



Keynote Speaker

Workshop/Retreat Leader

Management Team Developer



Jim Clemmer's Leader Letter

July 2003, Issue 4 ~ View on-line at www.clemmer.net

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Welcome to July!

As the pace of business slows and we take holidays during the summer, it's the perfect time for the pause that refreshes. Whether sitting around the pool or the lake, or taking a long walk on a warm summer evening, this is a great opportunity for reflection and renewal.



Key Notes from My Keynotes

Some industries and professions are under particular strain these days. That's certainly the case for healthcare professionals during these times of financial constraint, aging populations, and viruses like SARS or West Nile.

I was the opening keynote speaker for the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association this spring at their annual conference in Regina. Their conference theme was, "Discover the Leader Within." I took "speaker license" with their theme and modified my slide to read "Nursing the Leader Within." I introduced this theme with the analogy of how parents of young children on airplanes are advised that if the oxygen masks were ever to "drop from the panel above," put the mask on yourself first and then assist your child. This is

counterintuitive to our parental instincts. But, of course, if we don't take care of ourselves first, we may not be around to help anyone else (I wrote about using this metaphor in another setting in the [May Leader Letter](#)).

As you can see in the comment below from one of the conference organizers, the response to the notion of "oxygenating yourself first" to set up my overview of the timeless principles of personal leadership (drawn mostly from [Growing the Distance](#)) resonated very strongly with the 300 participants. Taking care of ourselves first so we can more energetically lead others is common sense. But it's not always common practice – especially among caregivers, parents, and other helping professions. During this summer's reflection and renewal, ask yourself whether you're getting enough self-leadership oxygen. If not, help others by taking care of yourself.

"100% were satisfied or very satisfied with your opening keynote address. A total of 80% were very satisfied (the highest rating possible). Impressive. You were indeed humorous, passionate, and profound all at the same time. Respondents were also asked what they enjoyed the most (about our conference), and your opening keynote was mentioned several times...incorporating comments from the previous evening's awards ceremony was a nice touch... Again, a heartfelt thank you."

Susan Smith-Brazil, Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association



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Teaming Up to Achieve Stellar Service

I have reconnected with some old friends and previous colleagues at AchieveGlobal Canada to bring together our respective strengths in the training and strategic organization change fields. If you're not familiar with my background, click here to see my biography and previous experience as co-founder of The Achieve Group (www.clemmer.net/bio/jimgen.shtml).

AchieveGlobal has a large selection of very powerful training modules and programs in customer service and leadership. I have been working with hundreds of management teams over the last few decades to assess, plan, and implement customer service, culture change, and other organization change effects.

Despite all the rhetoric about the importance of customers, people, and leadership, research consistently shows that 50 – 70 percent of service improvement and leadership development programs are failing. Harvard Business School professor Rosabeth Moss Kanter likens the typical improvement effort to "putting lipstick on a bulldog...not only has the bulldog's appearance not been improved, but now it's really angry."

Feeble or failing service improvement and leadership development efforts often fall into one or more of these traps:

- ❖ **Partial Programs and Pieces**
- ❖ **Not Leading from the Inside Out**
- ❖ **Bolted On, Not Built In**
- ❖ **Weak Team Leadership**
- ❖ **Resistance to Change**

I will try to deliver a fast paced, information-packed morning at the **complimentary briefing on Achieving Stellar Service: Leading in Turbulent Times in Vancouver, BC on September 3, 2003 and Calgary, Alberta on September 4, 2003**. I'll do my best to give participants more than their money's worth! (There is no charge for this complimentary briefing.)

This briefing is intended for senior managers, human resource directors, improvement coordinators, change agents, customer service managers, and internal organization development professionals. It's an especially powerful opportunity for a team of key senior managers and professionals to attend together and review current service improvement and leadership development activities.

Seating is limited and past briefings have been full. We aren't planning any other public sessions like this one. Go to www.clemmer.net/events/stellar.shtml for more details on the session and to register. If you are located in Canada and can't attend either briefing, but would like to explore the joint work AchieveGlobal Canada and The CLEMMER Group are doing around customer service and/or leadership development for potential application in your organization, contact me directly at Jim.Clemmer@Clemmer.net or (519) 748-5968.



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Try to Remember...My Most Memorable Articles

Recently a web site that posts a number of my articles for their visitors/members asked me which are the three most memorable articles that I have penned in my career. The editor was having a tough time choosing from the approximately 250 articles and columns available on our website (see www.clemmer.net/articles.shtml for the index).

