LEADING
a CULTURE
That THRIVES
in a DISCONNECTED
WORLD

LORI HANSON

The Success Whisperer™

Work with Lori: Speaker, Consultant and Coach

Lori Hanson is passionate about supporting businesses, individual executives, leaders and events. She would be happy to participate in your conference, executive retreat or event.

Keynote Speaker

If you want a high-energy, interactive, fun keynote presentation or seminar that gets your employees and attendees motivated to take action, The Success Whisperer creates lasting impressions. Whether a sales kickoff, executive retreat, company meeting or women's event, Lori's programs hit the mark. Visit her website or call her office for availability.

Keynotes and Seminars include:

- **Distracted and Disconnected**
  5 Steps to Building a Culture that Thrives
- **The Finalist Mindset**
- **Amplify Your Voice**
  How to Boost Confidence, Gain Respect and Negotiate with Ease

Business Consultant

Are you interested in having Lori consult with your company to help address issues and improve communications, perceptions and collaboration between staff and leadership? Her Leadership Empowerment programs are custom designed to

include women and men, facilitating conversations that improve connection and accountability within your organization.

Executive Performance Coach

Lori offers private coaching options for executives and leaders when you're ready to shift how you feel (physically/emotionally), how you show up, and who you really want to be. Feel stuck? Are you in mid-career/personal life transition? Lori's coaching builds on the foundation of nutrition and balancing your brain chemistry to deliver high-performance results. Schedule a chat on her website:

LoriHansonInternational.com

Group Coaching

Join Lori for group coaching in her Next Level Leadership Forum for women. Exclusively for high-powered, like-minded, badass women. *LoriHansonInternational.com/nllf*

Attend Lori's Seminars and Retreats

Lori offers a variety of seminars, events and exclusive retreats throughout the year. These include: *Amplify Your Voice, GPS to Success, Revitalize YourSELF, Accelerate Your (sales) Success,* and *Mastermind Mountain Retreats* in Colorado.

Other Resources

VoiceConfidenceQuiz.com
TestMyBrainChemistry.com

Finally—a leadership book that speaks to both the head and the heart of culture change! As someone who has navigated the complexities of leading teams, I found myself nodding in agreement with every chapter of Lori Hanson's brilliant guide. She gets it: Today's workplace isn't just disconnected, it's hungry for authentic leadership that truly makes a difference.

What I love most about this book is how Lori weaves practical wisdom with deep understanding of human dynamics. She shows us that building a thriving culture isn't about grand gestures—it's about daily choices, energy management, and creating spaces where people feel safe to bring their whole selves to work. Her insights on everything from handling post-layoff trauma to building trust in hybrid teams aren't just theoretical—they're battle-tested and immediately applicable.

If you're a leader who cares deeply about your people and wants to create lasting positive change, this book isn't just a good read—it's your new playbook for success. Lori's warmth and expertise shine through every page, making complex leadership challenges manageable and energizing.

– Victoria Quintana, Co-Founder, Istonish, Inc.

Energizing! As always, Lori conveys a real understanding of the workplace dynamic we all face today. In a rapid-paced, comprehensive and engaging way, Lori offers simple tools and actions that I'm compelled to begin working on right away.

It's a quick read, yet I found myself repeatedly stopping along the way to critically think through real-world examples

of how taking actions on Lori's advice could improve the success of my team, my organization and myself. While I like to think I have it all figured out after 40 years in every type of dynamic business situation, in these pages I discovered numerous practical solutions to address my nagging struggles that continue to evolve in this changing world. I'm highly recommending this book to my organizational peers, but I'm first advocating it to my daughters just entering the workforce to provide them valuable awareness and tools to optimize success potential at all levels of their careers.

– Rob Tietz, Senior Vice President,
Warner Bros. Motion Picture Group Finance

In an era where remote work and digital communication dominate the professional landscape, "Leading a Culture that Thrives in a Disconnected World" arrives as an essential resource for modern leaders. Lori Hanson masterfully combines deep insights with practical application, offering a comprehensive framework for building resilient organizational cultures.

The book's innovative CCE (Calm, Confident Energy) Principle provides a fresh perspective on leadership presence, while practical tools such as the 5-Step Clarity Wheel transform abstract concepts into actionable strategies. Hanson's holistic approach addresses cultural transformation at all levels, from emerging talent to seasoned executives, making this work invaluable for anyone responsible for shaping organizational culture.

