



Liz on Leadership

From Opponent to Ally: How to Turn Adversaries into Your Best Advocates

I flew to Chicago last week to participate in Alan Weiss' Million Dollar Consulting Convention. I was joined there by an exceptional cohort of friends and colleagues — an array of business experts from across the world. It was a terrific event, punctuated by a compelling keynote by Wharton's Jonah Berger, who was there to share insights from his new book, [Contagious](#).

On my first evening in town, two of my colleagues joined me for dinner at my downtown hotel. We enjoyed a few appetizers, shared a bit of wine, laughed and talked for hours. Just as we began to wind down the conversation, one of my colleagues politely pointed out that she'd found a "foreign object" (a jagged staple) in the food. Not so appetizing and potentially dangerous, were it to have been ingested.

Of course, most of us have had unsatisfactory restaurant experiences from time to time. But discovering a piece of metal in your food is the kind of thing you might be tempted to tell others about, both in person and across social media. And as we all know, an unhappy customer can create real headaches for a business trying to establish or maintain a spotless reputation.

An opponent in the workplace can have a similar impact on your personal brand. They can say unflattering things about you, withhold support for a key initiative, raise concern over a coveted promotion, or pose any number of other obstacles to your success.

Look closely at your work relationships and identify your overt adversaries as well

as your hard-to-spot saboteurs. Figure out why they are opposing you and don't make any assumptions. It may be a matter of organizational politics. It might be a personality clash. It may be the result of conflicting agendas. Or it just might reflect a failure to fully engage them, appreciate their perspective and win their support for what you are trying to achieve. Regardless of the reason, you'll need to sort things out quickly if you are to be successful.

Here are four steps to rapidly get back on track:

1. **Make the covert overt.** Openly acknowledge the issue. Brushing problems under the rug never works for long.
2. **Ask the other person's point of view.** You needn't be solicitous, but you do need to be open, non-defensive and genuinely curious about the problem. Did you do or say something wrong? Did you fail to invite your colleague to an important meeting or neglect to seek her perspective on a new project? What is your contribution to the current situation?
3. **Own it.** If you've inadvertently offended or harmed the other person, apologize and offer to right your wrong. A simple "I'm sorry" goes a remarkably long way. Don't allow your pride to get in the way.
4. **Learn and move on.** What's the key takeaway? Is there a remedy that can be applied to other situations and with other stakeholders? If so, learn quickly, add the new approach to your toolkit, and get right back in the game.

At the end of our dinner in Chicago, the restaurant manager walked over to our table, sincerely apologized for the poor experience and gave us the entire meal on the house. He asked what else he could do to remedy the situation. He was gracious and genuine throughout. As a result, I now have zero temptation to warn others to steer clear of the hotel or its restaurant. On the contrary, I readily tell people what a terrific customer experience I had. And I will surely be willing to give them another chance.

Interview - Marilyn Russell's Remarkable Women

On April 19, I joined Marilyn Russell of CBS Philadelphia radio to discuss my forthcoming book, *Slow Down to Speed Up!* Marilyn and her listeners got the inside scoop on how to be more strategic, efficient and focused, even as information and demands come at us at a breakneck pace. Listen in for a sneak peek at my tools for improving impact and accelerating success in today's 24/7 world.

[Listen to the April 19th interview here](#)

Did you miss my last newsletter?

Do You Participate, Contribute, Connect and Advise?

As the leader of your organization, it can be all too easy to be consumed with the everyday internal activities and operations of your team, department or company.

Yet maintaining a strong connection to the world beyond your own four walls is essential for building industry recognition, unleashing creativity, igniting innovation and driving market leadership.

In my work with Fortune 500 executives, we explore ways to increase connectivity and accelerate success by becoming involved with boards, participating in trade associations, attending key partner conferences and actively contributing to industry publications and events.

I like to practice what I preach. I am a longstanding member of the American Psychological Association, a new member of the advisory board for *Life Science Leader* magazine and I have, for years, been an active member of the Society for the Advancement of Consulting (SAC). In these ways, I stay connected to my clients and abreast of industry trends, while continually learning and sharing best practices with the most sophisticated and successful consultants in the world.

Earlier this month, I had the opportunity to offer advice to the readers of *Life Science Leader* and contributed to SAC's press release on politics in the workplace. In case you missed either, here are some excerpts with links to the original publications:

Read the original: [Ask the Expert - Life Science Leader](#)

What's The Fastest Route To Creating A High-Performing Team?

1. Be crystal clear about what you are trying to achieve...
2. Make sure you've got the right people in the right roles doing the right things...
3. Get your people talking to each other...

Read the original: [Harshly Opposing Political Views in the Workplace Offer New Challenge for American Organizations: SAC Press Release, April 1, 2017](#)

Strong Leadership is Critical

Liz Bywater, PhD, leadership expert and author of the forthcoming book, *Slow Down to Speed Up*, notes "My most successful clients actively foster diversity of thought and robust discussion within their organizations. But in today's hot political climate, discourse can quickly turn ugly. Coworkers may take fiercely disparate positions on passionately held topics and the tenor of discussion can undermine productive discourse. Worse, it can damage relationships and weaken the spirit of collaboration."

Says Dr. Bywater, "Leaders have to deal directly with this. Rather than avoid or ignore the tension, they must be proactive, bold and directive with their employees. No matter how intense the topic, discussion among colleagues is always to remain thoughtful, respectful and professional. Great leaders clearly set the expectation, practice what they preach, and hold people to account."

View the full release [here](#).

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Here's the takeaway: If you find yourself insufficiently connected to the world of your clients, competitors, colleagues and industry experts, it's time to branch

out. Find one organization, event or publication and get involved. Participate, advise, attend, contribute. Become a thought leader. You, along with your team, company and customers will be far better for it.

About Dr. Liz

Dr. Liz Bywater has been called a one-of-a-kind leadership expert. Working at the intersection of business and psychology, she brings together pragmatic experience, advising top executives across the Fortune 500, with an advanced degree in Psychology and a dynamic personal style to inspire, engage and counsel her clients.

For more than a decade, top global organizations have requested Liz's help in resolving issues such as creating extraordinary client relationships, increasing market persuasion, and driving productive collaborations in an increasingly complex world.

Liz advises senior leaders at some of the world's most successful companies, including Johnson & Johnson, Nike, Thomson Reuters, Bristol-Myers Squibb, AmerisourceBergen and more. She uses her expertise in human behavior to drive commercial success. She helps her clients propel innovation, exert influence and lead their organizations through change.

A thought leader in organizational excellence, Liz provides expert commentary for such publications as the Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Fast Company and USA Today. She is on the editorial advisory board for *Life Science Leader* magazine and is a featured expert on such radio broadcasts as CBS Philadelphia's *Philadelphia Agenda* with Brad Segall and *Woman of the Week* with Marilyn Russell.

Liz earned her PhD in Psychology at the Derner Institute for Advanced Psychological Studies at Adelphi University. Her undergraduate degree is from Cornell University, where she graduated Phi Beta Kappa and Cum Laude. She is a longstanding member of the American Psychological Association and the Society for the Advancement of Consulting. She lives in scenic Bucks County, PA, with her husband and two teenage children. Stay tuned for Liz's forthcoming book, *Slow Down to Speed Up!* (Business Expert Press, Fall 2017).

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