I replied that my most memorable articles are usually my most recent ones, that reflect my latest thinking or most current issues. Of course, my new book, *The Leader's Digest: Timeless Principles for Team and Organization Success* represents my latest thinking on leadership. Here are three recent articles adapted from *The Leader's Digest*:

Authentic Communication: Dealing with Moose-on-the-Table

The moose represents an issue that everyone knows is a problem but isn't being addressed. People are trying to carry on as if things are normal. By failing to declare the issue, they further empower it.

www.clemmer.net/excerpts/authentic_comm.shtml

Stop Whining and Start Leading

Less effective managers aspire to lead but end up demoralizing their own teams and frustrating themselves by choosing to be disempowered by their bosses. They unwittingly fall for the cult of heroic management -- the notion that leadership comes down from on high.

www.clemmer.net/excerpts/stop_whining.shtml

Timeless Leadership Principles

Both management and leadership are needed to make teams and organizations successful. Trying to decide which is most important is like trying to decide whether the right or left wing is more important to an airplane's flight.

www.clemmer.net/excerpts/timeless_principles.shtml

Since I always like to give our web site (and the *Leader Letter*) readers more than their money's worth (especially when they aren't paying anything!), I also gave the editor my three favorite articles adapted from *Growing the Distance: Timeless Principles for Personal, Career, and Family Success*. There are now nearly 100,000 copies of this book in print and sales have continued to gain momentum (we may be hitting that elusive "critical mass"). The 70+ excerpts on our web site have an extremely heavy "hit rate". Here are three of my favorites:

Change or Be Changed

Failing to respond to inevitable change, results in being victims of change.

www.clemmer.net/excerpts/change_or.shtml



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Choice More than Chance Determines Our Circumstance

Dwelling on our problems rather than our possibilities comes all too naturally. Too often we choose to curse the darkness rather than light a candle.

www.clemmer.net/excerpts/choice_more.shtml

Life Accumulates in Our Personal Choice Accounts

Now is the time to prepare for our next harvest. We can't wait until harvest time to plant the seeds. We can't strike a bargain to plant seeds once we see whether the harvest is worth the effort. Our choices accumulate in our personal choice accounts. We're accumulating deficits or surpluses with each decision we make.

www.clemmer.net/excerpts/life_accumulates.shtml

He's No Professional, He's Just My Dad

I am one of the two groups of people that love to get positive feedback and recognition for my work (the two groups are: men and women). So, I was delighted to get this e-mail a few weeks ago (by the way, all correspondence and comments shared in the *Leader Letter* are only done with full permission):

"I am on the faculty of the Atocrates Centre for Project Management at Durham College's Whitby Campus and currently teaching the fourth module in the five-module Master's Certificate in Project Management program. Your books and newsletters have provided me with numerous quotes and other material – with full attribution of course – which truly enriches what I have to offer my students in "Project Leadership Skills Development".

"I am further impressed with your 'down-to-earth' style, which is such a contrast to the academic material, and the academics themselves, with whom I deal on a daily basis.

"Thanks for all you have done, and all you are doing, for the subject of leadership."

Don Guillod, Principle, The Kawartha Highlands Group, Burnt River, ON

Following is my response:

Hi Don,

Thanks very much for your most thoughtful feedback. I always appreciate hearing about how my work is used and impacts others.

I especially appreciate your comments on my style. Last week I took our 18 year-old daughter, Jennifer, with me on a speaking engagement at a conference in Calgary. It was the first time she had heard me speak to a room full of managers. When we discussed her impressions on the plane coming home, she said she was surprised that I didn't "put on a



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professional mask" that she wouldn't recognize. "You weren't professional; you were just Dad at the front of the room giving a talk." Since my goal is to be authentic, I thanked her for the compliment.

Jim

I have thought about my conversation with Jennifer a few times since that trip to Calgary. Behaving like a "professional" is often a good thing. I am on the national board of the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers (CAPS). Like many professional groups, we have a strict code of conduct and a rigorous process and standards for our "certified speaking professional" designation (I reported on my receipt of this designation in the [May issue of the *Leader Letter*](#)).

I am all for professionalism. I also like the assurance that whether I am working with colleagues in my field or buying professional services, I am dealing with a true pro that really knows his or her "stuff." I like to know that he or she continues to study their field of expertise, has deep experience, and can handle most of what is thrown at him or her.