This timely guide stands out for its pragmatic orientation and deep understanding of what truly drives engagement in modern workplaces. Whether dealing with immediate challenges or planning long-term cultural initiatives, leaders will find this book an indispensable resource for creating thriving, connected cultures in our digital world.

– Patty Farmer, Marketing & Media Strategist
and Speaker, *PattyFarmer.com*

Good illustrations, examples, and real-life experience. Lori writes in an approachable style, making it comfortable to rethink how you do things. Long overdue to address the disconnection we find in Corporate America after COVID. We need more genuine leaders who can look past the rhetoric and exude authenticity. Reading this book reminded me that in managing the details and reviewing expectations, 'micro-management' is a good thing when it protects the leader and the employee they manage. But when it discredits or disempowers the employee, it's why leaders fail. In short, the book is action-oriented with a lot of helpful how-to advice, not just academic head knowledge.

– Ric Rothschild, Director, Customer Partner, Kyndryl

A concisely written handbook that benefits both current and aspiring leaders. Lori's depth of knowledge and experience in both the corporate and entrepreneurial space provides key insights, thought-provoking questions, and actionable solutions to build effective teams that drive profitability.

Lori analyzes the importance of two key traits in a leader: self-awareness and emotional intelligence. While often nonexistent in many of today's leaders, Lori recognizes they are imperative to establish trust and transparency in a corporate culture.

— Jeanne Teahan, former SVP Finance

Company culture and adapting to change in the corporate world are two of the biggest issues facing organizations and the business world. Lori does a great job of meeting this head on and opening our eyes to how a good positive culture can make the difference in our organizations. Leadership and culture creation start at the top; as Lori reminds us, "It starts with you."

— Eric Wasowicz, Investor/Advisor, Greenbrier Group

Very conversational and easy to understand! Lori's book is a quick read that provides useful and self- enlightening realizations that change starts with taking care of yourself. I like how she challenges the reader to take action throughout the book. This book is a great leadership tool, which executives can use to facilitate conversations with their team, followed by brainstorming sessions resulting in commitment on actions to take.

— Rachael Owens, LHI Client and VP, Business Leader

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Leading a Culture that Thrives in a Disconnected World
by Lori Hanson

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CONTENTS

Foreword

Creating a thriving organizational culture is a challenging feat in the best of circumstances. It has become even more difficult in today's tech-driven world, where remote work has taken center stage. In "Leading a Culture that Thrives in a Disconnected World," Lori Hanson—known as The Success Whisperer™—provides invaluable insights and indispensable strategies to assist leaders in tackling this challenge.

Having known Lori for years, I have seen firsthand her transformative impact on leaders in various industry sectors. Lori is truly exceptional as an executive coach, speaker and author. Her unique ability helps individuals discover their voices, cultivate resilience, and sharpen their leadership skills. Each chapter of this book embodies Lori's unwavering commitment to fostering growth through genuine connection and shared purpose—especially in our often-disconnected work environments.

Lori addresses a pressing truth: Despite the ease of connections through technology, many still feel isolated. Leaders must develop a different skillset to unite their teams without physical presence and create work environments where teams can thrive. This new landscape calls for a fresh perspective that emphasizes a strategic vision fostering intentional culture-building, developing authentic relationships, and leveraging emotional intelligence.

Lori's focus on actionable steps was what I appreciated most about this book. She skillfully identifies challenges in an overly technology-focused workforce and translates concrete ideas around connection and engagement into practical, relatable strategies that any leader can adopt. Readers will discover thoughtful insights and tools to nurture a thriving culture, irrespective of their organizational structure.

While these challenges are complex for most leaders, Lori provides invaluable insights, compassionate guidance, and relatable real-world examples to address how technology influences our workplaces. If followed, Lori's empathetic approach will help us all foster genuine connection and drive positive cultural change.

