



undermine a leader's belief that things can get better, and must get better. I believe you either bring this to the table or you don't."

Along with that optimism, great leaders can also bring big egos—and that's not a bad thing. While some have blamed the business world's recent string of scandals—Enron, WorldCom, and others—on bloated executive egos, Buckingham disagrees. It's not ego that ruined Ken Lay, but rather a lack of ethics. There's a big difference, Buckingham said. And considering the responsibility facing business leaders to build a future for their companies, a big ego might be what is needed.

"If you are going to lead, you better have a deep-seated belief that you should be at the helm, dragging everyone into that better future," he said. "Virtually nothing about a leader is humble. I'm not saying they are arrogant, but their claims are big." Buckingham said successful leaders must find a "universal truth" to rally their followers. These universal truths stem from the basic human needs, fears, and desires that unite all people, across all cultures. They also happen to be great tools for leadership.

Take, for example, one of the great human fears—fear of the future. "We all share a fear of the unknown," Buckingham said. "The problem for the modern-day leader, of course, is that you traffic in the future." Buckingham says some of the best leaders can overcome this fear—and build confidence among their followers—with a weapon of their own: clarity.

By presenting a clear message, and backing up their message with actions that support it, top managers of such companies as Tesco, Best Buy, and Wal-Mart have rallied employees to their cause and enjoyed bottom-line success as a result, Buckingham noted. "The best way to turn anxiety into confidence is this: Be clear. Clarity is the antidote to anxiety. If you do nothing else as a leader, be clear." Former New York City Mayor Giuliani provided a good example of effective leadership through clarity, Buckingham said. When Giuliani took office in 1993, he could have turned his attentions just about anywhere; America's largest city certainly had its share of problems.

But Giuliani set one specific, clear, and focused goal for his administration. He would reduce crime and improve quality of life for residents. Then he laid out three simple ways he was going to start making that happen: He announced he would get rid of the window washers who pestered New York City drivers; clean subways of graffiti and then keep the vandals away; and make all cab drivers wear collared shirts. The issues were, on their surface, minor. But they

were relevant to his citizens. And by setting three immediate goals—and then achieving them—Giuliani was able to build trust among residents and respect among his workers. That trust carried over as he tackled larger challenges, and within a few years of his arrival, the FBI named New York the safest big city in America. "You can do a lot worse than pick just a few areas you want to take action on right now," Buckingham said.

Clarity of purpose has also been a driving factor in the success of Tesco, the British food giant that has more than 2,000 stores and 360,000 employees worldwide. When Terry Leahy took over as CEO in 1997, he decreed the company's focus would be, from that point forward, to serve the housewives of the world. Then he went out and did something to prove he believed in his focus: He added more checkout lines in all his stores, a move that led to significantly higher labor costs but also won over his customers and sent a message to his employees that they were there, as Leahy had proclaimed, to provide courteous, efficient service.

"That kind of clarity builds confidence in people," Buckingham said. Today, Tesco is one of the three largest retailers in the world, and Leahy's success provides a handy leadership lesson. "When you want to lead, start with the future," Buckingham said. "Get specific. And get vivid."

(Source: Leadership and Change, Wharton University of Pennsylvania, <http://www.wharton.upenn.edu>)

## WEB SITE PICKS

### [www.sorryGottago.com](http://www.sorryGottago.com)

Ever really wanted to get off the phone with someone, but just couldn't think of any reasonable way to do it?

SorryGottago.com lets you download sounds that you can play as background noises to give yourself an excuse to hang up!

Sounds are available for use at home, at the office, with telemarketers, and in other situations, and include:

- My ride is here (honking horn)
- I have a customer (cash register)
- There's my pager
- The baby is crying
- I've got to feed the cat
- The tea kettle is boiling over



## TRAINING TIP

### How to Handle Conflict with a Coworker

**Question:** How do I handle conflict with a coworker?

**Answer:** Use this basic opening: "I sense that we disagree, and as a result, we're not working together. If I'm right, I'd guess that you're as uncomfortable as I am. I'd like to work with you to find an alternative to what exists now." With this opening, you aren't pointing the finger of blame. And most people will respond positively to such an invitation.

(Source: The editors of *Communication Briefings*, Sept. 2005)



## HUMOR

### Flight Announcements

Here are some real examples that have been heard or reported:

1. On a Southwest flight (SW has no assigned seating, you just sit where you want) passengers were apparently having a hard time choosing their seats when a flight attendant announced, "People, people we're not picking out furniture here, find a seat and get in it!"
2. On a Continental Flight with a very senior flight attendant crew, the pilot said, "Ladies and gentlemen, we've reached cruising altitude and will be turning down the cabin lights. This is for your comfort and to enhance the appearance of your flight attendants."
3. On landing, the stewardess said, "Please be sure to take all of your belongings. If you're going to leave anything, please make sure it's something we'd like to have."
4. "There may be 50 ways to leave your lover, but there are only 4 ways out of this airplane."
5. "Thank you for flying Delta Business Express. We hope you enjoyed giving us the business as much as we enjoyed taking you for a ride."
6. As the plane landed and was coming to a stop at Ronald Reagan National Airport, a lone voice came over the loudspeaker: "Whoa, big fella. WHOA!"
7. After a particularly rough landing during thunderstorms in Memphis, a flight attendant on a Northwest flight announced, "Please take care when opening the overhead compartments

because, after a landing like that, sure as heck everything has shifted.”