But too often "professional" is another name for impersonal. We often equate professionalism with being unemotional or not showing our true selves. While few people want us to throw a temper tantrum or break down in tears when we might really feel like doing just that, people connect most strongly with us when we're real. When we can be open, transparent, and not putting on an act, is often when we're the most genuine – and persuasive. Of course, if the image I want to portray is not the person I really am, that may necessitate a deep (and maybe painful) look in my personal development mirror.

The Gardening Analogy Keeps Growing

"I thoroughly enjoyed your June issue (of the Leader Letter) and reading your gardening analogies. Like you, I am an avid gardener. Many years ago at a workshop/seminar I had the pleasure of listening to Robert Dilts, the keynote speaker and his use of the garden as an analogy to his topic on Personality Traits in the Workforce and other Institutions. He referred to recognizing different species of plants/vegetation's ability to thrive only in certain environmental conditions. In order for them to blossom or bear fruits to their fullest potential they need to be planted or relocated in the right soil/zoning conditions and given the ongoing nurturing needed.

"His topic addressed recognizing people's dominant personality type/traits and directing or re-directing them to positions and responsibilities where they can give of their best potential, whether it is in a work, school or home environment. Most of all for those in authority to support and encourage individuals to embrace opportunities and resources to enhance their internal and external growth and development applicable to their unique personality and the environment they are more prone to adapt to more readily.



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"To reinforce his position on personality type and effective team work to get the job done, he pointed out that it is necessary to have on board The Dreamer, The Thinker, The Critic (for constructive criticism), and The Doer; each working with, not against, the other. I found that session to be a most insightful and informative, and have since tried to make a concerted effort to identify individuals with the above stronger tendencies...the people we connect with and the opportunities they present to us through thoughts, words and deeds do help us to keep growing."

Kamara Hennessey, Burlington, ON Canada

Improvement Points Subscribers' Top Picks for June

Improvement Points are short quotes from one of the hundreds of free articles on our web site that are sent by e-mail three times per week. Each quote comes with a heading that corresponds with my core models and frameworks ([click here to view those](#)). Subscribers have the opportunity to click on the title of the article that the quote was taken from and go read the entire piece. Of the quotes/articles sent out in June, the three most popular were (you can click on the article title to read it):

- **Communication Strategies, Systems, and Skills**
at http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/communication_strategies.shtml
- **Feedback to See How Others See Me**
at <http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/feedback.shtml>
- **Goal Setting Can Limit Our Flexibility and Learning**
at http://www.clemmer.net/excerpts/goal_setting.shtml

Here's one comment from an enthusiastic Improvement Points subscriber that really energizes us to continue sending out these tips!

"No words are enough to describe my appreciation to you. You know what? You always make my day right. Everyday, I start my day full of motivation end up at night still invigorated...because of all the notes, and really motivating nuggets of wisdom you are sending me.

"I hope and I would like to assure myself that even in my little way, I live up to the wisdom that I am receiving from you.

"More power to you!"

**Apollo Neil R. Monroy, Researcher, Plant Breeding, Genetics and Biochemistry Division
International Rice Research Institute, Los Banos, Laguna, Philippines**



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Book Review: Authentic Happiness

Martin Seligman has done it again. I have long been a fan of his work. Among his 20 books, I have often cited his classic 1990 book, *Learned Optimism* in my own writing and presentations. As Professor of Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania and as Past President of the American Psychological Association, Martin has spearheaded groundbreaking research on the emerging field of "positive psychology." This approach is "shifting the profession away from its narrow-minded focus on pathology, victimology, and mental illness to positive emotion, virtue, and strength."



In *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment*, Martin provides the Signature Strengths Survey along with a number of brief quizzes and tests that are helpful tools for assessing how much positive emotion we experience and how to determine our greatest strengths. His research shows that there is a direct relationship between the positive emotions, or happiness, we experience in our lives and our core, or signature, strengths.

"I do not believe that you should devote overly much effort to correcting your weaknesses. Rather; I believe that the highest success in living and the deepest emotional satisfaction comes from building and using your signature strengths."
(page 13)

Martin prescribes; "Weigh up your life once a year. If you find you are getting short weight, change your life. You will usually find that the solution lies in your own hands." (page 82) His self-assessment tools and the Signature Strengths Survey are ideal for some of that vital self-oxygenation and personal reflection and renewal.

His formula for authentic happiness recognizes that our life is a balance of things we can control and things we can't (one of his earlier books is entitled, *What You Can Change and What You Can't*). Martin's formula for lasting happiness is "H = S + C + V. Where H is your enduring level of happiness, S is your set range, C is the circumstances of your life, and V represents factors under your voluntary control." (page 45)

Authentic Happiness is a very well researched book that's also quite readable and very practical. I have purchased copies for our kids to try and help them lay the foundation for a lifetime of real happiness and fulfillment.