I believe you will be inspired and challenged as Lori empowers you with the strategies needed to create meaningful connections in your organization. This book is not just a resource; it's a chance to embrace your future of work with authenticity and purpose.
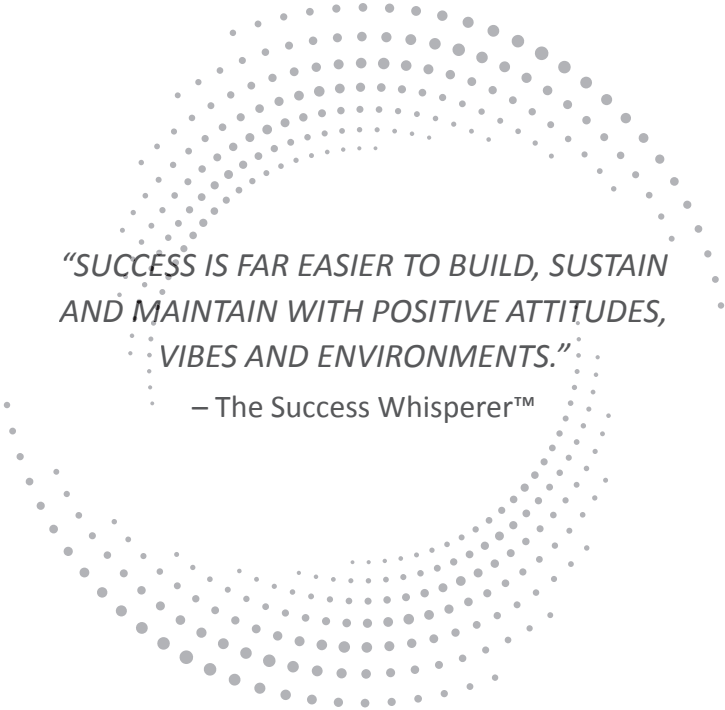
Susan Harkin
Retired School District Superintendent,
Educational Consultant

PART 1

Reviewing the Current State of Your Company Culture

"SUCCESS IS FAR EASIER TO BUILD, SUSTAIN AND MAINTAIN WITH POSITIVE ATTITUDES, VIBES AND ENVIRONMENTS."

– The Success Whisperer™

1

Does Your Culture Nurture Satisfaction or Stress?

I f you've been working for 15, 25 or 35+ years, you've likely experienced a wide variety of colleagues, coworkers, bosses and employees along the way. Whether it's your company or you're leading a small, mid-size or large company, stressful issues may be common for you *and* your employees. This applies regardless of your annual revenue, employee size and rank as a Fortune 1000 company. The larger your company, the more difficult it is for you to keep tabs on employee levels of satisfaction versus stress and to determine where and how to begin to shift your culture.

As difficult as it may seem, however, shifting the culture is critical because the issues in the modern-day workplace affect an individual's overall well-being in both their work and personal lives. While many executives are aware of the need to address their culture, the conundrum of where and how to start can be overwhelming.

After the world shutdown in 2020, ongoing debates have arisen on *where, how* and *how many hours* to work. Employee frustration and turnover resulting from return-to-office mandates shifted perspectives. In some cases, the concept

of lifestyle balance became more essential and integrated. In others, the rise of accessibility through technology has caused vastly different expectations around work hours, availability, responsiveness and boundaries, which could destroy work-life balance.

The year 2024 has been overloaded with layoffs and reduction in force (RIF). Employees who remain are often tasked with larger workloads and responsibilities. The results? Stress, burnout, poor attitudes and reduced productivity, which can impact revenue, increase turnover and negatively affect the ability to reach your organizational goals.

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) estimates "replacing an employee can cost between 50-60% of that employee's salary, with overall costs ranging anywhere from 90-200%."[1] These losses include reduced productivity and costs for onboarding and training. These replacement costs vary based on the study published.

A recent Forbes Advisor article reports, 30% of new hires leave within 90 days; 24% of companies have no strategy to onboard internal promotions; 88% of employees don't believe they are given a good onboarding process. Companies with a structured onboarding program keep 58% of employees for three years.[2]

The reality is, anyone working for you is investing a large part of their life at work. Whether leader or other employee, to be stressed out and miserable because of an overload of responsibilities or subjected to a toxic work environment is no way to live—even for a paycheck.

Without relying on a report or survey, what do you know about your company culture—the current attitudes, beliefs and challenges? How tuned in are you to how your workforce thinks and feels about the company, the work product or service, the leadership and overall goals?

