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## I. Huddle Up -- The Damage of Silence



Silence isn't golden, it is destructive.

You probably don't realize it, but the problems you are facing right now at work or at home can likely be traced to your silence. How can I say that?

From one end of this country to the other, I work with teams to diagnose what has stopped them from getting results. The cause—despite PDAs and smart phones and Bluetooth and wireless networks—always comes down to one thing: miscommunication. In every employee survey, communication is always top on the needs-improvement list. Miscommunication can mean saying something inaccurately or insensitively, but a huge chunk of it is caused by not saying what needs to be said.

### 'FILLING IN THE BLANKS'

I have a client whose vice president has gone silent. The VP is taking days to reply to e-mail messages and voicemails, is forgetting to include the managers in strategic meetings, and is just not making the crucial decisions that need to be made. My client has caught wind that the VP is having some personal issues at home. He sees evidence the work team is struggling with workload, and he knows the VP has other career aspirations. However, my client hesitates to directly ask the VP, who in the past has shot down questions with responses like, "That's just the way I am." So, with no information being openly discussed, my client finds himself filling in the blanks and questioning his own worth. *Am I the problem? Is it personal? Should I start looking?* And he's not the only one! The whole team's efficiency has halted, decisions are being made in the dark, subject matter experts are being left out of meetings, deadlines are being missed, morale is plummeting, rumors are flying—all because we have a VP who is unresponsive and "too busy" to deal with the team.

This is a mess—and I see it all the time! And I bet if the VP came to me, he would wonder why his team is failing to get results and is so ineffective. This is why I have a job!

People don't like "dead air." You've seen it during a too-long pause in a conversation: people inevitably fill the silence with a comment or question. It's the same in work and personal relationships, only on a larger scale. People can't help "filling in the blanks" caused by lack of communication and leadership. They speculate as to why the silence is so deafening. And soon the damage is done.

Say there has been a lot of closed door meetings and rumors floating around but no official word of any changes. You can bet people will start hypothesizing in the parking lot. Or, say a high-level executive puts in so many long hours he has no energy at home to invest in his children. What's the message to those kids? Whether or not it's true, they feel they've been told they're second best and begin acting that way.

The sad part is that the silent person usually is trying to do a positive thing by keeping quiet. He or she doesn't want to hurt someone, or wants to have everything all figured out before speaking, or doesn't want to appear weak.

## FEAR OF FAILURE

To the listener, silence communicates a lack of care, concern, and value. To the one being silent it usually masks a fear of doing something wrong or failing.

Your fear of saying the wrong thing to your staff, or appearing weak in front of your peers, or needing to take action in an area you don't feel competent in, causes you to leave important information unsaid, or said badly.

Most leaders despise weakness in themselves. Instead of stepping up and taking responsibility in an area they are unsure of, they skirt it and hide behind another competency they feel confident in.

For example, I find as I work with successful entrepreneurs that usually they are so good at the **doing** part (sales, technical, projects) that they are not skilled in **leading the team to do it** and managing the team to get results. The easiest out is to get too busy, because somewhere along the way being "busy" (translate: *doing other things that I am actually good at and can feel successful at*) is an excuse for not taking action.

Successful leaders in the workplace might subconsciously place more significance in work because they are unsure that they can succeed at home. They keep "busy" at work and hide behind their professional competency, abdicating where they could make the biggest impact for generations to come.

And unfortunately when leaders fail to step up and move into an area where they are uncertain their behavior can go to one of two extremes: Lording authority as a tyrant, leading to abuse (that's a topic for another newsletter), or skirting responsibility in silent cowardice.

## LEADING, NOT FOLLOWING

The truth is, *not doing any harm* is *not* being a good leader. It's abdication. *Not saying anything* in fear you'll of saying the wrong thing is not good communication. It's cowardice. If you're not leading, you are following. There are no extra credit points for *not doing anything wrong*, especially if you haven't done anything at all.

Strong leaders are *not* the ones who do everything right. They are the ones to put a plan together, take risks, make mistakes, humbly admit their mistakes, take responsibility for failures, make necessary changes, do not fear correction, and win the trust of their followers and the team of which they were leading.

Think about it. It is easier to trust someone who unintentionally hurts you, realizes and owns up to the mistake, apologizes, and humbly seeks to correct the wrong, than it is to trust the leader who does nothing, believing he or she is "doing no wrong." Trust is developed when you know that when someone screws up they will do the right thing!

Leaders, we must confront the areas we are fearful of and move *into* them, not *away* from them. Intentionally put the relationship and getting results in front of your fear of how you are going to look. Commit to connecting with others, in contrast to protecting your need to appear perfect. Speak truth and address the issue risking conflict and your comfort zone. Admit to those following you, "I am not completely certain of the best course, but this is where I am headed." Then seek input. You are hiring people who are brighter than you in many areas, aren't you?

What will emerge? The possibilities are endless. People around you are waiting for your words of encouragement, your words of wisdom, and your gift of being "present."

BEGIN IT NOW!

