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Oops! How to Deal with a Screw-Up

July, 2016



We've all been there. Maybe you're working with a client or a co-worker and say or do the completely wrong thing. OR maybe you space out on a deadline. OR maybe you miss the mark on a project. OR inadvertently offend a co-worker or friend...

Take a deep breath! You're human. You make mistakes.

I know I've made 'em! Just recently, I was working with my assistant to put together an email newsletter series for a client. We have done this in the past, so it wasn't anything new. As we reached the final stage of the project, the newsletters were designed, written, and ready to be scheduled to send automatically to the email list. But...

Uh-oh! The hosting website changed its pricing! They were now charging for a service (automatically delivering newsletters) that was once free. **What were we to do?**

Even though it was an honest mistake, we were accountable for the flub. Fortunately, the client was understanding and forgave our error and, eventually, we were able to work out a compromise.

How can YOU navigate through YOUR screw-up? Here are my 4 recommended steps:

1. Strategize

Before you jump into action to fix your mistake, pause. Take a step back. Make sure that you're following the best path before you keep going. Have you thought about all the parties involved? Have you considered what's at stake for everyone and who needs to be involved in remedying the situation? If you're working with a team, this step may involve a team meeting to strategize how to move forward.

2. Be Open and Honest

When your mother told you, "Honesty is the best policy," she was right! Even if it means some temporary humiliation, or even the loss of a client, it is better to be forthright than to tiptoe around a situation. This is related to my "No Excuses" concept, which I discuss in my book, The Ten-Minute Leadership Challenge. Even if it's painful to own-up to a mistake and take your share of the blame, it is the best course of action. Most people can see right through excuses and do not appreciate circling around an issue. Besides, by freely admitting your mistake, you are demonstrating courage and personal accountability—traits that are valued by clients and co-workers, alike.

Work With Others

Just because you're responsible for a mess-up, doesn't mean you have to fix it by yourself. If you're feeling truly stuck, **don't be afraid to call upon others for help.** Maybe someone else has been in a similar situation and has advice on moving forward. If nothing else, brainstorming a solution can never hurt.

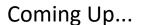
Keep in mind, if you're close enough to the person or people who were affected by your error, it is a good idea to involve them in the solution. In my recent sticky situation with the newsletter series, I reached out to my client and involved that person in resolving the problem. The client appreciated being included in the process and we reached an agreement that worked well for both of us.

4. See the Lighthouse Beyond the Storm

When you make a mistake, it's easy to feel angry or frustrated with yourself. You might get so caught up in the situation that you have trouble seeing the bigger picture. **Know this: the storm will end.** One way or another, you will make it through your mess and come out the other side, stronger and wiser. **It may be hard to focus on the lighthouse when you're caught up in the storm, but be aware that it's out there and, with a little effort and a level head, you will reach it.**

Good luck resolving your mistakes!

Sincerely,



Margaret

Dr. Jean Davidson and I have several <u>Insights Deeper Discovery</u> workshops coming up in 2016. **The next one is on October 13th**. Make personal and career breakthroughs, navigate transition periods, and explore your individual self worth (or team dynamics) with Insights Deeper Discovery. <u>Register Today!</u>



From the UXL Blog...



5 Minutes to a Better Cover Letter

How do you write a cover letter that gets noticed? Seems like a daunting task, right? It doesn't have to be.

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Lunch Meeting? Make the MOST of it

When organized and executed well, the power lunch can be a perfect mixture of work, play, and hunger-quenching. Here are my 7 rules...

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Get Unstuck from Life's Ruts

When you're in a rut--be it in a job, in between jobs, or just in general--becoming "unstuck" can be very difficult. Here are my top methods for dealing with a rut...

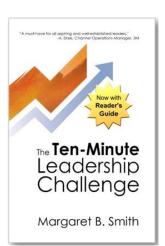
READ ON!



UXL's mission is to create leaders, promote positive change, and enable businesses and individuals to transform their dreams into reality. **Margaret Smith** is a career coach, speaker, author, licensed <u>Insights Discovery practitioner</u>, and adjunct professor at St. Kate's University with 27 yrs experience as a Senior Leader for 3M. <u>Learn more about Margaret and UXL</u>.

The Ten-Minute Leadership Challenge is an instructive and interactive book meant to guide and motivate you to achieve your full leadership potential. Let this book be your constant companion as you learn useful tips and gain valuable insights to help you develop into a savvy business professional and a confident leader. Start your journey to success today. Do you have ten minutes?

Click for more information on the Ten-Minute Leadership Challenge





Margaret is the co-founder of the TAG teamhttp://www.tag-mn.com/, a group of accomplished coaches that guide individuals and organizations to reach their peak. She runs TAG with acclaimed coach Karen Kodzik.



Margaret is a licensed Insights Deeper Discovery practitioner. She guides individuals undergoing a transition through her program, Intentional Discovery, co-founded with Dr. Jean
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