Is your workforce predominantly positive, fulfilled and satisfied or disgruntled, uneasy, negative, stressed out and walking quickly out the revolving door?
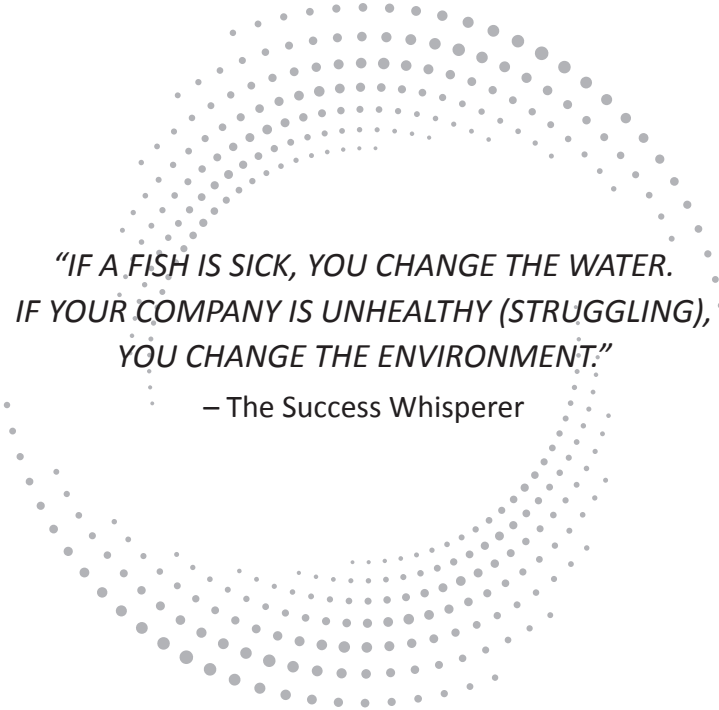
If you've recently executed one or more employee layoffs or a reduction in force, has it improved or negatively impacted your organizational culture?

You can learn a great deal by tuning in to the actions and underlying attitudes of employees following a RIF.

Questions to Ponder

1. As a leader or executive, what process do you use to tune in and get an accurate personal read on your workforce?

2. How do you translate your executive and organizational goals to align and communicate them clearly to your workforce?

3. How do you—or can you—help reduce the level of stress and improve the level of satisfaction and fulfillment at work for those who invest their time and energy weekly to support you, your mission and your organization?

What action will you commit to take today?

"IF A FISH IS SICK, YOU CHANGE THE WATER.
IF YOUR COMPANY IS UNHEALTHY (STRUGGLING),
YOU CHANGE THE ENVIRONMENT."

– The Success Whisperer

2

Assessing the *Real* Impact of Your Environment

Why all this talk of company culture? Companies with toxic cultures have made it big and survived—so does it really matter? (I'm not naming any names, but I have plenty of stories from my days in tech sales.)

Numerous behaviors and factors contribute to a toxic work environment, such as:

→ Lack of trust in or respect for coworkers or boss

→ Lack of clear goals, standards, objectives or policies

→ Limited accessibility to boss, coworkers, data or meetings

→ Micromanagers, arrogant attitudes

→ Bullying, verbal abuse and harassment

→ Undermining, backstabbing, lying, gossiping

→ Cliques, negative employees and attitudes

Think back to a time when you were uncomfortable at work; can you remember the situation and how it made you feel mentally and physically? More importantly, how did it impact your ability to work—to be productive and make big decisions? Being miserable or uncomfortable can lead to a

negative outcome when you leave or lose your job. Negative, toxic environments increase employee stress (Big DUH, I know). This negativity impacts the employee, department and company, resulting in absenteeism, chronic illness, work conflict and drama, all of which are counterproductive to your goals.

Real Life Impact of Toxic Influencers

Layla can still feel the hair stand up on the back of her neck when she thinks about a person who was promoted from her group of senior program managers. Her first conversation started with him saying, "Let me show you how to do this …" instead of taking any time to build rapport and ask questions about how she prepared similar reporting for the client. It was, "Here's what I need and when I'll need it." No effort to establish any type of connection or working relationship or to acknowledge her value and expertise. He just barked out orders and micromanaged her every move.

Layla left the company less than two months later. She was highly valued and respected by the client, who was upset she was leaving. In the following nine months, two other senior program managers also left because of this person—both of them male, so it wasn't a gender issue.

Kelly was a highly valued CFO. She was well-liked by her team and fellow employees. She was loyal, worked hard, always made herself available for her team and stayed on top of management needs. One month, she got "thrown under the bus," for a financial item that was reported incorrectly.

She had advised her coworker that it was incorrect, but it had not been adjusted. In the midst of a board meeting, the CEO called her out for the error. Her boss, who knew why it was incorrect, said nothing in her defense in the meeting.

This CEO had a reputation for being demeaning and disrespectful. After years of this, Kelly had had enough and gave notice within a matter of hours. A highly-talented, loyal employee with extensive knowledge was gone as a result of continued unprofessional treatment by a toxic CEO.

