

Volume 5**What I am hearing**

I had the opportunity to share a cup of coffee with two very successful leaders, one a CEO/entrepreneur and the other a senior pastor. As they shared their challenges a common point emerged: "Leaders have to make decisions and live with the results." As we talked about "living with" the results, one key point emerged:

Leadership can be lonely

- There are lots of risks in the big decisions that could have a huge impact on the organization.
- It often gets personal: people objecting or arguing the decision. There can be personal attacks on the leader (you) by people outside of the decision making loop. (Ask a pastor about this one!)

Does this sound familiar?

What it means

Gallup did a study that found people who had three close friends at work were 96% more likely to be extremely satisfied with their lives. I never read in their results the caveat "except for CEO's or executives." You may feel different, but you are not.

A common thing I hear from people who move into leadership roles, especially into senior leadership roles, is that it is "more lonely than I thought it would be." What is the impact of this on performance? Michael Watkins, an expert in leadership transitions, did a survey that found 40% of external leadership hires for organizations fail within 18 months at an average cost of 10x their salary. What are some of the costs you have experienced in promoting or hiring people who did not work out? What has been the personal cost to you?

What you should do

This message is for you – as the leader.

- **Get a small network** (3-5 people) of peers – one where you share ideas/frustrations, get advice, and are reminded that others have bigger problems than you (seriously!). If you are CEO, this network should be outside the organization.
- **Become an expert at:** 1) Finding a positive outlet for stress (it is part of your job and it is not going away) 2) Taking time twice a year (in addition to your vacations) to get away from the office to recalibrate your personal and professional priorities and to reenergize.
- **Make sure your team is practicing** the same principles. Do you really want your executive team making decisions from a place of loneliness, fear, or insecurity? Will your newly hired VP be more productive if s/he is feeling lonely or s/he has one or two friends to openly share frustrations with or get advice from?

Uncertain about how to make any of these happen for you or your team? Contact me. scott@thetrugroup.com



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