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Site Seeing: Web Site Recommendation

Martin Seligman has developed an excellent web site corresponding with his book, *Authentic Happiness*. The Signature Strengths Survey and all the quizzes found in his book are available on his web site with automatic calculations of the scores and storage of your responses for ongoing comparisons and reflections. <http://www.authentic happiness.com/>

Thoughts that Make You Go Hmm...

"Many a man's reputation would not know his character if they met on the street."

- Elbert Hubbard

"We all create an outward self with which to face the world, and some people come to believe that is what they truly are. So they people the world with doctors who are nothing outside the consulting-room, and judges who are nothing when they are not in court, and businessmen who wither with boredom when they have to retire from business, and teachers who are forever teaching. That is why they are such poor specimens when they are caught without their masks on. They have lived chiefly through the Persona."

- Robertson Davies, *The Manticore*

"There's something we call professional terminalism. People who emphasize too strongly the fact that they're professionals usually are not very good at what they do. What really adds up to professionalism is being very good at what you do in a very modest way."

- Herb Kelleher, founder of Southwest Airlines

"Jazz comes from who you are, where you've been, what you've done. If you don't live it, it won't come out of your horn."

- Charlie "Yardbird" Parker, saxophonist

"If life was fair, Elvis would be alive and all the impersonators would be dead."

- Johnny Carson, former host of "The Tonight Show"

"I am grateful that I am not as judgmental as all those censorious, self-righteous people around me."

- Author Unknown



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Leader Letter Feedback

"Besides working on three projects simultaneously, I was putting to bed four university courses (two on campus at night, one on the web and one via distance hard copy). I sobbed heartily when I got my marks...90, 85, 80 and 78. I knew with health, determination and stamina (and an understanding family)...I could do anything. (Only three to go to succeed in a Bachelor's Degree in Post Ed...a long time goal!)"

"I want to thank you for your part in this success. Receiving your e-mail quotes and newsletters...has stoked the inspiration to stay focused. Besides the hundred quotes which adorn the wall above my computer...receiving the words of wisdom on the e-mail (usually unexpected and at the very right moment!) has been welcomed and enlightening.

"Jim...I want you to know the positive difference you are making in society. You truly know the laws of giving. I pray you receive back tenfold what you offer to others. Thank you!"

Mary Jane Smith, Mount Pearl, NF, Canada

Following is my response:

Hi Mary Jane,

Wow! Now it's my turn to be inspired by a message from you! I sure appreciate the feedback and knowing what a difference my work has made for you. That re-fires my enthusiasm to continue what I am doing.

Congratulations on pursuing your educational goal – and on your outstanding marks. You're a testament to hard work and determination.

Thanks very much,

Jim

"Jim, thanks for your newsletter. I particularly appreciated the "It's okay son, everyone's doing it" story and your moose-on-the-table metaphor. Some of the folks to whom is applied the metaphor, I've met afore."

Luther Beauchamp, Chiefland, FL, USA

"Great newsletter. Perks me up to have my computer do something useful. I pass this to my co-workers and wait to see what they comment upon. It is a good conversation starter."

Stan Harvey, Vice President Managed Systems, Nuclear, Ontario Power Generation, Toronto, ON, Canada



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Coming Events

Achieving Stellar Service: Leading in Turbulent Times

Vancouver – September 3, 2003

Calgary – September 4, 2003



This is a rare, complimentary 1/2 day Executive Briefing in Vancouver Sept. 3rd, and Calgary Sept. 4th. I'm very excited to partner with AchieveGlobal. Our connection goes back to when I co-founded The Achieve Group, which was sold to Zenger Miller and is now part of AchieveGlobal. Aligning The CLEMMER Group's leadership expertise with AchieveGlobal's award-winning training is an extraordinary combination! I hope you can join me and AchieveGlobal for a fast paced, information packed morning! **Click for details and registration:** www.clemmer.net/events/stellar.shtml

I would love to hear from you on any of the discussions raised in this issue of the Leader Letter...or any other matters concerning my work. Of course, I especially welcome conversations exploring how I might help you or your team/organization with a keynote presentation, management team retreat, or workshop.

Send me an e-mail at Jim.Clemmer@Clemmer.net or call me directly at (519) 748-5968.

I hope to connect with you again next month!

All the best,

Jim

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