*Shandel*

## II. Pep Talk -- Monthly Quotes

The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing. — *Edmund Burke*

Act the way you'd like to be and soon you'll be the way you act. — *George W. Crane*

Praise is a powerful people-builder. Catch individuals doing something right. — *Brian Tracy*

Real power comes by empowering others. — *Denis Waitley*

Judge each day not by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant. — *Robert Louis Stevenson*

When people are made to feel secure and important and appreciated, it will no longer be necessary for them to whittle down others in order to seem bigger by comparison. — *Virginia Arcastle*

Everyone has inside of him a piece of good news. The good news is that you don't know how great you can be! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is! — *Anne Frank*

## III. MVP Award -- Successful People Living with Intention - Nicole Shanks



*This month welcomes Nicole Shanks to the MVP Hall of Fame, and to True Life Coaching, Inc. This woman knows her purpose and demonstrates it by the way she makes strong decisions in living her best life. I am so impressed that I have asked Nicole to join our team of coaches! I want her to focus her gifts in helping women discover their needs, values, and purpose in life. Just in time for Mother's Day! (See the Game Schedule below!) Nicole succeeds as an outstanding coach, committed wife, and focused mom—all while maximizing her calling. What a great example! Welcome aboard, Nicole, and congratulations!*

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**Here's Nicole:**

For years I worked as an ob/gyn nurse in the hospital, the clinic and as a childbirth educator. I enjoyed working with women (and still do), and I especially love teaching! But I always felt like there was something more out there. I kept praying and keeping an eye out for what that might be.

Then one day I saw a life coach on TV, and I knew. *"This is it!"* This is what I want to do with my life: help people move forward, reach their potential, go for their dreams, and live their best life! Of course, I needed to experience life coaching first. So I enrolled in classes to become a certified life coach, and then started my life coaching business soon thereafter. Here's a quote that inspires me:

We have an innate desire to endlessly learn, grow, and develop. We want to become more than what we already are. Once we yield to this inclination for continuous and never-ending improvement, we lead a life of endless accomplishments and satisfaction. —Chuck Gallozzi

In the middle of pursuing my dream, my husband and I were blessed with a little girl named Olivia, who will be turning two this month. I love being a mommy. But even after a two-year break, I still have a desire to pursue my passion of life coaching. Enrolling in Shandel's Life 301 class in January was perfect timing to

are with other motivated, driven people who want to make changes in their life to reach their potential and live a purposeful, passion-filled, balanced life.

There's a great quote by Max Lucado found in my latest favorite book, *The Success Principles*, by Jack Canfield\*: "You weren't an accident. You weren't mass produced. You aren't an assembly-line product. You were deliberately planned, specifically gifted, and lovingly positioned on the Earth by the Master Craftsman."

It reminds me I have a great purpose to fulfill. I now feel ready to go and inspired to fit life coaching back into the mix. I feel so blessed to be a mommy *and* live my dream as a life coach.

Striving to live my best life,

*Nicole Shanks*

\* *The Success Principles: How to Get from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be*, by Jack Canfield with Janet Switzer (Collins, 2006).

## **IV. Game Schedule -- What's New at TLC! Reno office is open! New coaching packages.**



**NEW DIVISION OPENS!** True Life Coaching, Inc. has successfully launched the Nevada office operating out of Reno. I welcome our four new business clients to this newsletter. We will be helping business owners and executives maximize their influence as leaders to get better results from themselves, their team, and the bottom line of the company. Business is relationships and we take business to the next level. If you have any leads or contacts, I would so appreciate an e-mail introduction. Or forward our newsletter to any Nevada or Northern California

contacts. *Thanks so much, team!*

*"Most people are too busy living life to ever put life in their living..." - Doug Firebaugh*

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**Life 301 Wokshop** — Starts **APRIL 5**, noon phone class! **ONLY 3 SPOTS LEFT**

*Define the steps to propel yourself forward to your next level.*

If you have attained a measure of success, yet find yourself at a personal or professional plateau, Life 301 is for you. Discovering and working from your personal values you will maximize your potential to succeed in all aspects of your life. So we ask you...How would you like a life that is more fulfilling than you ever imagined? In which you have laser-like focus for your goals, plans, and dreams for the future? With more time, energy and determination to accomplish the important things in life? If you find that practically every minute of your life is filled, yet you lack definition and fulfillment, this workshop is for you! [Life 301 Flyer](#)

**Change Your Life Coaching For Women** with Coach Nicole Shanks. Amazing introductory offer!!!

To jumpstart Nicole here at True Life Coaching, Inc. we are offering an unbelievable 1:1 personal coaching package for women of all ages. An excellent Mother's Day gift for your wife, mom or daughter!! Nicole will meet with you for a two-hour intake session followed by 10 private coaching sessions to work through the Change Your Life program. The cost is only \$800 including materials. It doesn't get much better than that, my friends. To get started e-mail [admin@truelifecoaching.com](mailto:admin@truelifecoaching.com) or call 206-718-6914.

**True Life Career Course** - With Coach Piper Abodeely - *Perfect for Graduates!*

Prepare for the Grand Adventure you are ready to embark on!

Graduates from high school and college, alongside those folks in their 20s looking for all that life has for you? Join Coach Piper Abodeely in this workshop designed to give you the opportunity to anchor yourself in your own sense of purpose and find ways to be fully engaged in executing your career path. Each part of the program identifies the foundations to make optimal choices and gain clarity in the next steps of your personal and professional development. The process will provide the tools for analyzing how you grow and change as well as techniques for prioritizing what you want from work and life. For more information or to purchase gift certificates, please e-mail [admin@truelifecoaching.com](mailto:admin@truelifecoaching.com) and get focused on all that awaits you!

***If not now...when?***

[Descriptions here on all workshops](#)

## **V. On 3 - Ready...1,2,3 - BREAK**

Thank you for taking the time to read this month's edition of The Coach's Time Out. I truly appreciate you forwarding this newsletter to those whom may find it beneficial. If you desire to subscribe, please visit the front page of our website or send an email to [ss@truelifecoaching.com](mailto:ss@truelifecoaching.com) with the word SUBSCRIBE.

If you would be so kind to forward this to a friend - see below for an easy click to help you pass it on.

Life's a blast - go for the 2 EXTRA points!

*Shandel Slaten*  
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*Be You. Be Real. Be the Best You can Be...Today!*