn is once someone knows what they want or expect, it’s fruitless to argue with them,” I suggested. “When a manager, teacher, or parent is committed to his or her values, beliefs, principles, or philosophies, there is no way someone can argue or rebel against those elements and expect to gain the trust, respect, confidence and support of that person.

“Let me say it another way: *You cannot argue philosophies, you can only argue tactics.* What this means is, once the company’s philosophies have been established – such as its vision, values and strategies – these things are no longer open for disagreement or argument. The managers and employees need to just accept them and move on. However, even though the philosophies cannot be argued, it is acceptable for the managers and employees to argue the *tactics* of how the vision, values or strategies are carried out. You can argue tactics; you just can’t change the core philosophies.

“Paul, once the corporate executives have made a philosophical decision about where they want to take the company, you can’t argue whether it is the right thing to do. At least not if you want to maintain the trust, respect, and confidence of your superiors. If, for example, your company has decided to implement a cost-cutting initiative, you can’t declare you don’t want to cut cost. Not cutting costs is not an option available to you. The philosophical decision has been made by the company and you must support that decision by cutting costs. *How* you cut costs and *where* you cut costs are open for discussion, but not *whether* you will cut costs. Again, you can argue tactics, but you’d better not argue philosophies.”

Paul was still mulling this over, so I gave him another example.

“Let me use my own company as an example and pretend you work for me,” I continued. “Once I know where I want to take my company – Innovative Management Group – you cannot argue with my vision if you want to work for me. Once I have determined the core values of my company and I know what it takes to win, you cannot tell me these core values are wrong when I’ve already declared they are the values I believe in and want. Once I know the business imperative, the goals, direction, roles, expectations, boundaries and authority levels for the company, you cannot declare that you don’t agree with the conditions I have set. At least, you cannot argue against them or remain in disagreement and still expect to work for me.”

Paul looked like he was in agreement. But I wanted to clarify something before he agreed with my comment without understanding another critical element of this point.

“So you don’t misunderstand me, let me be clear,” I cautioned. “I don’t mind people arguing with me *before* these things are decided. I welcome input on the vision and values of the company. I want people to help me discern the business imperatives, goals, and direction for the business. They even can provide input on their roles, expectations, boundaries and authority. But once these elements have been established, I expect employees to carry out their job duties without argument. I expect them to accept and abide by the philosophical agreements regarding their

position. Once these things have been determined I am perfectly willing to listen to contrary views about our tactics – *how* we do it – but they cannot argue philosophically whether we *should* do it.”

Paul was listening attentively. I could see he had gone inside himself and was making some mental notes.

“It’s the same at home,” I continued. “If you want to have a happy home and successful marriage, there are certain imperatives that must be met. The people who succeed in life, both at work and at home, are the ones who figure this out early in life and live accordingly. Success is simply a matter of whether a person is willing to do what is necessary to gain the trust, respect, confidence and support of those with whom they interact in whatever situation they may be in.”