8. From a Southwest Airlines employee: “Welcome aboard Southwest Flight 245 to Tampa. To operate your seat belt, insert the metal tab into the buckle, and pull tight. It works just like every other seat belt; and, if you don’t know how to operate one, you probably shouldn’t be out in public unsupervised.”

9. “In the event of a sudden loss of cabin pressure, masks will descend from the ceiling. Stop screaming, grab the mask, and pull it over your face. If you have a small child traveling with you, secure your mask before assisting with theirs. If you are traveling with more than one small child, pick your favorite.”

10. “Weather at our destination is 50 degrees with some broken clouds, but we’ll try to have them fixed before we arrive. Thank you, and remember, nobody loves you, or your money, more than Southwest Airlines.”

(Courtesy of <http://www.homeholidaysfamilyandfun.com>)

Cherish your visions and your dreams, as they are the children of your soul, the blueprints of your ultimate achievements.

—Napoleon Hill

## WORDS FOR REFLECTION

### Handwriting on the Wall

A weary mother returned from the store, Lugging groceries through the kitchen door. Awaiting her arrival was her 8-year-old son, Anxious to relate what his younger brother had done.

While I was out playing and Dad was on a call,  
T.J. took his crayons and wrote on the wall  
It’s on the new paper you just hung in the den.  
I told him you’d be mad at having to do it again.

She let out a moan and furrowed her brow,  
Where is your little brother right now?  
She emptied her arms and with a purposeful stride,  
She marched to his closet where he had gone to hide.

She called his full name as she entered his room.

He trembled with fear—he knew that meant doom

For the next 10 minutes, she ranted and raved

About the expensive wallpaper and how she had saved.

Lamenting all the work it would take to repair,

She condemned his actions and total lack of care.

The more she scolded, the madder she got,

Then stomped from his room,  
totally distraught.

She headed for the den to confirm her fears.

When she saw the wall, her eyes flooded with tears.

The message she read pierced her soul with a dart.

It said, I love Mommy, surrounded by a heart.

Well, the wallpaper remained, just as she found it,

With an empty picture frame hung to surround it.

A reminder to her, and indeed to all,  
Take time to read the handwriting on the wall.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

### Being Frank

#### Constructive Confrontation

Pointing out a fault or misstep in someone is often uncomfortable, draining, or stressful. It can be easier to overlook a problem than to confront the individual behind it. But just as everything in the universe has a positive and negative side, confrontation can be beneficial when handled one way or detrimental when handled another way. If you accept that there is no winner or loser in a confrontation, and that it is merely a step in reaching a constructive solution, you can harness confrontation as a means of inspiring positive change. Sometimes the only way to show a person how they are doing you or themselves harm is to candidly express the consequences of their actions. In fact, confrontation, when handled in a calm and timely fashion, can be an act of caring.

If you find you shy away from confrontation, seeing it as an opportunity to help someone else may make it more bearable. To be willing to confront someone demonstrates your desire to maintain an open discourse with them, even if they don’t initially see it as such. Naturally, in con-

fronting someone, you run the risk of offending them because you are openly discussing negative aspects of their behavior. But there are steps you can take to remove the sting from a confrontation. Remember that confrontation is nothing more than an opportunity for frank communication. Prepare beforehand by compiling a mental list of the facts surrounding the issue behind the confrontation. You may want to rehearse your opening statement to yourself, if it will make you feel more at ease. Finally, after discussing the behavior you are unhappy with in clear terms, give the other person a chance to respond without interrupting.

Maintaining a calm demeanor can turn a confrontation into a constructive conversation. Positive confrontation can be a learning experience for both parties, because it involves openly and bravely facing an issue. When most effective, both parties will come away from a confrontation feeling satisfied that they can move forward, changed for the better.

(Source: [www.dailyom.com](http://www.dailyom.com))

## HEALTH AND FITNESS

### Hip Strength and Golf Scores

Golfers with the best game appear to have the strongest hips, pointing to the importance of exercising hip musculature to better coordinate a golf swing.

Golfers were divided into three groups based on their golfing



handicaps. The greater the hip strength during exercises in which the hip moves the leg out and away from the body, the better the handicap. And the best players—those with a “scratch” or better handicap—tend to be stronger in all hip movements tested.

Serious golfers have a high incidence of hip injuries. Muscle strength is critical for the prevention of hip injury.

Researchers conclude that improving strength and flexibility in the hips and torso can add 20 yards to a golfer’s driving distance.

(Source: Meeting of the American College of Sports Medicine, Indianapolis, June 2004)