Regardless of one's role or title, there's absolutely no reason or excuse for treating other employees or coworkers with disrespect. This will *not* contribute to a positive work environment. It *will,* however, foster an environment of fear, distrust and anxiety. Individuals who *lack* the professionalism to know when, where, and how to have sensitive adult conversations are toxic. Ask questions first; you *know* what happens when you assume. (It makes an ass of you and me.)

Ginni Rometty, former president and CEO of IBM, spoke for the 2023 SXSW Conference and Festivals. She said she used to think perfectionism was a great quality for a boss to have. Now she knows it's toxic.

Her early-career nickname was "Red Pen." Someone finally told her, "You know, people don't even want to try hard, because you're going to change it and fix it. It's never going to be good enough."

Ginni admitted, "I was disempowering them. Of course, it was never my intent, but I learned to stop it."[3]

Everyone matters, especially if they work for you or your organization, as they contribute to your success. If someone is

underperforming, that issue should be dealt with in a professional way that aligns with your legal policies and procedures.

Opening Up to What's Really Happening

It's important for you to know the temperature of your organizational environment and culture, especially if you're an executive leader. It's critical to your success, profitability, and achievement of your own goals as well as those of the company.

Numerous companies are no longer with us because the leaders were not tuned in to their culture, which contributed to the downfall of their companies.

Using Your Senses: Eyes, Ears, Intuition

What current processes do you have in place to get an accurate read on your company culture? How do you know if the processes you're using are providing you with accurate information about employee attitudes and opinions?

Do your employees feel safe to speak up when they disagree with a new direction or approach? What avenues are available for them to share their opinions outside of the traditional company meetings, town halls or surveys?

Depending on the size of your organization, different challenges to obtaining an accurate view may arise. If you run or own a large corporation, you may suffer a significant disconnect simply due to size. It's important to evaluate how the information is collected, who reviews it and how to keep the surveys, focus groups or task forces fresh.

If you're the owner or CEO of a small company, your employees may not want to speak out in a company meeting. They may fear being in the spotlight in front of all employees and possibly having their opinion cause negative backlashes, responses or judgments. In general, people are more comfortable giving feedback to you in a private meeting.

Infinite Possibilities for a Culture that Thrives

Let's take the positive position that you and your fellow executive leaders *care* about your company culture and recognize it has issues. You know ways to improve it are available, but you're not sure where to start (common). Don't let it overwhelm you—keep reading. Help is available for you.

Consider what *could* happen if you genuinely want everyone to feel a part of what is happening and feel the energy around the product or service you create and deliver. What if your staff felt highly valued and appreciated? How could this change your culture and results?

By keeping employees committed to your mission to serve and support your customers or clients because they feel important, supported and acknowledged for their work, you can create a winning strategy.

Back to Basics

Can you imagine the success and impact you could have as an organization if your employees were truly passionate about the work they do, where they work, and who they work for and with? A culture that thrives has unlimited possibilities!

Limitations creep in when you remind yourself of all the things you've tried before: those things that worked for a little while and those that didn't work at all, and those that seemed too risky to even try. But that's all a mindset game. To succeed beyond where you have before requires a different mindset and a different approach.

It starts with your belief in what is possible and a willingness to be open to a new path forward. The beliefs you hold now can be shifted; more to follow on this.
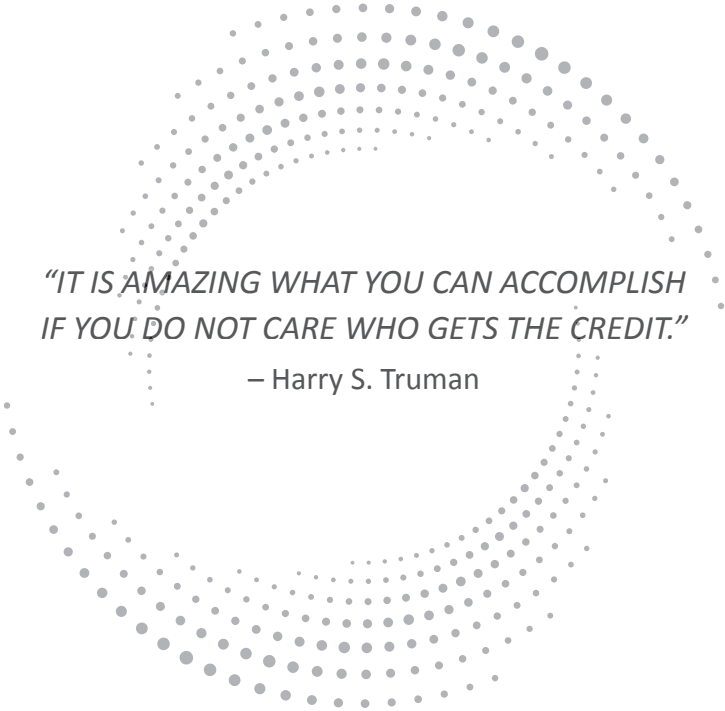
Questions to Ponder

