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a MESSAGE from SYLVIA

The VALUE of VULNERABILITY

When is the last time you deliberately demonstrated vulnerability in front of someone at work? It's hard, isn't it? I think it's especially difficult if you're in a management position. You don't want to open yourself to ridicule, rejection, criticism, and attack. You resist being judged. You prefer to be viewed as together and strong instead of fractured and weak. Believe me, I *get* it. I've been there. Often.

The truth is that all of us are vulnerable, and we fear showing it. But over the years I've discovered the benefits to letting others see who we really are. If you choose to tolerate some temporary awkwardness, you find out there's a lot to gain. Vulnerability makes you human to those who are watching. It breaks down walls and enhances relationships. It builds trust. Through the example of your uncensored honesty you give your



staff, peers, and maybe even your boss permission to stop hiding, pretending,

and masking—efforts that demand incredible energy when you stop to consider it.

Letting yourself be vulnerable in the workplace takes practice. It's an ongoing process that requires both self acceptance and commitment. The start of a brand new year offers you an ideal opportunity to *decide* to allow yourself to be more vulnerable. By making that conscious decision you say *yes* to yet another form of growth. Though the holidays are over, vulnerability is a year-round gift you can give yourself and everybody else.

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FEATURE ARTICLE

7 WAYS to DEMONSTRATE VULNERABILITY

How you choose to show vulnerability at work is up to you. This article offers specific language that represents seven different ideas. There's no need to implement all of them. In fact, I recommend that you don't unless you've already developed skills in this area. During the next sixty days dip your toe in the water with just one and see what happens.

1. I made a mistake.

Contrary to what you may think, admitting you goofed or erred in judgment is likely to boost your credibility in colleagues' eyes. It's one thing to own your mistake in the privacy of your mind; it's quite another to acknowledge it aloud. Because this is uncommon behavior, people generally sit up and pay attention.

2. I misunderstood.

Openly declaring that you didn't listen intently, that you missed key information, or that you misinterpreted someone's main point in a conversation takes courage. Once you realize you misconstrued something, asking for clarification is wise on your part because it helps you avoid making a glaring mistake going forward.

3. I'm sorry.

From the time we are small many of us have connected apologies with shame. If this is true for you, ring in the New Year by creating a healthier new association. I bet you never thought about it: "I'm sorry" can emerge from confidence. Practice saying it from that place .

4. I need help.

It's frequently tough for managers to disclose their need for assistance with a task, a project, or a problem. When you do, you may feel inadequate or inept. But asking for help can be a sign of strength. It opens the door for you to receive essential information, ideas, and insights—and let someone else shine. Seeking help may establish or cement a necessary partnership too.

5. I don't know.

In an era of information overload nobody is a walking encyclopedia. And nobody is expected to be one. While you may not enjoy having to profess that you don't know a particular fact, process, or plan, you receive a lesson in humility every time you do so. Tell people what you know, and be forthright about what you don't.

6. I feel intimidated.

Whether or not we face it head-on, we sense our vulnerability when another person or situation intimidates us. You can remove a lot of the pressure by indicating how you feel during these moments. My only advice is to select your audience carefully with this one.

7. I minimized the situation.

All managers have personal limitations that impact their job performance and behaviors. Although you should not use the workplace as a confessional, coming clean about one or two of your limitations is a smart thing to do. Let folks know that you have a tendency to minimize difficult situations, brush off criticism, or keep the peace at any price.

Yes, you take risks by allowing yourself to be vulnerable in the work environment. No question about it. But in my experience the benefits outweigh the risks.

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What Clients Say

By the time I decided to hire Sylvia I was really floundering. Although I had a capable staff, I realized that I wasn't effectively maximizing their talents and skills. My department got decent results, but I knew we could do better. I just didn't know how to make that happen. Sylvia recommended that I meet

individually with each staff person and tell them I needed their help. She advised me to ask them to tell me specifically what would motivate them to exceed my expectations as well as those of the company. While this strategy sounded almost too simple, I discovered that, when I did this, it opened my eyes to many things about my employees. Leveraging these insights over a period of several months took me and my team to the next performance level. The key was to ASK FOR HELP.

- Justin P., Training and Development, Central PA

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Offers and Opportunities

Finding Your Leadership Voice: A Free Teleseminar Coming Soon

On February 10, 2015 Sylvia will present a brand new teleseminar entitled: “Finding Your Leadership Voice”. The topic of vulnerability will be included in the content. Watch your email inbox over the next few days for more details about this **free** audio event.

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RESOURCES

Take This One Minute Self Assessment

Read each statement below and rate yourself using the following scale:

- (4) Frequently
- (3) Occasionally
- (2) Rarely
- (1) Unsure
- (0) Never

_____ I admit to others when I make mistakes.

_____ I tell people when I realize that I've misunderstood something.

_____ I can say the words "I'm sorry".

_____ I ask for help when I see that I need it.

_____ I forthrightly admit that I don't know something.

_____ I let others know when I feel intimidated by a person or situation.

_____ I talk openly about at least one of my personal limitations.

NOTE: Look at the statements you rated with a 3, 2, 1, or 0. Then ask yourself this question: What would have to be true for me to assign a 4 to those statements? What would have to happen? What would need to change?

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TIP

List two short term and two long term benefits to demonstrating some form of vulnerability to a) your employees; b) your peers; and c) your supervisor. To complete this exercise call upon both your logical mind and your imagination. See where it takes you. As you allow yourself to be more vulnerable in front of the folks around you, keep a log that records these situations, initial reactions, and results. After you do this for ninety days, review your notes and identify themes and trends. If necessary, determine appropriate adjustments to your behaviors and speech.

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Where in the World is SYLVIA?

Sylvia is excited to provide a brief progress update related to the

publication of her new book scheduled for Amazon and Kindle release at the end of March. The cover design has been finalized, and the editing/proofing work is well underway. Already a dozen professionals representing various industries have written endorsements. Over the next couple of months ezine readers will continue to receive additional information. Stay tuned!

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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.

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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**

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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.

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