



CENTER FOR CATHOLIC STUDIES

TO: WBC AND MICAH PARTICIPANTS
FROM: MONSIGNOR RICHARD LIDDY
SUBJECT: LENTEN REFLECTIONS
DATE: MARCH 2017

- **Welcome and Self-Introductions**
- **Woodstock Business Conference Mission Statement**
 - The Mission of the Woodstock Business Conference is to establish and lead a national and international network of business executives to explore their respective religious traditions in order to assist the individual executives:
 - To integrate faith, family and professional life,
 - To develop a corporate culture that is reflective of their religious faith and values and
 - To exercise a beneficial influence upon society at large
 - The Conference, grounded in the Roman Catholic tradition, welcomes believers who are open to and respectful of one another's religious tradition. It is committed to the conviction that ethics and values grow out of one's religious heritage.
- **Scripture Reading: Luke 4:1-13 Temptation in the Desert**
- **Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, then returned from Jordan and was conducted by the Spirit into the desert for forty days, where he was tempted by the devil. During that time he ate nothing and at the end of it he was hungry. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command the stone to turn into bread." Jesus answered him, "Scripture has it, and 'Not on bread alone shall man live.'" Then the devil took him up higher and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a single**

instant. He said to him, “ I will give you all this power and the glory of these kingdoms; the power has been given to me and I give it to whomever I wish. Prostrate yourself in homage before me, and it shall all be yours.” In reply, Jesus said to him, “Scripture has it, ‘You shall do homage to the Lord your God him alone shall you adore.’” Then the devil led him to Jerusalem, set him on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, “if you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for Scripture has it, ‘He will bid his angels watch over you’ and again ”with their hands they will support you that you may never stumble on a stone.” Jesus said to him in reply, “It also says, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.” When the devil had finished all tempting left him, to await another opportunity.

- Quiet Reflection 5 minutes followed by sharing insights
- Articles: Lenten Reading

7 deadly sins of employee communication

Sujan Patel

Inc. Magazine

For modern businesses, employee engagement is key.

High engagement leads to reduced turnover, improved productivity and increased profitability. However, the latest research from Gallup shows that less than 30 percent of employees are engaged at work. Management is one of the top reasons cited for lack of engagement in the workplace, accounting for 70 percent of the variance between high and low engagement scores.

Of the factors that contribute to manager-led engagement, communication tops the list. If you can't communicate effectively with your employees, you can say goodbye to engagement, productivity and retention.

Are you making any of the following deadly communication sins? Be honest — and then take action to be better.

Sin #1: Focusing on weaknesses

Whether you're conducting annual reviews or discussing progress in regularly scheduled one-on-ones, focusing on an employee's weaknesses and failures can tank your engagement.

According to Gallup, of employees who strongly agree that their manager focuses on their strengths, 67 percent are engaged at work. Among those that strongly disagree, 71 percent report that they are actively disengaged.

Ratings systems, performance reviews and goals handed down from upper management can encourage a focus on employee weaknesses.

Sin #2: Disregarding professional development

Millennials, who are predicted to make up 75 percent of the workforce by 2020, are often considered the least loyal generation of employees. But a 2016 survey conducted by Deloitte found that millennials who are satisfied with their professional development opportunities are twice as likely to stay with a company.

A common mistake managers make is focusing all of their communications with

employees on their current roles. You'll motivate employees more if you show them you understand their aspirations and work with them to develop a plan of action for meeting those goals.

Sin #3: Being unapproachable

There are several reasons why employees may find their managers unapproachable: Some react negatively to employee complaints or concerns, some do not allocate enough time to one-on-ones and some take too long to respond to employee questions or emails.

Employees may feel their manager is too busy for them or fear retribution for admitting a mistake and attempt to hide problems or resolve them without consulting with management.

Schedule regular team meetings and one-on-one sessions with employees, encourage honest communication during these sessions, and avoid canceling scheduled meetings.

Encourage employees to drop by when they need to talk with you.

Sin #4: Being uninvolved

Some managers see their role as an escalation point — someone to resolve situations only when employees are no longer able to handle them.

The problem with this “available when needed” approach is that it leaves managers out of the loop on the day-to-day issues employees face. Employees begin to feel as though managers are incapable of resolving issues, or they feel as though managers don't want to be bothered.

With regular discussion of and participation in employee's roles, managers are better suited to resolve problems when they arise. In turn, employees will be more likely to seek the advice of managers, who can then offer tips and suggestions to employees to prevent problems before they occur.

Sin #5: Being too involved

Perhaps worse than managers who are uninvolved are those who are too involved. Micromanagers demoralize employees by questioning all their decisions, excessively scrutinizing all their work and demanding detailed summaries of completed tasks.

Often, micromanagement is the result of one of two things: The manager is struggling with finding his or her own role as the leader of a team, or the manager is skeptical of the team's ability to work effectively. For those in the former category, leadership courses can be effective. For the rest, allowing employees to make mistakes and learn from them can be an effective coaching technique.

Sin #6: Exhibiting pessimism

In a study of leadership effectiveness in Forbes, pessimistic managers were rated in the 19th percentile for effectiveness, while optimistic leaders were rated in the 89th percentile. Optimistic managers inspire progress, while pessimistic leaders plague employee morale.

While it may be tempting to commiserate with employees when they bring frustrating issues to the table, try to focus instead on brainstorming potential solutions. Employees will appreciate the extra attention, and they'll be motivated to take the same approach to problem solving in the future.