1. What do you currently do to address employee concerns after a layoff or RIF?

2. What level of transparency do you provide to your executives, leaders and workforce?

3. Are you willing to *actively* listen? Are you open to new ideas and approaches? Is your door open to anyone in your company to allow for feedback, ideas and discussions when appropriate? Grievances should of course go through HR.

   What action will you commit to take today?

CULTIVATE COLLABORATION

*"IT IS AMAZING WHAT YOU CAN ACCOMPLISH
IF YOU DO NOT CARE WHO GETS THE CREDIT."*

– Harry S. Truman

3

Culture Killers:
The Games People Play

I've always found it interesting and amusing how so many things in the corporate workplace are overlooked:

Employees who are not qualified for their job that stay year after year.

Employees who get promoted to managers and keep their jobs despite being rude and difficult to work with or hated by their entire staff.

Employees who have poor performance, attendance and results or work that's continually delivered with mistakes.

Employees who use their role to rule the universe, aka refuse to share their data, won't help share the workload or basically don't give a shit about their coworkers. This is far too common at the department level (Payroll, HR, department managers, etc.).

Employees who are mid- or senior-level leaders who treat their staff unprofessionally, such as being verbally abusive, setting unrealistic expectations or causing death by micromanagement.

I've seen time and again that some of these people are "protected," either because they're a relative or they've been

there since the good old days. Sometimes management just turns a blind eye to what's happening because they don't want to deal with the conflict.

Let's review a few of the common culture killers. We'll address strategies for dealing with them in the following chapters.

Double-Standard Messaging

This is a big one that doesn't go unnoticed by your employees and staff. It holds high potential for causing negativity, complaining, gossiping, unrest, and moving some into action—right out the door.

An example that's been in the news recently is the newly appointed Starbucks CEO, Brian Niccol. He lives in Southern California, and Starbucks' headquarters are in Seattle. The first article I read said he was not required to move and planned to work remotely. Well, all hell broke loose, because in early 2023, Starbucks issued a return-to-work mandate requiring employees to be in the office three times a week.

The next article I saw was an update stating he would, in fact, be in the office, arriving via private jet and commuting 1,000 miles weekly. Environmental backlash followed.

There are numerous studies on the impact of remote work and having "geographic flexibility," a term Raj Choudhury, a Harvard business professor uses in his research. He's covered the benefits of attracting and keeping talent when employees are not required to move for work.

What if you offered your desk employees the same flexibility as you offer your executives? I spent over 20 years in the consulting industry, and working remotely was always common, especially when a client wanted to save money on travel expenses.

Comparing and contrasting high-level executives to lower-level employees exposes significant gaps, from compensation to policies. It can also be an issue with mid-level management and their employees.

Taking time to review the way your employees are treated is a worthy endeavor. As you rise up the ladder, it can be easy to forget what it feels like to be in the lower ranks and stay tuned in to what's important to your lowest-level workers. Yet without them, where would you be? How would you deliver your product and services? Yes, this is stating the obvious—but what have you personally done to reduce the double standard messaging in your company?

Battle of the Sexes: Gender Equality

Loaded topic. Gender bias and issues go back many, many years, from the initial business stereotypes of where women belonged in the workplace (nursing, teaching or secretary). Much has changed—much has not.

When I worked in Technology Consulting and Sales, it was male dominated. Typically, I was "one of the guys," and I did well, but not all women are comfortable with that scenario.

Depending on the industry, far too many scenarios still exist where men don't respect women and treat them poorly,

from bullying, belittling or embarrassing them to directly pursuing an agenda that will set them up for failure. A woman who lacks the confidence to speak up, voice her opinions and ask for what she wants can unfortunately become victim to a wide array of inappropriate treatments and interactions. When they do speak up, in some workplace environments, women are often ignored or men talk over them.

