

Practically applying the character quality of

Boldness

vs. Fearfulness

"Confidence that what I have to say or do is true, right, and just."

By: Stephen Leckenby

Don't Worry; Be Happy!

An employee in a company was asked to coordinate a departmental tour for a company executive who was in town from out of state. The executive was assigned to become more familiar with this particular branch because of a possible responsibility shift that would put him in charge. Word quickly spread about the visit, and employees quickly became concerned that this "awareness procedure" was simply a cloak for an in-depth evaluation leading to reassignment. As the employees mulled over this possibility, the mental images (and lunch room conversations) soon became those of job loss and unemployment. And all from a visit by an executive on a simple information gathering trip that, as it turns out, resulted in no change whatsoever.

Alfred Hitchcock admitted, "I turn my fears into movies." Like movies, we replay our fears over and over in our minds: What if...what if...what if...? You can't be happy and fearful at the same time. An attitude of boldness eliminates this kind of fear because we are confident that our activities are based on truth. Therefore, if circumstances change for the worse, we can be assured that the ultimate outcome will be for our best since our conscience is clear. Truth defeats anxiety.

Nothing but the Truth

My personal study of boldness has led to an interesting conclusion. It is not possible to demonstrate true bold-

ness without a basis of truth and good character in my life. Look at the definition: "Confidence that what I have to say or do is true, right and just." Without that confidence, I have no foundation to be bold. That does not rule out the possibility of a *strong* decision. However, what we typically may define as a "bold" decision may actually be better described as a *rash*

Commitment to Boldness

- I will keep a clear conscience
- I will support others when they are right
- I will not be afraid to speak the truth
- I will be willing to stand alone
- I will speak with humility

decision. Rashness can quickly destroy any confidence you have built with those who answer to you and from those to whom you answer. Deep inside, each person can recognize when a decision is based on truth. Truth-based decisions demonstrate a clear understanding of boldness.

Confrontation

Let's stay on the *truth* line of thinking for a minute. You are likely to observe activities today in your place of business that are against company policy or aren't serving the needs of

the company. What is your response? Do you go running to leadership and "tattle"? Do you say nothing and hope that when you break policy it will be overlooked as well? Here is where boldness comes into play. If our actions are truth-based, we will be willing to follow the "Commitment to Boldness" (see circle) and not be afraid to speak the truth, even if it means standing alone. Peer accountability in the workplace would probably help to solve many day-to-day issues.

But you can't just barge in and set someone straight. Boldness must be balanced with Humility and Discretion. The goal is to maintain the relationship in question while still emphasizing the necessary truth.

The flip side of confrontation is supporting others when they are right. That way, when a confrontation becomes necessary, you already have a relationship with the individual. Thus, you have earned the right to speak.

Boldness may not always yield the most comfortable outcome, but it will determine your long-term success.

Comments on BOLDNESS

- "Courage is the greatest of all virtues. Because if you haven't courage, you may not have an opportunity to use any of the others." - Samuel Johnson
- "Courage without conscience is a wild beast." - Robert G. Ingersoll
- "When at some future date the high court of history sits in judgment on each one of us recording whether in our brief span of service we fulfilled our responsibilities to the state, our success or failure in whatever office we may hold will be measured by the answers to four questions: were we truly men of courage ... were we truly men of judgment ... were we truly men of integrity ... were we truly men of dedication?" - John F. Kennedy