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Click for section: [Features](#) [Offers](#) [Resource](#) [Tip](#) [Where](#) [About](#)

## *a MESSAGE from SYLVIA*

### **LEADERSHIP WEAKNESSES**

Perhaps the biggest leadership weakness I've seen over several decades is avoiding what I call "necessary but touchy" conversations with employees. Quite a few clients have hired me to teach them how to initiate and frame such conversations. Christina was one of those people.



Because she feared criticism and rejection, for months this woman continued to tolerate a staffer's chronic inaccessibility, unreturned phone calls, and outdated electronic calendar. These issues impacted both Christina's productivity as well as the entire department's. She realized that her own supervisor would blame her for the problem. When she came to me, this client admitted that she had no idea how to approach the conversation she knew intuitively she needed to have.

By giving her relevant, appropriate language scripting I was able to help Christina to stand taller in her leadership role. Within a couple of weeks she had scheduled a private meeting, held the conversation, clearly communicated her expectations, and followed up on the employee's observable progress. In the beginning, she told me that she felt awkward talking to her staff as I had recommended. With practice her confidence grew. By the end of her coaching engagement Christina had learned to accept necessary, difficult conversations as part of her job. Her fear diminished. This allowed her to feel more competent as a leader. The same can happen for you too—if you struggle in this area.

In my feature article below I've identified ten additional common leadership weaknesses worthy of examination. Do you see yourself in any of them?

[back to Ezine top](#)

## FEATURE ARTICLE

### 10 Leadership Weaknesses and Their Impact at Work

Every leader has a glaring weakness. It's just a matter of what it is and how big it is. Every weakness has consequences too. The question is this: Can you afford them? Wise leaders recognize their weaknesses and identify the impact upon individuals, teams, work flow, culture, service delivery, sales, and profits. Wise leaders don't stop there. They choose to do something to close their leadership gap(s).

1. Micromanaging employees

If you're doing this, you probably have control issues. Breathing down your staff's necks sends the message that you don't trust them to do their jobs to your satisfaction—on time.

2. Failing to see reality

When you refuse to look at people and situations through a clear lens, you don't see things for what they are. A rosy colored glasses approach to leadership sets you up for missing important truths such as an employee's character flaws, a shrinking funding stream, a ruined project.

3. Perfectionism

Trying to be perfect bogs down processes and progress. It can also make your staff feel inadequate no matter what they do. Trade your tedious perfectionistic tendencies for a desire for consistent excellence.

#### 4. Lacking emotional intelligence

If you can't manage your feelings, you're likely to alienate a lot of people. If you can't read a room, you're going to draw wrong conclusions about what is really taking place during meetings. Today emotional intelligence counts as much as any of the hard skills. In leadership you must demonstrate both.

#### 5. Making hasty decisions

Although some decisions must be made immediately, most can wait for at least a day. If you aren't tapping into key people's knowledge and experience before making various judgments and choices, then you're setting yourself up for costly mistakes. As a result, your employment future could be on the line as well as the company's sustainability.

#### 6. Talking too much

Most people in leadership positions talk entirely too much. When you're talking, you aren't listening. When you're not listening, you miss opportunities to determine employee attitudes, acquire critical information, and hear valuable ideas. Ultimately, listening takes you farther than talking.

#### 7. Forfeiting opportunities to influence

If you're not coaching members of your team, you're giving up chances to shift their thinking, enhance their skills, modify their behaviors, and expand their vision. As a leader, a large part of your job is to influence those around you in responsible ways.

#### 8. Resisting change

We live in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world. As a leader, you cannot keep on doing your job like you did it even five years ago. Change is the new name of the game. You must be able to walk without falling on a moving floor. If you resist change, you aren't providing the type of leadership people need today.

#### 9. Modeling undesired behavior

When you smoke your cigarettes next to the "No Smoking" sign outside the front door of your building, you send a double message to everyone watching. When you shout in a meeting, you indirectly give others permission to do the same. Make sure your personal behaviors align with those you want to see in others at work.

#### 10. Ignoring professional development needs

Smart leaders value opportunities to grow. They don't assume they

have reached the pinnacle of their potential skill level. If you make excuses about why you can't enroll for a course, sign up for a conference, or read trade journals, you teach employees that professional development isn't important. Believe me: This has a trickle down effect, and it's not a good one. Your organization pays a price for people standing still.

Never forget that leadership weaknesses, while we all have them, stick pins in your credibility balloon. It's your obligation to face them directly and take action to minimize or eradicate them.

