

3 Traps Every Leader Must Avoid

It seems like there are more ways to fail as a leader than there are principles for success.

Perhaps the vision of a leader is so forward looking that a lurking trap is easily missed. Sometimes warning signs are ignored. But more often, leaders with a strong self-image fail to believe in their own vulnerability to a fall.

I think the list of traps is long. Every leader has weaknesses and therefore, is susceptible to certain types of traps. One thing seems certain, there is trap built just for me. There are quite a few actually.

I'm asking you to consider three traps that most easily beset leadership:

Trap 1: Hire fast and fire slow. Open positions on our organization chart are an invitation to fall into a speed trap. We almost never make good decision when we hire fast. The urgency to fill a position will cause a pattern of hanging on to poor employees too long, for fear of another bad hire. Poor hiring perpetuates itself.

Hire slow and fire fast.

Trap 2: Leader like. While we all want to be liked, a leader who makes decisions based upon his likability rating will soon be following his team. Metrics matter. A team must be led to produce improved metrics.

A like affair is as dangerous as a love affair.

Trap 3: Gut-based decision making. Decisions based on intuition will eventually catch up with any leader who eschews facts. This is a particular truism for a leader-on-a-roll. The

better things are going the more we need to gather facts and input. We can never believe our own press clippings.

I have a gut feeling, I shouldn't trust my gut.

Traps do not scare me as long as I'm aware that traps await me when I think too highly of myself.

It's the self-made traps that catch us napping.

"For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sound judgment, according to the measure of faith God has distributed to every man" (Rom. 12:3).