I've consulted with companies where the number of Human Resource complaints were excessive, directed toward certain male individuals with patterns of mistreating female employees. Women didn't feel heard, productivity suffered, and morale took a beating.

If you are a female working in a male dominated industry, you've got to take the initiative to build your confidence and self-esteem. A victim mentality won't bring you success.

In 2023, the number of women holding C-Suite positions fell according to a study by S&P Global Market Intelligence. "In 2023, women held just 11.8% of the roughly 15,000 C-suite roles assessed, down from 12.2% the year before." This is the first time it has decreased since 2005.[4]

A great deal of work and acceptance are needed to recognize and utilize highly-talented female leaders and executives. Promotion of an individual who shines brightly as a natural leader should not be kiboshed because of gender.

Woman-to-Woman Sabotage

If you are a woman, have you ever witnessed or personally experienced sabotage by another female employee? Sometimes

it's blatant; other times it's more passive aggressive. I've consulted with companies that brought me in because of gender issues between women and men, and in the process of discovery, we found that the woman-to-woman sabotage was even worse.

I've been in the line of fire (receiving end of this) more than once. In my corporate days, I often came off as a threat to other women (or so I'm told). I suspect this was because my energy is confident, and I'm not easily intimidated. I was there to make things happen, to hit my goals. In my 20s and 30s, I was a bit different—far less sure of myself. It took me a few years, a lot of research and self-development to find my voice.

Because this is so common, in my book *The Stress Survival Kit for the Alpha Female,* I have a chapter titled "Business and Bitches," where I discuss this in more detail. Here's an excerpt:

> *She's often the Type-A Bitch who makes life a living hell. She is often controlling, nasty, demanding (shades of the Devil Wears Prada), doesn't care about you or your needs, and wants what she wants by the deadline— period. Get it done. What sucks for being the other woman in this scenario is that it seems she always wins.*

I've coached many women on the receiving end of this behavior and helped them to gain the skills needed to rise above it and be successful.

One theory on why this happens is it may be the only control that individual has—either generally or at home. Another theory is that, due to her insecurities, this person

feels threatened by the other female. Instead of having an adult conversation, she resorts to behavior much like we used to see on *Dynasty* and *Dallas*—the good old drama shows. (I suspect it's like reality TV today, but I don't watch it.)

Allowing this type of behavior in your organization is incredibly unhealthy. Often, the side of the story you're hearing is just that—only one side. Your organization may be missing out on the more talented employee who has great ideas that are continually shut down by those threatened by her. FYI, this is happening at senior levels and lower levels of your company.

Passive Aggressive Patty

Other big culture killers are passive aggressive employees. These individuals suck the energy out of a room and out of fellow employees. It's exhausting to deal with them. They are major game players, from giving others the silent treatment, avoiding them, displaying disingenuous kindness, or dishing out sarcasm.

These individuals create a lot of drama and are major productivity killers. This is especially true when their target is an individual who has the need to please or smooth things out and keep the peace. Mind you, these two will attract each other and engage in the pattern of the game. Passive aggressive individuals talk a lot of trash and gossip about others, always a red flag.

This type of person can be like a cancer in your organization, impacting one person then another and another, because

they don't have the personal skills to engage in adult-to-adult communication.

The organization can try to help this person learn new ways of engaging—or it may be in the best interest of everyone to send this one packing. Don't underestimate the impact they have on their coworkers and department and how that negativity can ripple throughout your organization.

The Screamer: Verbally Abusive Vinny

Screaming happens in large companies, small companies and sizes in between. I've been in sales meetings where the prospect suddenly started screaming to get his point across.

I've worked for a boss who required an 8 a.m. Monday morning meeting in which he went off on everyone because quotas weren't being met. Such a great way to start off a week. It totally destroyed any motivation I had to work for him.

While I love sports, I was never okay being managed by someone whose approach included intimidation, and acting like a stereotypical, bully-ish football coach. Those who attempt to motivate by yelling, verbal putdowns, calling out people and threatening them aren't leading in a professional, respectful way. Those tactics don't belong in a corporate business.

This behavior can be quite common in smaller companies, often from the owners, who for some reason think it's the way to motivate employees. These individuals tend to be verbally abusive, demeaning, and intimidating. They can destroy morale, trust and respect with one outburst. Why do people stay and work for them?

People tend to be attracted to situations they're comfortable with because they know what to expect. It doesn't mean they like it, but they know the pattern and how to handle it. If they grew up with a verbally or physically abusive adult in their life, chances are they will land at a company working for an individual with the same energy and behaviors.

