



## The Advisory Alliance 60-Second Email™

### ***Fear: Maybe not a Friend, but a Reliable Companion*** ***January 28, 2009***

*In this month's 60-Second Email™, we face the unavoidable truth about fear, pressure, and personal development.*

This past weekend at a local conference, I delivered a presentation on overcoming barriers to effective talent development. I also had the chance to attend other presentations too. At one, the facilitator split the room into sections, and labeled each one with a specific emotion. He then asked people to stand in the section that best described the atmosphere in their company. Would it be surprising to say that 70 - 80% of attendees were standing in the "scared" section? No it wouldn't; these aren't times for the faint of heart.

It's certainly reasonable to place oneself in the "scared" section. The news about what lies ahead is still pretty uncertain and a tad threatening. In a perverse way, people might think there's something askew with you if you said you weren't afraid. However, this is where safety in numbers could bring us all down.

Now I would be the last person to say don't be afraid. We feel what we feel, and there's not much you can do about that part of it. If I have a feeling, someone's telling me not to feel it, isn't truly that effective. However, if I can channel the fear, I will have some possibility and even some hope.

Based on decades of research and work in leadership development, Michael Lombardo and Bob Eichinger note that there are 4 qualities to experiences that result in significant personal development:

- 1) You know very little about the experience as you go into it.
- 2) You have to make a difference.
- 3) You feel a chance of significant failure.
- 4) You feel a tremendous amount of pressure.



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Forget about the self-help-how-to leadership books read from the comfort of your La-Z-Boy. Leadership and personal development is an active undertaking. And if you think back to the experiences that shaped who you are today, you're likely to experience the truth, as discomfoting as it may be, in Lombardo and Eichinger's findings. We grow when there's significant outside and inner pressure and when there's something real at stake.

So, yes, it makes sense if you stand in the "scared" section. It's perfectly normal. And if it's any comfort, remind yourself that you've been here before, that it's a familiar feeling (albeit more intense), and the key is to contain the fear, if possible, and use it to push yourself to grow further.

Have a comment on using fear to further your growth? Share your thoughts with other readers on our blog: <http://www.advisoryalliance.com/blog>

And you can access all of our 60-Second Emails (TM), including last month's issue, "How Will You Succeed in 2009?", via this link: <http://www.advisoryalliance.com/newsletter.php>

Best regards,

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