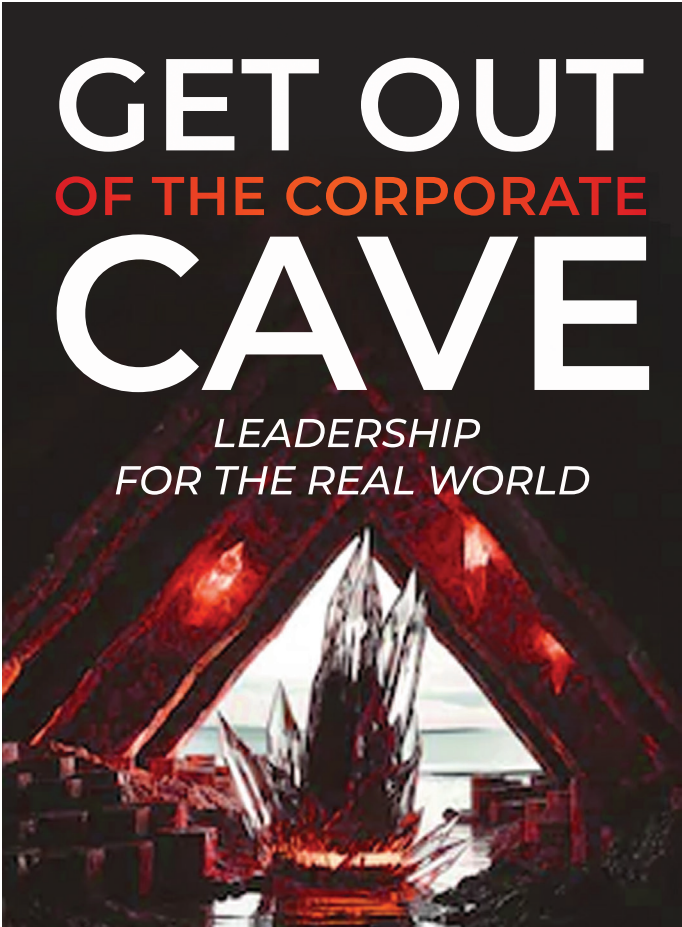


GET OUT OF THE CORPORATE CAVE

*LEADERSHIP
FOR THE REAL WORLD*



SUZETTE MORITO PHILLIPS

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Chapter One

Management Misconceptions

When I was in my twenties and had one of my first jobs, I remember sitting in my cramped cubicle, rushing to meet a deadline while dozens of other people did the same. We were like bees in a hive. Then I'd see the managers walk past us, heading out for one of their two- or three-hour lunches. The managers seemed to have it easy—joking, laughing, and strolling through the office.

I wanted to be a manager so I could do whatever I wanted. It looked like a lot more fun than my job. I heard them having personal conversations all day, instead of talking about what was going on in the office. The rest of the employees were always busy while the managers chit-chatted and delegated their

work to others. Why wouldn't anyone want to be a manager if all you had to do was flit and flutter and dole out your work to your worker bees? Topped off by the manager receiving the accolades for you and your team's work? That sure seemed like a job to have.

Then I *became* a manager. I got to go on those extended lunches. Turned out they were half kicking back and half working, but they still ate up a significant portion of the day. It all seemed so unproductive and not part of my work ethic. I soon stopped taking long lunches, unless it was a meeting, because I had way too much work to do back at the office. I could have delegated but knew my former peers already had a ton of work, so why would I pile my work on them? I decided, then and there, to be a different manager than so many of the ones I had worked with and for. I wanted to learn, to grow, and to make a difference in the workplace.

Management in the Shadows

When I asked questions about policies and procedures, I usually got “that’s just the way we do things” as a response. That wasn’t good enough for me. Have you ever read *The Allegory of the Cave* by Plato? It’s about a fire in a cave and the misconceptions cast by the shadows on the wall. That’s what I felt like office life was—we were told to look in one direction and not question the policies and procedures we saw. But like

the shadows on the walls, the mystery behind this corporate environment was never explained to me until I opened my eyes and asked, “Why?” and, “Can we do this better?”

Over the last few decades, I’ve seen many different styles of management, each one creating their own kind of drama and shadows on the wall. When you work for someone like that, being able to recognize who they are and why they act the way they do makes your work life easier. Knowing and understanding these types of managers also gives you a basis to work from when you become a manager yourself and want to be one that is a step above these six types:

- **Finger Pointing Manager:** When confronted with a problem the Finger Pointing Manager’s first reaction is to blame someone else and not take ownership for their mistakes. It’s kind of like working in a daycare. When one kid steals another’s pacifier, and you confront the one who took the pacifier, they deny they did it—even though the pacifier is hanging out of their mouth. The Finger Pointing Manager has integrity issues because people who don’t own up to their own mistakes often can’t be trusted.
- **BFF Manager:** The BFF (Best Friends Forever) Manager wants to be friends with everyone and doesn’t want to hurt anyone’s feelings.

This style of management has an aversion to confrontation. They would rather take the blame or lie about speaking with an errant employee instead of nipping the situation in the bud. This isn't so much an integrity issue as it is a fear to own their role as a manager. The BFF Manager doesn't like to face the real issues, and instead whines, procrastinates, or avoids, just to preserve those "friendships" and peace in the office.

