

When to Stop Buddying Up to Colleagues

There is danger in the familiar.

Becoming familiar with a person or organization has layers of knowing.

We can become familiar with:

- How you walk, talk, dress and behave
- Our surroundings and physical spaces
- Our customers, associates, vendors and friends

My list is certainly not all-inclusive. We tend to seek familiarity in all things. It is comfortable. Predictable. Secure.

Leaders walk a thin line in becoming familiar with their teams, systems or organization.

- We become blinded or callous to what seems obvious to others.
- We often fail to see hurting people, processes or paradigms.
- We tend to focus on the person more than their productivity.
- We rest on past accomplishments of the organization rather than engineer the future.
- We manage-up in a spirit of friendship rather than honor.

I don't know if "familiarity breeds contempt," but in my view, when a working relationship slips into the buddy zone, the relationship and organization are threatened.

There is a place called "too-familiar." I've been there. I didn't like it and couldn't find my way out of town.

I noticed conversations became more focused on non-work activities. Problems weren't addressed. Thoughts were closely held so as not to offend.

It is the responsibility of a leader to call out a relationship that is becoming too familiar. We must be very intentional about not becoming too close to make a tough call.

We must remain tough on standards yet soft on people.

Standards are never lowered, only raised. When people make mistakes we coach toward our goals through execution of work standards. Mistakes often point to a need for training rather than friending.

Our work teams don't need their leaders to be a familiar friend.

Effective leaders love, but will be quick to hold the team accountable to produce results.

We can never become too familiar to praise or correct.

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Today's Scripture

"If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15).

Platform Tip No. 69

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