

Jim Clemmer's Leader Letter



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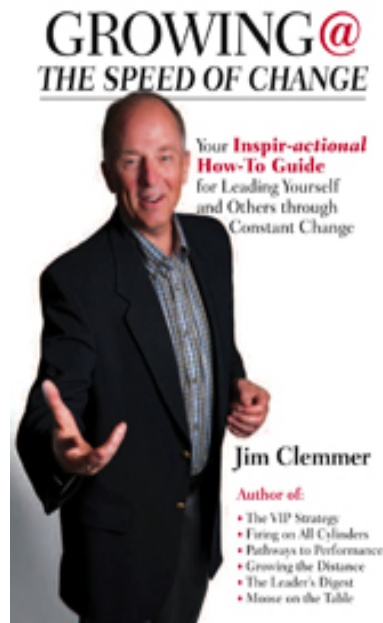
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NOVEMBER 2009, ISSUE 80

SINGING "COME GROW WITH ME" IN MY FRANK SINATRA PERFORMING STANCE



Last month I introduced the issue by telling you about our struggle with whether or not to put my photo on the front cover of [Growing @ the Speed of Change](#). At the time, I recounted how the book cover designer and photographer spent hours shooting hundreds of digital photos looking for a shot they felt combined a warm and inviting stance with action (inspir-action). I said I was too biased to objectively judge the photo chosen but hoped readers would connect with it.

Here's part of a note Kamara Hennessey of Burlington, Ontario, Canada sent me:

"Your photographer has captured you in the manner of a Frank Sinatra performing stance. Since your latest book is defined by you as "edutaining," then this was quite an appropriate photo to use.

You appear as though you are stepping out from the cover in an inviting and charismatic manner to entice your audience to step into your world. If you are familiar with Sinatra's timeless song 'Come Fly with Me,' I can perhaps 'hear' you in song replacing the word 'fly' with 'grow.' Hopefully, like your writing, you can also carry a tune well by sustaining the pitches and not going off key. If not, then add that 'no talent, won't make it in Idol search' to another of your Dad's jokes."

Like the meeting planner said when her keynote speaker failed to show up, I am speechless! I certainly can't carry a tune and musically I am not

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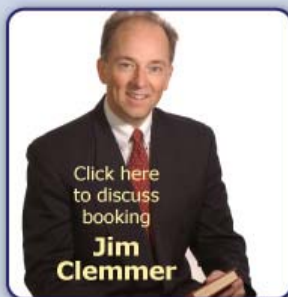
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qualified to carry Frank Sinatra's bags. If I could sing, Kamara has a great idea for a theme song. But doing that song my way would be considered cruel and unusual punishment. I'd be told in no uncertain terms exactly where to fly.

So without musical accompaniment I'd like to invite you to step into this issue and come grow with me...

NERVOUSLY AWAITING EARLY FEEDBACK

I am getting better at enjoying the task of writing for its own satisfaction. This year as I immersed myself in writing my newest book, I was often in the magical state of "flow." I learn at such a deeper level through researching, conceptualizing, roughing out, and then writing on a topic.

A good example with *Growing @ the Speed of Change* was Chapter Two on the nature of reality, consciousness, and the bizarre and incredibly exciting emerging science of quantum mechanics and string theory. I lost – and confused myself – in this field as I tried to simplify and make practical the key ideas. It was the toughest chapter of all to write. But I now feel it provides a very solid framework for the book's core theme of choosing our glasses or perspective when dealing with life's constant and most difficult changes.

So while I am very happy with that chapter – and the entire book (I do feel it's my best one yet) – I confess to a bit of nervousness as I await reader feedback. As you can read at <http://www.jimclemmer.com/content/view/1138> it's starting to come in. The comment from my long time colleague and a researcher, writer, and entrepreneur, Jack Zenger (he co-founded Zenger-Miller now part of AchieveGlobal) is much appreciated. And feedback from Jim Estill, high tech entrepreneur and board member of Blackberry maker, Research in Motion (RIM), is appreciated given his voracious reading habits.

I found C.S. Clarke's detailed review especially interesting and quite useful feedback. I am gratified by her comments on *Growing @ the Speed of Change* being almost a collection of articles, almost a magazine, almost a training manual, and almost a series of tutorials all connected by the book's formatting. It's exactly that "browser's digest" format I am aiming for. The goal is to produce a book deep enough for a reader who really wants to get immersed in these topics while also being light and breezy enough to attract people who don't read much of this type of material so they can flip through it and get drawn in.