Sin #7: Using passive-aggressive communication

Passive-aggressive behavior is destructive to effective communication. Passive-aggressive managers hide feedback in humor, provide conflicting direction and place blame on employees, leaving them confused and disengaged.

Managers who struggle with assertiveness or who don't feel equipped to provide criticism may benefit from taking emotional intelligence courses. Better yet, consider emotional intelligence training for your entire team to improve overall communications.

What matters when it comes to employee engagement isn't perfection, but identifying your faults and taking clear, consistent action to improve them that'll boost overall office morale.

Sujan Patel is the author of "100 Days of Growth" and the co-founder of Web Profits.

- **Bonus Reading: Garrison Keillor**

Strangers in the night amid prettiest storm

Russ Brown clears the steps of the Brattleboro, Vt., town building as New England is pummeled with snow.

Garrison Keillor

Chicago Tribune

Feb. 15, 2017

I flew into Boston in a snowstorm Sunday, coming in low over little white houses in the gray murk, and my connecting flight to Vermont was canceled, so I rented a car and set out into the storm. I had told Vermont I'd be there, and once you start canceling things, where do you stop?

It's three hours from Boston to Vermont ordinarily, and I made it in six, nonstop, 35 mph, through the prettiest snow landscape you can imagine, yard lights of farmhouses glowing in the twilight, the Main Streets of Norman Rockwell towns lined by lit store windows, and thanks to GPS, the gift of big government, navigation was a cinch, I just stayed in the tracks, drove slowly, listening to a CD, the DiGiallanardo Sisters singing Beatles songs and old swing tunes. I heard it eight times and pulled up to my hotel just over the New Hampshire border.

It was one of those economy hotels with a big TV in the lobby, two heads on the screen, a man and a woman, talking, about the news, I guess, though the sound was low and nobody was listening. It was a background murmur, like ocean surf or the wind in the trees. For this, these faces are paid millions a year and I suppose they imagine they play a large role in the life of the nation, whereas their function is more like houseplants. They're decor.

I checked in at the desk and a man at a nearby table said, "So how are you doing tonight?" and that seemed to be an invitation. So I sat down. Two other men and two women at the table. A cheerful group, as people tend to be in winter once they're warm and in off the road. "How was the drive?" he said. "Almost rearended a snowplow," I said. Other than that, I had listened to the Beatles' "Because" eight times. A woman at the table didn't know the song, so I sang her a little of it. "Because the world is round, it turns me on. Love is old, love is new. Love is all, love is you."

Two of the men and the two women were couples and had met last summer at a memorial service for a mutual friend of the two women. Those two had grown up within 10 miles of each other in Vermont and had never met before. They bonded over the death of the woman, in her 50s; faced with a dreadful diagnosis, she committed suicide. She had seemed rather elated the day before, making phone calls, reminiscing, and had spoken to these two women and told each of them that she should meet the other — "You'd like each other" — and so they had become friends. They had come up to Vermont from Boston this weekend to put flowers on her grave for her birthday and they couldn't find the grave under all the snow. She had been an English teacher and one of the women, a banker, had memorized a Shakespeare sonnet about old age for the memorial, "That time of year thou may'st in me behold, when yellow leaves, or none, or few do

hang” and she said it there at the table, and we all knew the ending: “This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong, To love that well which thou must leave ere long.”

Their story beat mine, hands down. Near-neighbors who are strangers, pulled together by the suicide of a mutual friend. We sat contemplating the lost friend and the poem, and then the conversation dwindled onto politics, and we said goodnight.

To love that well which you must leave ere long. The beauty of a long slow drive through New England hills in a snowstorm. Because the world is white, it’s filled with light. The faces on the TV screen talked about politics, but none of it matters unless you love this world and the people you find in it. You drive into the storm and meet five friends you didn’t know before, you feel their mortality and your own, the snow is falling. Love is here, love is there, love is drifting through the air. And the people in these lovely little towns, how are they doing tonight? Do they have medical insurance? Can they afford to go to the movies? Do their kids learn poetry in school?

Be Attentive: *In the 7 deadly sins* articles do an “examen of consciousness based on the 7 sins”! Which sins do I find in my office/workplace? Which of the sins might I own currently or as part of my career development? Any good stories?

Be Intelligent: Ask yourself once sin is identified, where is grace? What does grace look like in you and in your office/organization? What virtues are called forth and what values need to be employed?

Be Reasonable: Apply the above two questions to home or community life? In comparing are there consistent or inconsistent patterns depending on context work or home? Are there any crossover strategies that might be helpful?

Be Responsible: As Lent begins on March 1st. How do you/we need to repent and start over in light of the lessons shared through this article. How will this conversation impact your thoughts and actions this week, this month?

Bonus Questions: Memento Mori or “Remember, O man, that dust thou art, and to dust thou shall return.” In the Garrison Keillor article we read about the adversity of the snowstorm; then we encounter the suicide/death of a friend. First adversity and death, then redemption and gratitude and finally the enduring power of love. So where are you seeing redemption? Where are you seeing the conversion from sin to grace?

Closing Prayer: St. Francis Peace Prayer

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;
Where there is hatred let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;

And, where there is sadness, joy;
Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
To be understood, as to understand,
To be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
And that it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning is now and
ever shall be world without end. Amen