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TALKING BUSINESS WITH MICHAEL SHEVACK

Ethics At Work

SUCCESS recently talked about work-life balance and spirituality with Michael Shevack, corporate executive counselor, advisor and author. Here, he addresses a familiar problem—micro-managing.

How do you deal with a boss who is a real micro-manager, who says you were hired for your proven track-record, but doesn't let you do your job the way you know how?

If you are stuck working under a micro-manager, then you have a real problem that has to be handled quickly and decisively because it will undermine your spirit, and that will undermine your material success.

People hire someone because they need help. Obviously! But, some people—insecure, fearful people—take needing help as a sign that they are “less than.”

Micro-managers fear their own limitations and corporate vulnerability. They may have someone peering over their shoulder and feel diminished by their superiors. But they allow this to rule over their conscience, and they psychologically compensate by “making themselves god.” Feelings of inadequacy, combined with arrogance, make them micro-managers. They are usually credit-hoggers as well, because they don't want you to excel in a way that shows them up. This behavior is pervasive in corporate America, and usually where it appears, you will also find an almost militaristic company demand for loyalty between bosses and their hirelings.

How do you handle this? First, don't focus just on your boss; become aware of the spiritual

issues for you. For instance, you may have had a micro-managing spouse or parent, so your boss may be pushing a button inside you that has been hard-wired into your behavior. Whatever button your boss is pushing, it's still your button. Only you can un-wire it.

Next, declare to yourself, in utmost faith and conviction, your right to spiritual success: It is precisely by confronting this problem with your boss that you will have the extraordinary spiritual opportunity to release yourself from any issues you may have. That's why we're all here on earth working—to grow! It's also why this challenge has been sent your way. Remember, you often bring yourself spiritual challenges that mirror the same problem (sometimes hidden) in yourself. Micro-managers often hire micro-managers. Be honest with yourself. Look at your professional life and your personal life for the micro-manager's syndrome. You've got to heal yourself.

Sit down with your boss. Tell him exactly what's going on. Don't be afraid to be personal and human, and admit you feel uncomfortable if that's the case. Often, we don't confront these issues, because we are afraid of letting someone in a position of power see that we are “weak.”

It's O.K. to be human. After all, a boss that would take advantage of that in you is not someone you want to work with anyway. And remember, good bosses want you to challenge them—to make them better. Challenging them is one of the best ways to know if you are in a position that you will want long-term.

After you talk it out, remind yourself that it is not necessary

for your boss to change. If they don't change after you confront them, that's their spiritual problem; they may have a lot of issues themselves, and sooner or later, these will bite them on the butt. There is no escaping the spiritual law of sowing and reaping; it's as operative in business as anywhere else.

But, regardless of the response, once you confront the issue, you will be free, or well on the road to freedom. You will have released your spirit. Once you do that, you will either reap the rewards of your current job, or, if this job doesn't work out, you will have grown so much spiritually that you will find a position that is the correct challenge for your new, more advanced level of spiritual clarity. Either way, you can't lose. But, you must have the courage to grow spiritually, or you will not grow materially. That's the philosophy behind our free enterprise system (when it's working right)!

In short: Your real boss is your Maker, the CEO of your soul. That earthly boss? Well, he's just an insecure kid in the playground who needs to grow up.

“YOU MUST HAVE THE COURAGE TO GROW SPIRITUALLY, OR YOU WILL NOT GROW MATERIALLY.”