Holding in my hands and rereading the finished product from hundreds of hours of solitary writing does have its own deep reward. Knowing that *Growing @ the Speed of Change* is being read and used as I'd hoped is a bit of sweet cream cheese icing (one of my favorites) on the cake!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR — FREE WEBINAR

On December 3rd, at 1:30 pm (EST) I'll be conducting a free webinar based on the principles found in my new book *Growing @ the Speed of Change*.

The complimentary session will touch on many of the subjects affecting workplaces right across the world including:



- Continuous changes in leadership, direction, and priorities
- Constant re-organizing and restructuring
- Relentless pressure to do more with less
- Change fatigue, low morale, de-motivation and stress

In the past, participants have encouraged other members of their teams and organizations to participate in these sorts of events as a way to acknowledge their commitment to positive change.

This is a condensed version of my highly tailored 60 – 90 minute keynote presentation of the same name. I've also designed a series of highly customized half, one, and two-day workshops around the concepts and approaches outlined in *Growing @ the Speed of Change* and I'd be happy to explore how we might tailor a session for front line staff, supervisors, managers, or executives to meet your needs. You can send me an e-mail for more information.

[Register here](#) for reminders about this event and the link to join in the discussion.

INTRODUCTORY BOOK OFFER EXTENDED: TWO AUTOGRAPHED BOOKS FOR THE PRICE OF ONE NOW ENDS IN NOVEMBER

We were slow getting copies of *Growing @ the Speed of Change* back from our printer because the editorial process went longer than we'd planned this summer. So we were slow getting out the word on this offer. So...we've extended the offer until the end of November. And if you act now I'll throw in a free autograph of every copy of *Growing @ the Speed of Change* when you order it as part of this offer! I am not hustling ShamWows (the ShamWow guy's job is safe), but I don't normally autograph books we sell online so here's your chance to get a collector edition!

You can pass that second copy to a colleague, friend, family, or team member on the grow. You can also combine *Growing @ the Speed of Change* with a copy of *Growing the Distance*, *The Leader's Digest*, or *Moose on the Table* at this same introductory offer of two books for \$19.95. [Click here](#) to review deep discounts on book bundles.

THE QUEST CONTINUES: GOALS VERSUS VISION

I've written extensively about the central role of vision to team/organization leadership and personal growth. Learning about the incredibly magnetic power of imagery and picturing my preferred future at age eighteen dramatically changed my life. It's clearly what set me along the path to the work I do now.

[Improvement Points](#) subscriber, Larry Beckon, responded to a recent Improvement Point e-mail about visioning that he is printing out two copies of. He's keeping one copy of the article for himself and sharing the second copy with others. Here's the Improvement Point he was referring to:

"Goals follow out of the Focus and Context of our visions. They are shorter-term steps toward our longer-term vision. Especially in today's fast changing world, most detailed strategies or sets of plans aren't relevant for more than a few months. Effective visions define what we want us, our team, or our organization to look like well into the future. To set goals is to be reasonable. To vision is to be bold."

- from Jim Clemmer's article, "[Visions Provide the Energizing Context to Reach Our Goals](#)" (click title to read the article)

This article explains how visioning is often confused with goal setting and provides a management/leadership chart from [The Leader's Digest](#) to show the differences. I find many people continually confuse these two complimentary and intertwined elements. Vision grabs our hearts and goals appeal to our head.

You can find an extensive collection of articles and book excerpts on personal visioning (and the intertwined concepts of values and purpose) at <http://www.jimclemmer.com/personal-vision-values-and-purpose.php>. [The Leader Letter](#) archive has past postings and items on this topic at <http://www.jimclemmer.com/newsletter/?cat=19>.

There's another collection of articles on team/organizational vision, values, and purpose at <http://www.jimclemmer.com/vision-values-and-purpose.php>

ARE YOU WALLOWING IN THE SWAMP? NEW "WHERE'S MY LINE" QUIZ NOW ONLINE

I've long collected research on the deadly dangers (both to our physical and mental health) of wallowing in the swamp of negativity and pessimism. Wallowers usually call this being "realistic." That's very true. It is the cynical reality they've chosen to create for themselves.

