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## Permission to Screw Up: How I Learned to Lead by Doing (Almost) Everything Wrong

by Kristen Hadeed, Simon Sinek

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### 18 Highlights | 4 Notes

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Highlight (Yellow) and Note | Location 60

Perfection comes out of molds or off assembly lines. It is not the natural state of things. And the great irony is that we value things made by hand more than we do things that come from machines, despite the fact that things from machines are more . . . perfect. Why, then, do so many leaders fail to recognize the same value when it comes to their people or, for that matter, themselves? Our foibles are what make us endearing. Our irregularities are what make us unique. Our human imperfections are what make us beautiful. This doesn't mean that we shouldn't strive to be better. But there is a huge difference between aspiring to be our best selves and claiming to be perfect. One is a journey of fulfillment. The other is a lie we tell ourselves and others. Good leaders know that their people will only truly thrive not when they are pushed to be perfect but when they are encouraged to be their natural best.

**Wise words from @simonsinek via @kristenhadeed**

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 70

I admit, "being vulnerable" sounds more like advice from a self-help book than a good way to conduct business or build a company. That is, until we understand what "vulnerable" looks like in a company. It doesn't mean we walk around crying all the time. "Vulnerable" in a corporate culture means that someone feels safe enough to raise their hand and say, "I don't feel qualified to do the job I've been asked to do. I need help." It means someone feels they can admit weakness or insecurity without fear of humiliation and the company can, in turn, offer additional training. It means someone feels they can walk into their boss's office and say, "I screwed up," without fear of putting their job, advancement, or reputation on the line. But for too many of us, vulnerable is exactly the thing we most certainly cannot be at work.

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Highlight (Yellow) and Note | Location 79

Leadership is not about being in charge; it's about taking care of those in our charge and making people feel safe.

**Yes @simonsinek & @kristenhadeed**

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 117

Little do I know that I am about to experience the most humiliating thirty seconds of my life. Slowly, one steps in front of the group. And then, carefully avoiding eye contact with me, she says, “We quit.” I almost drop my fork. Wait . . . wh . . . Before I can even think of a response, all forty-five of them turn around at exactly the same moment and begin to make their way out the big double glass doors, dragging their vacuums, buckets, and sponges with them. Forty-five people quit. At the same time. Seventy-five percent of my team. That’s the moment that inspired my obsession with learning how to be a better leader.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 144

This entrepreneurial way of thinking wasn’t new to me: I’ve been a self-starter since I was six, when I started a babysitting service (even though I still needed a babysitter myself) and sold fake nails made of Elmer’s glue to my first-grade classmates. After that came the Girls Club, a “friendship” club that members had to pay \$5 to join. They also had to follow my thirteen rules (the seventh of which was simply “Obedience”). I signed the list, “Thanks, Your Leader, Kristen.” Yeah. Definitely the same thing as friendship.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 397

As I sat on the floor of my bedroom, staring at the payroll reports in the dark, I spotted the error: Lizzie had mistakenly entered the total dollar amounts in the total hours column. Instead of paying people \$200, for example, she’d paid them for two hundred hours. She’d accidentally overpaid twenty-seven students by a grand total of about \$40,000. \$40K! I couldn’t believe it. Our checking account didn’t have room for a mistake that big. If each of those twenty-seven students actually spent the extra funds, we’d be broke. Super broke. Like out-of-business broke. I didn’t know what to do (aside from check myself into a psychiatric center for the nervous breakdown I could feel coming on).

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 425

Two weeks later, when it was time to submit the next payroll, Lizzie asked if I wanted to do it instead. “Why would I?” I replied. “You’ve got this.” She never made a payroll error again.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 428

Though I wasn’t aware of it at the time, the way I handled the payroll snafu with Lizzie would turn out to become a hallmark of my leadership credo: Trust people with enormous responsibilities, allow room for mess-ups, then give them the chance to fix their mistakes so they can learn from them.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 553

As much as I wanted to call my parents for help, I didn’t. And now I understand that was my dad’s plan all along. For years he stood on the sidelines, giving me encouragement and guidance but leaving it up to me to solve my own problems, even though it meant I’d make a ton of mistakes (and boy, did I). He could have offered to verify the trademark before I incorporated. He could have helped me manage my business loan. He

could have called Maid Brigade's attorney for me. He could have done my calculus homework in high school. But he didn't do any of those things—and not because he didn't care. In fact, it was the opposite.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 715

It became my mission to make Student Maid a place where people had room to screw up and to figure things out on their own without having to worry about losing their jobs in the process. I figured that if I succeeded, it would be a win for all of us: Our students would gain problem-solving skills that would help them thrive not only in their jobs at Student Maid but also in their future pursuits; they would learn to trust themselves and become more independent; and they'd be able to take pride in their accomplishments.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 795

The next time you see someone struggling, remind yourself that they don't need you to save them. They don't need the answer to their problem. They need to know they are capable of solving it themselves.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 871

If I sensed anyone's energy flagging even slightly, I gave them a boost with a few complimentary words and a high five, and if I noticed they weren't mopping the floor well or they were making the beds wrong, I gave them . . . an extra high five. Sure, I could have shown them the right way. But why rain on their parade over such a little thing? Instead, I'd wait until they moved on to the next room and then redo the job myself.