This behavior will quickly destroy your workplace culture. It will instill fear, anxiety, resentment, even hatred. That's not the kind of energy you want to fill your workplace if you're looking for success. And yes, this is present in huge companies as well.

Cathy the Camera Avoider

Cathy is widely known for her refusal to turn her camera on during web meetings. This leaves other attendees with questions. Is it a power play or is she multitasking? Why doesn't she join the rest of the attendees and turn her camera on?

One executive I spoke with while writing this book shared that his company had hired a person who worked for a multinational consulting company. In two years working there, this individual never saw their boss. Think about how toxic this behavior is. There's no trust, no confidence, and a huge lack of respect being dished out in this scenario. Cameras create connections with other people, especially when you never see them physically.

Charlie the Chest Beater

You know this guy, right? Always talking about himself and

what he's done, how great he is, how management loves him, and my goodness, how the world could not survive without him. It's all Me, Me, Me, Me. . . .

You can easily spot this individual by how he (occasionally she) dominates conversations and meetings, talking over other people as if their opinion or voice isn't important.

These individuals are not in tune with other employees. They don't have active listening skills or compassion. They're consistently fighting the demons of their insecurity, which requires them to shout from the mountaintop, "Look at me! Look what I just did!"

In addition to annoying people around him or her, if you dig deeper, this individual may not be producing in a way that meets expectations. For these chest beaters to be successful members of your organization, you need to get to the root of why they need to be the center of attention. You also need to show them how to trust and respect their fellow employees and team members.

Sandbox Leaders

I once wrote an article about sandbox leaders because the analogy works so well. These individuals keep score and refuse to share and engage on an adult level with fellow employees and staff they manage. In short, the sandbox leader is not sharing their pail because you didn't share your shovel!

These individuals often take data or reports hostage and refuse to provide them to other people who are dependent on them. They may work behind a closed door and make any

type of communication difficult. They protect their power because they aren't willing to "play."

These individuals make driving end results, meeting deadlines and collaboration next to impossible. They're focused on what the other employee did, which then drives what they will or will not do. This drama bleeds into who is invited to meetings, included in communication or in the "inner-circle" as they define it.

This behavior is highly unproductive for your organization and upsetting for those attempting to work with this person. It's no different than six-year-olds playing in the sandbox.

Protected Employees

Everyone knows who these people are. For some reason they are protected by upper management. They get promotions, make it onto the fast track, and are allowed to play any of the games they deem fit—including being sandbox leaders, screamers, passive-aggressive players, or experts in sabotage. Your employees will continue to be confused by how and why they remain in positions of power when they're not collaborators or communicators. Just more unhealthy game players.

Now we've taken a spin through a number of the culture killers and why they're so toxic. In the next chapter we'll shift our focus to more positive considerations.

But before we move on, take time to ponder these questions.

Questions to Ponder

1. What culture killers are well known in your company?

2. What double standards are present and ignored in your company?

3. How will you root out or rehabilitate the culture killers?

   What action will you commit to take today?

Playbook for Leading a Culture that Thrives

How do you shift your *current state* and build a collaborative, connected culture you lead intentionally and more authentically? This book:

- Reminds you why it's critical to assess and address your employees' workplace stress and frustration
- Identifies games people play that are culture killers
- Introduces the CCE Principle™ and why your energy matters
- Delivers tools for facilitating open, honest communication
- Calls out issues caused by lack of training for new managers

"*Leading a Culture that Thrives in a Disconnected World* is an excellent playbook for leaders navigating today's disconnected workplace. It offers a unique, holistic approach to cultural transformation where authenticity and intuitive leadership are blended with actionable steps to create a lasting, successful culture that thrives."

— Jack Canfield, Co-author of *Chicken Soup for the Soul®
at Work* and *The Success Principles™*

"Finally—a leadership book that speaks to both the head and the heart of culture change! Lori gets it: Today's workplace isn't just disconnected, it's hungry for authentic leadership that truly makes a difference. This book isn't just a good read—it's your new playbook for success."
— Victoria Quintana, Co-Founder, Istonish, Inc.

"Energizing! I'm highly recommending this book to my organizational peers, but I'm first advocating this book to my daughters just entering the workforce to provide them valuable awareness and tools to optimize success potential at all levels of their careers."
— Rob Tietz, Senior Vice President,
Warner Bros. Motion Picture Group Finance

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