When writing [Growing @ the Speed of Change](#) I came across this wonderful definition of wallowing from Wiktionary.org and just had to use it as the opening quote for Chapter IV "Bogged Down: When We Wallow in the Swamp." It's very bitter swill to wallow. I couldn't resist that Dad joke as a section heading for this chapter!

1. *To roll one's self about, as in mire; to tumble and roll about; to move lazily or heavily in any medium; to flounder; as, swine wallow in the mire. 'With Smithers out of the picture I was free to wallow in my own crapulence.'*
2. *To roll; especially, to roll in anything defiling or unclean.*
3. *To live in filth or gross vice; to disport one's self in a beastly and unworthy manner.*

Many people have a problem recognizing they are in the swamp. It's become so familiar and comfortable it feels like home. So I sifted through discussions from the hundreds of workshops I've facilitated on living above, on, or below "the line" for the most common "wallow words" participants used to justify, explain, or reinforce their negative reality. Chapter V of [Growing @ the Speed of Change](#) is entitled "Wallow Words: The Tempting Ten." As stated in this chapter's headline, my goal with these common phrases (e.g. "I am not a born leader") was to take away excuses for "sinking thinking."

I've just developed a new quiz based on the Tempting Ten. You can answer these ten simple questions in less than a minute and get a score showing whether you're living mostly in the leader, follower, or wallower zone. Go to our home page (www.JimClemmer.com) and find "Where's My Line" under the headline "Take a Leadership Quiz!" at the bottom of the center column.

#1 ON THE TEMPTING TEN: "I AM NOT A BORN LEADER"

The CLEMMER Group does a lot of work with our Clients defining and implementing competency models (performance management systems, training, 360 feedback, etc.) for supervisors, managers, and executives. Recently I was working with a Client when the issue of nurture versus nature emerged yet again. The question was whether people can improve their emotional intelligence or leadership skills.

I hear excuses like "that's just the way I am" or "strong leaders are naturals" so often from people who would rather slide down and wallow in the swamp than take responsibility for their choices and change their reality. That's why I deliberately put it in the #1 spot on the Wallow Words Tempting Ten list (see previous section).

In this section of [Growing @ the Speed of Change](#) (headlined "Why Don't My Genes Fit?") I used these examples from the mounting evidence that our leadership skill level is a choice:

- *"The most dangerous leadership myth is that leaders are born – that there is a genetic factor to leadership. This myth asserts that people simply either have certain charismatic qualities or not. That's nonsense; in fact, the opposite is true. Leaders are made rather than born."*
- Warren Bennis, Distinguished Professor of Business Administration and Founding Chairman of The Leadership Institute at the University of Southern California
- *"Consistently and overwhelmingly, the evidence showed that experts are always made, not born." "...if you want to achieve top performance as a manager and a leader, you've got to forget the folklore about genius that makes many people think they cannot take a scientific approach to developing expertise...the journey to truly superior performance is neither for the faint of heart nor for the impatient. The development of genuine expertise requires struggle, sacrifice, and honest, often painful self-assessment."*
- From a major study reported in *Harvard Business Review*.
"...based on rigorous research (from over 100 leading scientists) that looked at exceptional performance using scientific methods that are verifiable and reproducible..."
- *Fortune* magazine published an article entitled "Why Talent is Overrated" that addresses this critical self- and leadership-development question. The subtitle to the piece states, *"The conventional wisdom about 'natural' talent is a myth. The real path to great performance is a matter of choice."* The article gives an example of two young men who started working together at Proctor & Gamble in the late seventies. They were unremarkable recruits who did not stand out in any way early in their careers. Writer Geoff Colvin quotes one of them as recalling, *"We were voted the two guys probably least likely to succeed."* Colvin goes on to write, *"These two young men are of interest to us now for only one reason: They are Jeffrey Immelt and Steven Ballmer, who before age 50 would become CEOs of two of the world's most valuable corporations, General Electric and Microsoft. Contrary to what any reasonable person would have expected when they were new recruits, they reached the apex of corporate achievement."*

EXPANDED BOOK AVAILABILITY ACROSS THE UK AND EUROPE

Every day a good proportion of visitors to www.JimClemmer.com – and new subscribers to *The Leader Letter* and my [blog](#) – come from the United Kingdom, Ireland and other European Union countries. Unfortunately, the shipping costs of sending one or more books outside of North America made it prohibitively expensive to keep up with my published work.