- **Eggshell Manager:** The Eggshell Manager is a type-A, aggressive, overly competitive, impatient, control freak and focuses on quantity over quality. They want to achieve goals and hit numbers, which can be a drawback in a customer service-based business where the customer should be more important than meeting (or exceeding) a quota. The Eggshell Manager creates such a tense environment that everyone feels like they are walking on eggshells. It creates distrust within the workplace, which can sometimes turn into a hostile or toxic environment and lead to high turnover rates in that department.
- **Doormat Manager:** The Doormat Manager is more of a type-B personality. Someone more relaxed, less frantic, who also has a tendency to be unaware of issues going on around them

if they are engrossed with another project. A manager like this will be loved by most of the employees, but being so well loved and easygoing often means they aren't always respected. Some employees will take advantage of the Doormat Manager because they know they won't get in trouble. Doormat Managers need training in how to draw a line and set boundaries while also managing fairly.

- **Narcissistic Manager:** With the Narcissistic Manager, it's all about them. They need to be the center of attention and receive constant admiration, while having contempt and a lack of empathy for others' feelings, wishes, and needs. This personality has an ego the size of Mount Rushmore and won't admit when they are wrong. This causes many upset feelings and a high turnover rate since they are seen as uncaring or self-centered (and, as narcissists, that's exactly what they are). The Narcissistic Manager needs to learn to open up, to be more vulnerable, and to be genuine. For employees, compassion and understanding will go a long way to repair integrity and trust issues.
- **Do as I Please and Apologize Later Manager:** The DAPAL Manager definitely has integrity issues. They would rather do what they want, when they want, than follow the systems that

are currently in place. When asked about why this was done a certain way the answer is, “I’d rather apologize later than ask for permission.” This completely undermines the integrity of the systems currently in place. If everyone ran around doing what they want, whenever they want, the business would not be open for very long. The DAPAL Manager needs to get in line with the systems currently in place. If there is a question, it should be brought up during a managers’ meeting and discussed in the proper manner.

- **Seat of Their Pants Manager:** The SOTP Manager is an untrained leader who is making uninformed decisions. They flounder along, doing the best they can, essentially faking it until they make it instead of asking their boss for help. This manager should ask for an immediate sit down with their direct supervisor so that they can relay their concerns and ask for training. The biggest concern with an SOTP Manager is the reason why they don’t trust the person to whom they report to and don’t ask for help. Is it ineptitude, or are they scared they will be fired? The entire leadership team needs to be transparent, empathetic, and caring...especially when you have new leaders starting.

Being a manager is not like what you see on an episode of *Mad Men*. There are no grandiose promotion parties

and long, lazy lunches with few expectations. Few managers step into their role automatically knowing everything they need to do—especially when it comes to effectively managing a team. Management is like a marriage; it's a work in progress every single day, situation, shift, and moment of time. The learning never stops, and because of that there should always be empathy and compassion present. Not every manager is a leader. Know the difference.

Don't Be a Stereotype

Managing people is one of the harder jobs that exist because you're not just managing people—you're managing the different *personalities* of your employees. Managing others based on their personalities means you learn to change your management style to work with the team member in front of you. Each person takes direction differently, so your delivery will need to be different for each personality. We will discuss this in more depth later.

*Out of the Cave
you will find...*

It's okay not to know all the answers. Good leaders are always learning and growing in their knowledge and experience.

Managers need to start with trust, both building trust for their employees and creating trust from the bottom up. You need to show that you trust your team before they will trust you (more on that later in this book, as well). As backward as that sounds, it works. Your team will perform best when they trust you.

You don't have to be hard on your employees or micromanage them. You can be polite and nice and still be a great leader. You want people who are working with you and who aren't just there for a paycheck. That builds team members who care about the company and see the other employees as an extension of their family. Those are the kind of employees who will go the extra mile and do whatever it takes to get their job done. Your management style will dictate whether you have employees working for you or who are members of a team. Trust builds team members and not just employees working for a paycheck.

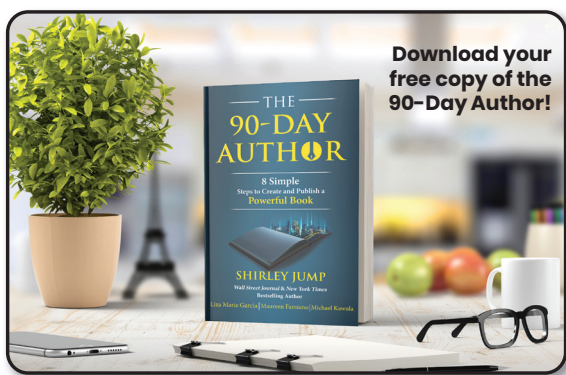
Managers don't need to know everything. It's a misconception that they have all the answers. This book is here to help you create your own management and/or leadership style, one that doesn't fall into the traps of the six mis-management styles. I've worked with each of the six over various stages of my career and have learned a lot of difficult lessons along the way. I vowed to be a better, different leader from the first day I was promoted. It wasn't always easy, and there were quandaries and issues that I didn't see coming, but I've

applied the lessons in this book and built a positive and healthy work environment. Everyone wins when you do that, so it makes sense for any leader—or leader-to-be—to understand how empowered leadership works in order to stop projecting shadows on the wall and create a real workplace that gets things done.

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