



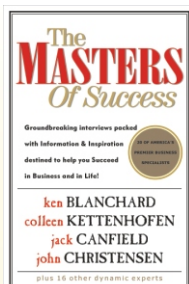
Colleen Kettenhofen

International Speaker, Trainer, Author

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Criers, Hand-holders and Blamers... Oh My!

written by Colleen Kettenhofen



Colleen Kettenhofen

International speaker, author and motivator is to be featured in a new book called

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"If you keep on saying things are going to be bad, you have a good chance of becoming a prophet."
Isaac Bashevis Singer

Please keep in mind that with any of these difficult personalities, it is often what is going on with them. You cannot internalize everything that they say or do to you. Look at what might be your part in this. Did you allow the behavior to go on for too long? Research shows one of the main reasons managers don't address performance problems is that they're uncomfortable with conflict. Ask yourself, "How much worse will this situation become if I don't do something about it soon?" By allowing the behavior to continue, you are the enabler.

Here are three of the most difficult personalities and what to do about them.

Criers or "Victims": Do approach them. Be brief, realistic and tactful when giving constructive feedback. Give them respect and a feeling of importance. Often they need it. Don't let them cry their way out of meeting with you. If they're really upset, reschedule the meeting for a half hour later. Hand them a tissue and pour them a glass of water. It diffuses the situation, acts as a buffer and a momentary distraction. It shows you're acknowledging their feelings even though you may not agree. Start out with a "buffer," such as something they are doing well. Watch your tone and body language. When they go into their "the world is against me" spiel, ask for specifics as why they feel that way. Ask questions but be brief.

Hand-holders: These people seemingly need your attention all the time. Often it's due to the fact that they took initiative in the past, and were screamed at or admonished by a difficult supervisor. Now they're afraid to take risks and be proactive in making decisions. These needy individuals often suffer from low self-esteem. They lack confidence in their skills and abilities. Do they need additional training? Give them the benefit of the doubt. Build their confidence. Empower them. Be specific in person and in writing as to when and where you want them to talk initiative in making their own decisions. Coach them. Give immediate positive reinforcement for risks taken where they end up succeeding.

Blamers: Blamers have a sign on their desk that reads, "the buck never stops here." They are constantly blaming others, and outside circumstances for their failures. They do not hold themselves

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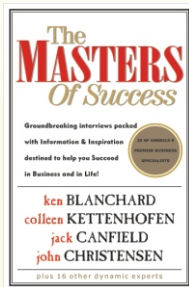
accountable or take ownership for their personal and professional lives. The hard part is that these individuals often have very valid and "creative" excuses. For example, they are 20 minutes late "because of traffic," or "due to inclement weather," or "construction on the highway."

Let them know when you are starting to see a pattern. Say something like, "Chris, I know the traffic gets backed up on the interstate, and at the same time, since you've been coming in 20 minutes late, my suggestion is to plan for those days, and leave your house 20 minutes early." What a concept! The point is to acknowledge, listen, and then offer a suggestion. Also, make them aware of their tendency to blame outside circumstances for everything. Often times, these people do not realize how they're coming across. Sometimes they have been this way for a long time because somewhere they learned they could get away with it. You have to let them know (tactfully) that this is unacceptable behavior. Begin to hold them accountable by placing the most important goals and objectives in writing. Clearly define their roles and responsibilities. Use exact times and specific dates for deadlines. Good luck!

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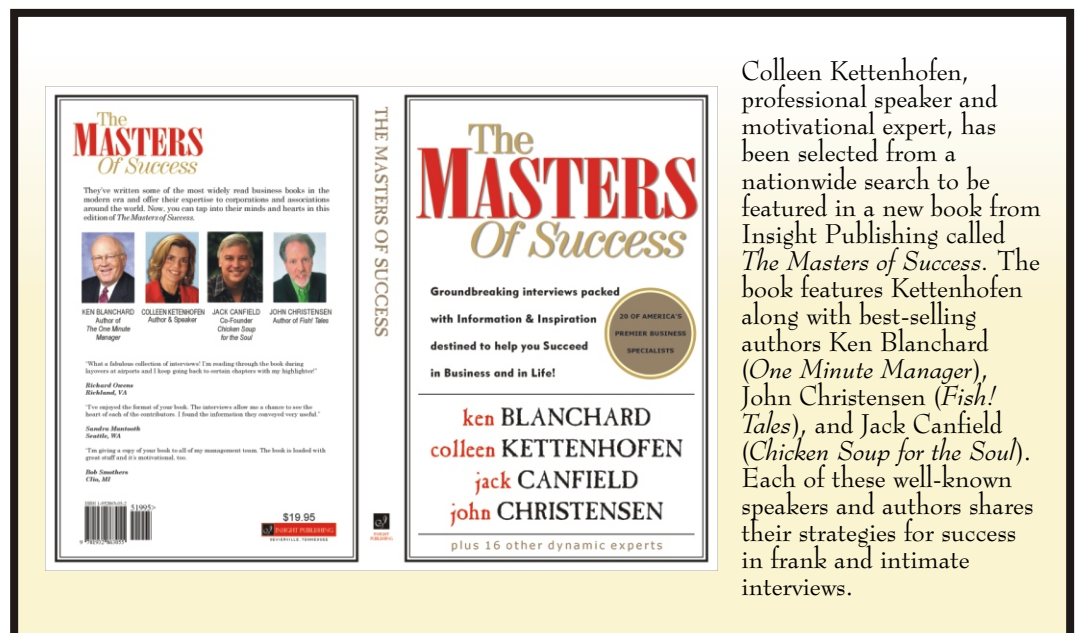
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