So I'm extremely happy to announce that all my books are now available in the United Kingdom, and throughout the European Union, with local shipping and no need to worry about currency exchange.

Here are links to all my books on Amazon.co.uk – but you should be able to find and order them through any retailer:

- [Growing @ the Speed of Change](#)
- [The Leader's Digest](#)
- [Growing the Distance](#)
- [Moose on the Table](#)
- [Firing on All Cylinders](#)
- [Pathways to Performance](#)

If you do pick up one or more of these books, I'd also ask that you add a quick review when you've finished to make this material more "findable" on the Amazon.co.uk web site.

BOOK REVIEW – HOW GOD CHANGES YOUR BRAIN: BREAKTHROUGH FINDINGS FROM A LEADING NEUROSCIENTIST

As part of my morning spiritual reading and meditation I've just finished studying – and working to apply – a fascinating new book entitled *How God Changes Your Brain: Breakthrough Findings from a Leading Neuroscientist*. Co-author Andrew Newberg M.D. is the director of the Center for Spirituality and the Mind at the University of Pennsylvania. Co-author Mark Robert Waldman is a therapist and associate fellow at the Center. This unique new book is exactly the type I love because it combines solid research with mystical teachings, powerful anecdotes and personal experiences, along with very practical application exercises.

Based on their extensive brain scanning, surveying, and analysis, the authors and their research team found that active and positive spiritual belief changes our brains for the better. But, they conclude, "actual faith isn't always necessary: atheists who meditate on positive imagery can obtain similar neurological benefits." They also found that there is no one faith or approach healthiest for our brain – as long as it's rooted in love and compassion. Extreme and negative beliefs rooted in anger and prejudice can permanently damage our brains. When we look at the havoc wrought on this world by religious extremism and hate these findings have deep implications for global security and humanity's collective well-being.

My copy is full of underlining and lots of notes. Here's just one passage summarizing some of their intriguing findings:

"We can evoke or suppress specific emotions and focus our thoughts in ways that biologically influence other parts of the brain. From a neuroscientific perspective, this is

astonishing because it upsets the traditional view that we cannot voluntarily influence nonconscious areas of the brain. Only human beings can think themselves into happiness or despair, without any influence from the outside world. Thus, the more we engage in spiritual practices, the more we gain control over our body, mind, and fate."

The book has a series of chapters with many simple and practical application exercises that I find very useful. As I've struggled to learn how to tame my "monkey mind" through meditation, some of the techniques they've outlined are very helpful for starting my day and relaxing at bedtime for a better sleep.

To see more of the extensive body of work of both the authors, go to www.andrewnewberg.com and www.markrobertwaldman.com. There's an outline and excerpts of the book at <http://markrobertwaldman.com/bookexcerpts.aspx>.

This research further illustrates the power of positive choice that I've written quite a lot about. Two fairly recent blog posts are (click on the titles to read them) [Which Framing Level? Wallowing, Following or Leading](#), and [Harnessing the Phenomenal Power of Self-Hypnosis With Affirmations](#). In the March issue of *The Leader Letter* I included an item on our [Range of Reality: Choosing the Best or the Worst of Times](#) excerpted from *Growing @ the Speed of Change*.

THOUGHTS THAT MAKE YOU GO HMMM ON...THE MIND/BODY CONNECTION

I've long collected information regarding the fascinating medical research on how our beliefs change our brain and how that connects to our physical health. Our tangible physical world is powerfully affected by our intangible thoughts and feelings.

I found researching Chapter II ("Reality Check") of [Growing @ the Speed of Change](#) to be especially intriguing. I tried to show that we really need to pay attention to what our thoughts produce in our lives. Here are a few excerpts:

"The relationship between emotion and health is turning out to be more interesting, and more important, than most of us could have imagined. Viewed through the lens of 21st-century science, anxiety, alienation and hopelessness are not just feelings. Neither are love, serenity and optimism. All are physiological states that affect our health just as clearly as obesity or physical fitness. And the brain, as the source of such states, offers a potential gateway to countless other tissues and organs – from the heart and blood vessels to the gut and the immune system. The challenge is to map the pathways linking mental states to medical ones, and learn how to travel them at will."
- Herbert Benson (Mind/Body Medical Institute Associate Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School), Julie Corliss (medical writer at Harvard Medical School), and Geoffrey Cowley (*Newsweek's* health editor)

"Placebo treatment can dramatically reduce pain compared to no treatment, but only if the subjects know it is happening. It is not the placebo itself that reduces the pain, which makes perfect sense since it is inert. It is the knowledge of the placebo that does the trick...Human biology is comprised of neurons, neurotransmitters and

synapses; but it is also comprised of meaning, experience, knowledge and practice."

