



No Room for Anger

It was on the way home from an evening at the theater that I “relearned” a very important lesson that will serve us all very well. Read through my mini story with the intent of applying it to the choices you make under pressure.

It is a 40 minute drive from the Durham Performing Arts center and both Gretchen and I were on the high of just experiencing the play, “Rent.” We were energetically discussing the experience when at a red light I observed a Honda Accord pull up in the left lane beside me. My “carbon footprint” is unfortunately not as small as I drive a GMC Denali...hey, can’t pull a wakeboard boat with a Honda Accord! It’s important to note that the road ahead of the red light goes from 2 lanes to one as it enters the more rural part of our drive home, and it’s the right lane that goes away. As the light turned green and without a second thought I applied enough pressure to my right foot to easily move in front of the smaller car to my left or at least that is what I thought. It was immediately clear to me that the driver was in no way going to let me “get ahead” so the brakes came on, things went flying and my survival mode kicked in.

There was a momentary loss of connection to LeadersWay philosophy as I sped up behind the Honda and threw on my high beams. (Same reaction cavemen had when they saw a saber tooth tiger...brilliant!) The good news is it was momentary and all the lessons we teach flooded back as I took a few deep breaths and re-engaged in our spirited conversation about the play. Given we had about 20 miles to our home that include several turns and all on 2 lane road and that we were behind the Honda, I began to witness some interesting behaviors from the driver. Every time he turned we turned, when he passed, we passed. You are likely getting the idea that serious paranoia was setting in for the driver as he began to imagine we were purposely following him when in fact, we were just going home. His fairly fast driving began to slow down until he was driving well under the speed limit... something was happening! It was on the last turn on the last stretch of road when Gretchen and I turned to each other with a bit of a smile recognizing that the odds this driver lived in our neighborhood were quite high.

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...
Nothing good ever comes from choosing to anger ”

Sure enough, the next turn was into our development and as soon as we both turned in the car pulled to the side of the road and the driver’s window came down and he said; “what is your problem?” It’s important to note the look of panic in the guy’s eyes and the apparent distress he was experiencing. Gretchen’s response was classic; “we are going home Joe!” With that her window rolled up and we drove home. Joe’s anger started the cascade of reactionary thinking and led then to a high level of fear and anxiety that often accompanies the onslaught of anger. As we enjoyed a brisk and lively conversation about the play, Joe was experiencing and paying the price for making the choice to allow anger to rule his behavior.

All of that for this; “how many stressful, anxious and fearful situations do we create by choosing to anger?” Yes, it is a verb and yes it is something we choose. I witness people choosing to anger in the workplace and I’m keeping score... it works 0% of the time. Hear me say this! Nothing good ever comes from choosing to anger, not at work, not at home or at play. No one wins when we choose to anger and the cost to our mind, bodies and emotions is devastating. It is Joe that I felt sorry for not Gretchen or me. He is the one who really paid the price for his choice and unfortunately it affects our relationship and not positively. This is what happens in the workplace when we choose to anger. Even when we go back and apologize (which Joe didn’t) we must accept the fact that the damage is already done.

The real lesson to the story is to choose differently. Get this! Anger is something we choose, it doesn’t choose us. We know when it is happening and in that knowing we can make the choice to do something different allowing for a more favorable chain of events. Know this, the old Kevin would have also chosen to anger and would have driven 20 miles with the intent to get revenge. It felt good for me to make a different choice that evening and I know it will feel good to you as you remove anger from your life!

Life is good!

KW

About LeadersWay

LeadersWay is a leader in the talent management industry. Our mission is simple. It is to create a lasting profitable impact on your business. Through staff selection and retention and business coaching & personal development we help position your business for growth and success.



Kevin Wolfe

We provide you with the ability to select, manage, and develop the best workforce available by providing reliable and valid assessments as well as personalized development plans. Whether you manage a one-person start-up or an established company with thousands of employees, we can help you protect and grow your business by leveraging people talent.

LeadersWay utilizes a suite of talent assessment tools, coaching, development and training seminars that help you identify, retain, and develop the most talented people for your organization.

Consider the following: Would you do things differently if you knew that a single hiring mistake would cost your company thousands of dollars? How about if the same losses applied to the people who didn’t leave - the under-performing, disengaged members of your staff or executive team? The reality is, a mistake does cost you that much! Our goal is to assess your team for job fit and leadership development.