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Highlight (Yellow) and Note | Location 942

Giving a pep talk can be powerful. But there's a time for pep talks and a time for reality checks. And a good leader knows when and how to give both.

**Yes @kristenhadeed**

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Highlight (Yellow) and Note | Location 955

After I scored everyone and wrote down exactly what needed to be said to them, it was time for an intern to give the students their evaluations. Yes. An intern. (Okay, so I did chicken out.) If the recipient of a poor evaluation ended up hating the person who delivered it to them, better it be the intern than me.

**Cracking me up @kristenhadeed**

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 982

It soon occurred to me that I shouldn't wait until evaluations to give out constructive feedback.

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 1088

Lencioni identifies three things that can cause people to have miserable work experiences: immeasurability (not having an immediate, concrete way to measure their performance); anonymity (not feeling appreciated by their

leaders for their contributions); and irrelevance (not knowing what difference their work makes or why it matters).

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Highlight (Yellow) | Location 1213

Barry-Wehmiller teaches that if you want to give truly effective feedback, you need to communicate three things: the way you feel, the specific behavior that made you feel that way, and the impact that behavior has—whether it's on you, the company, your relationship with that person, or anything else.

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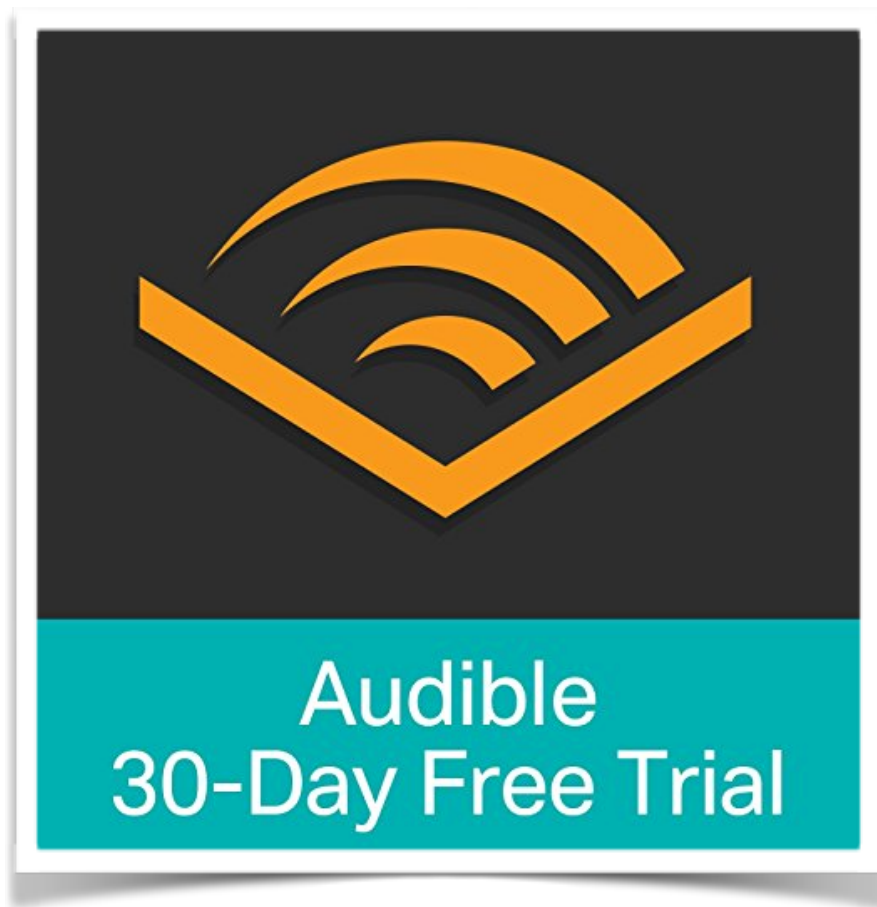
Highlight (Yellow) | Location 1234

When you recognize someone with an FBI, you tell them how they made you feel, the behavior that specifically made you feel that way, and the impact of their actions. When we give someone all three pieces, they'll usually be inspired to repeat that behavior—again and again and again. Here's an example: "I felt grateful when you stayed late last night to help me with the report, and it allowed me to make it home in time to put my kids to bed." Guess who is likely going to volunteer to stay late again the next time you need help?

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