- Daniel Moerman, *Meaning, Medicine and the 'Placebo Effect'*

"All the major diseases of our day – heart disease, cancer, hypertension, and more – were shown to be influenced, at least to some degree, by the mind."

- Larry Dossey, *Recovering the Soul: A Scientific and Spiritual Search*

"My research has shown me that when emotions are expressed – which is to say that the biochemicals that are the substrate of emotion are flowing freely – all systems are united and made whole. When emotions are repressed, denied, not allowed to be whatever they may be, our network pathways get blocked, stopping the flow of the vital feel-good unifying chemicals that run both our biology and our behavior."

- Candace Pert, *Molecules of Emotion*

"When athletes think they are taking a performance-enhancing drug, their performance tends to get better – even if they never really take the drug. 'This is a very relevant finding of the biology of the mind,' said study co-author Dr. Ken Ho, head of the pituitary research unit at the Garvan Institute of Medical Research in Sydney, Australia. 'There is a very real placebo effect at play in a sporting context, in which a favorable outcome can be achieved purely on the basis of a belief that one has received something beneficial – even if one hasn't.'"

- "Sports Doping's Effect May Be in the Mind," *HealthDay*

CONNECTING ON LINKEDIN

I have been using LinkedIn fairly extensively over the past few months. It's essentially a professional equivalent to Facebook. Facebook is a good way to stay in touch with family and friends. LinkedIn is an excellent tool to find past associates, Clients, workshop participants, or readers that I've lost touch with. It's also a good way to share interests or help each other out through a few special interest groups I'm part of.

[Click here](#) if you want to view my LinkedIn profile. If you're on LinkedIn and would like to connect, please send me an invitation. My [blog](#) feeds into my LinkedIn profile so this is another way you can be notified of my postings.

Like our web site, my LinkedIn profile is never finished and I am constantly updating it. One area I'd appreciate your help is Recommendations. If you've had a positive experience in working with me, please post your comments there.

HOW CHANGING BEHAVIOR CHANGES ORGANIZATION CULTURE

I recently joined the LinkedIn group "HR - Organization Development & Training." Eli Sopow, Special Advisor, Change Management at Royal Canadian Mounted Police posted the question, "Can changing behavior change your organization culture?" It was a question at the heart of so much of The CLEMMER Group's consulting and training work of the last years so I had to jump in.

I've studied and written quite a lot about culture change since we started working with Zenger-Miller and Tom Peters on a "Toward Excellence" executive implementation program back in 1983. Over the years I've facilitated and guided hundreds of management teams on variations of this topic. I've come to firmly believe that the key variable in successful or unsuccessful culture change is the management team leading it. An organization's behavior (and values) ripple out from the management team. As the old adage reminds us, "If we keep doing what we've always done we'll keep getting what we've always got." You can read an article I wrote on this for *The Globe & Mail* a few years ago at <http://www.jimclemmer.com/culture-change-starts-with-the-management-team.php>.

As the lively debate/discussion carried on, I recounted a recent lunch with the police chief of a large police service on the challenges of shifting an entrenched culture. He is a younger and more open/transparent leader than most chiefs. We talked about how especially difficult it is to change behavior in a paramilitary organization that's steeped in command and control. He's having trouble getting his senior managers to understand the critical balance of bossing and leading and when is the right time for either one. His organization epitomizes the truism that the higher a manager rises the less he or she has to deal with people who disagree with him or her.

My experience is that the most successful culture change comes either from a strong CEO, like that police chief who is modeling and driving leadership behavior change, and/or the senior team that is willing to look in the mirror to see how their behavior impacts the culture. A simple example is looking at a culture of departmentalism, silos, and turf protection. The roots can be traced to a management team that doesn't manage conflict well (so it usually goes underground), operates independently with only vertical accountability, and may take snipes and potshots at each other (often wrapped in "humor") in meetings or to their direct reports.