[back to Ezine top](#)

## What Clients Say

### Feedback on Sylvia's Leadership Training and Coaching

*Sylvia provided several key components to our leadership development program. Built on the foundation of one of her teleseminars, she facilitated a dynamic group coaching session that equipped participants with practical solutions for addressing their own career obstacles, fears, and weaknesses. She returned at graduation, delivering a compelling commencement speech that challenged the audience to build resiliency in themselves and others to ensure success in a volatile, uncertain world. I have definitely found Sylvia's style to be highly effective, and her content is always powerful and engaging.*

Jonathan Brown, Training Specialist  
PA Department of Health

[back to Ezine top](#)

## Offers and Opportunities

### Want to Shed the Weight of Your Leadership Weakness?

Whatever your particular leadership weakness, you can move beyond it-- or at least diminish its power. While you may know this intellectually, you may not know what steps to take. That's where I come into the picture. By May 31, 2014 I promise to hop on the phone with three executives or managers to provide the specific guidance you need. To schedule your **FREE** 30 minute session with me, send an email request to: [Sylvia@launchinglives.biz](mailto:Sylvia@launchinglives.biz) today. Be sure to reference this ezine offer. The sooner you receive direction about

how to weaken your weakness, the sooner you and everybody around you benefits. **Remember: I am offering this opportunity to only three people.**

[back to Ezine top](#)

## RESOURCES

### Brand New Book Released

*Leadership Blindspots: How Successful Leaders Identify and Overcome the Weaknesses That Matter* by Robert Bruce Shaw teaches you how to identify them in yourself and others. This newly released 2014 hardcover book also explores the dangers and rewards of blindspots, highlights some of the most common blindspots, and shows you how to see what others miss in situations and human behaviors. The leadership blindspot self assessment included in this resource is a real bonus. Available on Amazon.com for \$25.

[back to Ezine top](#)

## TIP

All of us see ourselves differently than other people see us. Sometimes it's hard to face that fact, but it's true. If you are serious about gaining greater insight into your own leadership weaknesses, select a few trusted representatives from your staff, peers, and Board to get the truth. Not sure what to say? Try using these strategic questions as you reach out to folks:

- What is the one skill or quality I could acquire that would significantly enhance my leadership competency?
- How would that skill or quality strengthen relationships, increase productivity, and improve workplace culture?
- In your opinion, what could make me fail as a leader?

**Suggestion:** Make an effort to incorporate this dialogue into conversations already in progress. This way people are less likely to be guarded and cautious with their responses. By the way, don't interject this subject matter into emails. It's too personal. You want to speak with folks face to face.

[back to Ezine top](#)

## Where in the World is SYLVIA?

### Header

On May 29, 2014 Sylvia debuts as a breakout session presenter for the Harrisburg Chamber's annual *Ladies Who Lead* event to be held at the Best Western Premier—The Central Hotel and Conference Center, Harrisburg, PA. The theme for this year's event is Lead From Where You Are. Specifically, Sylvia's topic is "A Path to Personal Power".

[back to Ezine top](#)



*Join Sylvia on these social networks!*

## About This Ezine

The purpose of this Ezine is to: 1) Provide readers with valuable FREE content which contributes to personal and professional growth as well as overall career development; and 2) Invite readers to take next steps toward working directly with Sylvia.

Back issues are [available here](#). Send an email by [clicking here](#) to manage your free subscription. Sharing content with attribution is encouraged as is forwarding the Ezine email. Include launchinglives.biz in your list of safe senders or friends, depending upon your email software, to be sure you receive the monthly emailed issues.

Launching Lives Ezine is dedicated to "building people ... building businesses." ©2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014

[back to Ezine top](#)

## About SYLVIA

**Sylvia Hepler**, Owner and President of Launching Lives, LLC, specializes in career development for both corporate and nonprofit executives and managers.

Based in South Central PA, she specifically supports clients as they upgrade their current job performance, seek a promotion, or plan/navigate a career transition. What makes her services unique is that Sylvia helps people to cope with change, loss, and grief as they work on developing their careers. Her professional background includes: nonprofit executive management/leadership, nonprofit community health program start-up, program evaluation, public speaking, business and freelance writing, teaching, and retail sales.

A certified executive coach through The Rescue Institute in Golden, Colorado and Quantum Endeavors in Chicago, Illinois (plus a participant in extensive continuing education opportunities with several coaches of national notoriety), Sylvia offers individual and group coaching, assessments, teleseminars, workshops, keynote speeches, and retreats. She also has created tangible and downloadable products that augment her coaching and speaking services.

**For more information** and to connect with Sylvia try:

[Launching Lives Website](#)

[Click to contact Sylvia by Email](#)

Reach Sylvia by phone at **717-761-5457**

[back to Ezine top](#)

## *Launching Lives SERVICES*

**Launching Lives, LLC** is a full service career development company for managers and executives located in South Central PA. Utilizing a holistic approach to service provision, Launching Lives focuses on supporting clients as they create the platinum level career they desire by upgrading their job performance, seeking a promotion, or planning/navigating a career transition

Often people don't really know HOW they might benefit from coaching. Quite simply, ask yourself these questions: "What can't I seem to resolve on my own? What is keeping me awake at night? What am I missing when I look at a certain situation? How can I get to the next professional level? How can I learn certain skills quickly? How can I narrow my professional gaps? How can I motivate my staff? How can I communicate more effectively so I serve myself and others better? How can I reduce my work-related frustration? How can I develop a viable plan of action for myself and/or my organization? How can I obtain greater job satisfaction? Coaching may be the SOLUTION to any of

these issues.

[\*back to Ezine top\*](#)

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