

Resentment: Four Ways to Let Go and Move On

Our manager, Kevin, suddenly charged into the room and sat down at the conference table.

“Okay, let’s see what you’ve got!” he exclaimed.

“Hi, Kevin. How are you today?” I said with a smile, trying to lighten his mood and begin our meeting on a positive note.

Kevin replied, “I don’t have time today for small talk. Let’s go through your presentation and determine the next steps.”

Over the next 15 minutes, Peter, my teammate, and I presented three different promotional displays to Kevin. We discussed the construction, benefits, and potential cost of each display. Kevin seemed to like the options and asked how we could gain national customer team feedback.

The conversation came up once before, and I recommended using an internet survey. Kevin turned it down the first time. During this discussion, I thought I’d revisit the survey option. After I mentioned it, Kevin shook his head and said, “Nope, already rejected.”

I gently pushed back and asked him to reconsider. I began my response with, “I don’t mean to challenge you, but...”

Not good. As soon as the words left my mouth, Kevin’s face turned red; he slammed his computer shut and shouted: “But you are challenging me, and I don’t appreciate it!” Throwing a tantrum, he got up and began to walk out of the room. Wanting to solve the issue, I followed him out the door. I asked Kevin to wait a moment and told him that I was just trying to make a suggestion. I told him I didn’t appreciate being treated that way, especially in front of a team member.

Kevin said, "Are you going to confront me in the hallway right now?"

"No," I said, staring at the floor. He told me we'd talk later and walked away. I went home deflated.

The following day, Kevin called me into his office. When I arrived, he asked me to sit down. Then he said, "I am going to tell you some things, and you cannot respond."

I looked at him inquisitively and thought, "I'm in for it; this can't be good." He was about to give me *feedback*. He told me that he wanted me to think about it and then we'd talk again. So, I sat in silence, ready to listen.

"Preston, I was relatively easy on you yesterday. Other executives would have torn you to shreds."

"Really?" I thought to myself.

"You're not helping me, you're not being a team player, and you don't listen well. You've got to change, or you'll be out of a job." I held my tongue, honoring his request, and thanked him for the feedback.

I walked away from the conversation madder than a hornet. I was highly offended. I'd worked very hard, accomplished so much, but Kevin always marginalized me. Kevin retaliated by implying my job was in jeopardy. A molehill was made into a mountain, and I resented Kevin for it. As a matter of fact, I resented Kevin and his management style for the two years I worked on his team. My constant feelings of bitterness were taking their toll. What was I going to do?

All leaders experience resentment from time to time. What is *resentment*? It's an emotion that wells up inside when you feel like you've been mistreated or offended. Hard feelings, frustration or anger, can come from any number of sources, including not gaining someone's respect, not receiving

appreciation for a job well done, not being assigned to a special project, being passed over for a promotion, an unspoken apology, or rejection. Resentment is the most toxic of all emotions because it can lead to anger, hate, discord, divorce, aggressive driving, alcoholism, depression, anxiety, bankruptcy, and even violence.

If you hold a grudge against someone, the bitterness will fester inside and eventually destroy you. It begins as an emotional trigger and, if harbored, will become a mood impacting behavior. Resentment is a heavy burden you carry, affecting your relationships and health. As the adage goes, "Bitterness is the poison one swallows as he or she hopes the other person dies."

If resentment is so dangerous, what is the antidote? **Forgiveness**. If you forgive someone, you stop blaming him or her for the offense. You let go and move on. The Bible says, "Get rid of all bitterness, rage, and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." (Ephesians 4:31-32 NIV)

How do you forgive someone? Employ the four steps to forgiveness:

1. **Acknowledge your anger, then drop it and move on.** It's okay to be angry but don't allow it to last. Let go of the anger when offended or wronged by someone. Don't harbor it. Anger can lead to hate and violence. Resentment will break you unless you break it first. Put down the poison and move on.
2. **Stand in their shoes.** Realize that everyone is perfectly imperfect. The Christian leader remembers God forgave them, and that same mercy should be shown to others.
3. **Respond with good, not revenge.** Forgiveness is a decision, not a feeling. Ask God to change your heart and enable you to return the offense with a positive

reaction. Practice the *Golden Rule* – *do to others as you'd have them do to you*. Remember, love is patient, kind, and doesn't seek its own way.

4. **Pray.** Ask God to forgive you and enable you to forgive the one who offended you.

Admittedly, I've struggled with resentment for years. I often dwell on circumstances and people when I feel disenfranchised, demoralized, or undignified. In the above story, I let my manager get the best of me. I should have taken responsibility for my words and actions. I didn't need to challenge Kevin after he'd made a decision or chase him into the hallway to confront him. I needed to exercise more self-control and give him space. It would have been better if I'd approached him later, apologized, and asked how I could help; personal leadership lessons learned that I applied to future situations.

The good news is that I recognized the impact bitterness was having on me and those around me. **I discovered that the best antidote to resentment is forgiveness.** I let go of my grudge, and my well-being improved tremendously; I no longer felt the weight of bitterness. I found that my mental outlook improved, relationships healed, and I felt much better.

How about you? Do you resent someone? Are you holding a grudge? If so, how is it impacting you? What will happen if you continue holding on to the resentment? Are you willing to forgive the individual? Why not forgive that someone today? If you do, your well-being will improve, your relationships will heal, and you'll be a more successful leader.

Want to learn more about becoming a leader others will gladly follow? Visit my website, prestonpoore.com, today!

Cheers,

Preston