The discussion turned to whether it's possible for a department or divisional unit to change their culture despite the bigger organization. We've seen examples of successful culture change starting with a unit management team (division, department, or branch) and then spreading out from there. It takes strong and determined leadership and a united team to create "an island of excellence in a sea of mediocrity – or worse." My only book of fiction (*Moose on the Table*) was a story showing a middle manager doing exactly that despite a bully boss.

A simple model that has helped set a strong foundation is getting the management to embrace and apply the idea that they have three fundamental choices in reshaping their team/unit culture. They can lead, follow, or wallow (go to <http://www.jimclemmer.com/chapter-three-wallow-follow-lead.php> for more). Once the team firmly agrees they want to live in the leader zone they begin a change process that starts with identifying those behaviors, systems/processes, training, performance management, etc. that they directly control, can influence in the bigger organization, or have no control over (so they need to let go of the negative energy and "awfulizing" uncontrollables like political interference, the economy, demographics etc.). In a number of cases the renewed unit has created such a successful forward surge in their performance and "the way we do things around here" that other units have joined the process and the bigger organization has gotten on board as well.

We have an extensive collection of articles and excerpts – including our SVP, Scott Schweyer's excellent five-part series – on culture change at <http://www.jimclemmer.com/culture-change.php>.

READ IT HERE OR HOT OFF MY BLOG

Most of the items in each month's issue of *The Leader Letter* were first published in my [blog](#) (updated twice per week) the previous month. You can wait to read it all together each month in *The Leader Letter* or you can read each item as a [blog](#) post and have them sent directly to you hot off my computer by signing up at <http://www.jimclemmer.com/blog/>. Just enter your e-mail address in the upper left corner box under "Sign up for E-mail Blog Notification."

MOST POPULAR OCTOBER IMPROVEMENT POINTS

[Improvement Points](#) is a no-charge service to bring timely and inspirational quotes from my articles to subscribers three times a week. Built around our new [topic index](#), Improvement Points are crafted to help you become a better leader of yourself, your team and your organization. Each Improvement Point links directly to a full article on our web site. If you'd like to read more about the point being made in that day's Improvement Point, you simply click on the "Read the full article now" link below each IP. Many subscribers circulate especially relevant [Improvement Points](#) articles to their team, Clients, or colleagues for further discussion or action.

Here are the three most popular Improvement Points we sent out in October:

"Managers often will try to solicit ideas using various formalized approaches, such as suggestion boxes. These are rarely effective. A disgruntled staff member once put a sign on a suggestion box that summed up the consensus view of this approach: "Please don't put any more ideas in here. The handle is broken and it won't flush." Instead, the organization needs to focus on the leadership values of partnership, participation, and involvement. Without these values there is no system that can foster the communication necessary to keep ideas flowing."

- from Jim Clemmer's article, "Engagement is an Inside Job"

[Read the full article now!](#)

"Strong leaders engage people's hearts. They build ever-deeper passion and commitment. The key leadership word is "care." When we care about our work, we will often be harder on ourselves than anyone else would dare to be. When we really care about the customers we serve, we'll go out of our way to ensure that each "moment of truth" (contact with customers) is as positive as we can make it. When we care about making our organization successful, we'll go above and beyond our job to do whatever it takes to be part of a winning team. When we care about our products or services, we'll do whatever it takes to continue feeling proud of what we do."

- from Jim Clemmer's article, "Leaders Foster Individual Passion for Change and Improvement"

[Read the full article now!](#)

"Leaders develop and bring out the best in people. This dramatically expands the performance capacity of an organization. With a strong leadership foundation, management systems and processes, as well as technology and technical expertise, expand to their full potential."

- from Jim Clemmer's article, "A Coach's Playbook for Leaders"

[Read the full article now!](#)

FEEDBACK AND FOLLOW-UP

I am always delighted to hear from readers of *The Leader Letter* with feedback, reflections, suggestions, or differing points of view. Nobody is ever identified in *The Leader Letter* without their permission. I am also happy to explore customized, in-house adaptations of any of my material for your team or organization. Drop me e-mail at Jim.Clemmer@Clemmer.net.

Keep learning, laughing, loving, and leading – living life just for the L of it!!

Jim

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