![The Advisory Alliance 60-Second Email™](stopwatch logo)

Real Leadership Development:
You Know It's Not Easy; It's a Struggle.

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In this month's 60-Second Email™, if you're struggling, you know you're on the right path. But just don't struggle alone.

As many readers know, I don't have a whole lot of respect for "how-to" books on leadership and management. I think they often convey a false sense of hope, in that by reading this book and following the author's process, tips, advice, best practices, etc. you too will become the leader or manager you've always wanted to be (or that your organization needs you to be).

Like I've said before, self-help books continue to sell because they don't work.

Knowledge only goes so far. And when it comes to leadership and management development, the people that really make a difference, I believe, are those who struggle to make a change in themselves.

I'm not saying that you have to force yourself to struggle to become a better leader or manager, but let's face it, if it was so easy to do, we'd have already done it. Given that we might not be exactly where we want to be in our leadership or management abilities and that we've exhausted all quick and/or easy fixes, we are left with the hard work of getting from where we currently are to where we eventually would like to be. Bottom-line, there is usually some real, honest struggling in becoming the leader or manager we yearn to be.

For whatever reason, our culture loves the story of a self-made person. Particularly, in the business press, you find countless of cover stories of people who have been incredibly successful. The focus is typically on the person, their struggles, what they overcame, and how they became a success against great odds. For some, it was overnight. For others, it was years or decades in the making. In either case, the focus is usually on the individual.

And personally, that celebration of the individual who overcame great hardship can be a great disservice to many, if not most, people. For it often creates the impression that if this person can be a

great success on their own, then you should too. (To add insult to injury, articles will often include things like "Bob's/Mary's 10 Tips for Great Leadership", as if all you have to do is pattern yourself after Bob/Mary, and you'll be that great leader or manager you've always wanted to become.)

Instead, I would like to see cover articles on people who have helped other people become great successes. In my experience, most people don't have enough inside themselves to make it totally on their own, notwithstanding all the stories we like to read and hear about to the contrary. I don't think this is indictment of people, as it is a reality of the human condition, yours truly included.

Instead, I believe most benefit significantly from there being at least one person (and often times you don't need more than that), who shared their desire to be greater than who they presently were, who truly believed they could become that person, and who advised and coached them along the way.

In light of what we've all been through these past few years, struggling is almost a badge of honor, because if you're struggling, that means you're still in the game, still have the courage to find a successful way forward. Being a leader or manager is tough enough these days without having to do it all on your own. Whom do you have in your corner who will help you become the leader or manager you want to be?

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Share your thoughts with readers on our blog.

You can access all of our 60-Second Emails (TM), including the most recent issue, *Leadership, Pornography, and A Visit to Justice Stewart*, via this link.

Until next month,

David

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The Advisory Alliance advises and works with Fortune 500 & Mid-Market companies for improved leadership selection, development, and succession.

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