

# **The Coach:**

## **Conversations on Leadership**

***A Leadership Parable***

Guy Harris

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# Guy Harris

## The Recovering Engineer



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This is sample copy from of a special, pre-publication edition of a book that will eventually be released as a printed version.

# **Table of Contents**

## **1 – The Situation**

## **2 – A Call for Help**

## **3 – Meeting The Coach**

4 – The First Coaching Call: Understanding What We Do

5 – The Second Coaching Call: Control vs. Influence

6 – The Third Coaching Call: Meeting Basic Needs

7 – The Fourth Coaching Call: Understanding Influence

8 – The Fifth Coaching Call: Resolving A Conflict

9 – The Sixth Coaching Call: Beginning to See Change

10 – The Seventh Coaching Call: The Facets of Life

11 – The Eighth Coaching Call: More on The Facets of Life

12 – The Ninth Coaching Call: Wrapping It Up

More Insights on the Facets of Life

## **Guy's Keynotes**

## **Resources Online**

# Chapter One

## The Situation

*“A man has to learn that he cannot command things, but that he can command himself; that he cannot coerce the wills of others, but that he can mold and master his own will: and things serve him who serves Truth; people seek guidance of him who is master of himself.”*

James Allen

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It's a beautiful, early summer day, and I still can't shake the feeling that something isn't quite right. Two years ago, I was at the top of my game as a successful, young officer in the United States Navy Submarine force. In fact, on the day I left my last ship, the USS Benjamin Franklin (SSBN 640), I received my second Navy Achievement Medal for excellent performance. I left the Navy as the excited and energetic Lt. Carl S. Daniels, USN. Now, just two years later, I'm Carl Daniels, the frustrated and disillusioned general contractor.

Launching the business looked easy – buy a franchise, hire the right staff, and work hard to build a future for my family. The first few months were difficult, and they were rewarding. Just before leaving the Navy, I purchased a franchise territory in my home state of Georgia from a successful remodeling company franchisor. In only six months, I built the business to a profitable status. Right from the start I was on a roll. The business grew quickly. I was paying off my business loan, and I was making money. Within nine months, the business grew to the point that I needed to start hiring a professional staff. I could no longer keep track of all the sales, production, customer service and accounting issues on my own. Following the business plan created by the franchise company, I began to hire a staff to help me grow the business.

The hiring process took a while to complete, but over the next three months I found the people I wanted. Isaac Dalton, an experienced building and construction sales professional, came onboard as my Sales Manager. Doug Caldwell, a seasoned engineer with experience at a large home builder, took over day-to-day production issues. Sharon Innis came to us from a local retail store to work as our Customer Service coordinator. And, I found a great accountant, Christine Stevens, to look after the company's financial matters.

We began our second year in business with a growing client base, good carpenters, fantastic relationships with subcontractors, and a strong professional staff. We were poised for great growth — then it hit. Suddenly, my fast growing business hit a wall. The money kept coming in, but the staff started losing their drive. Now they seem to be working in slow motion and bickering with each other over minor issues. I've been trying to fix the problem for six months. I don't know what to do, and now I'm starting to lose my drive as well. I've got to get some help. When I get to the office, I'm calling the franchise corporate staff to see if they can offer any advice.

# Chapter Two

## A Call for Help

*“Most people think of leadership as a position and therefore don’t see themselves as leaders.”*

Stephen R. Covey

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“Good morning, John. This is Carl Daniels, from Kennesaw.”

“Hello Carl! How’s our fastest starting, most profitable, first-year franchisee this fine morning?”

“Well John, to tell you the truth, not good. I’m having some problems that I don’t know how to fix, and I was hoping that you could help me out.”

“No problem, Carl. Tell me what’s happening, and I’ll see if I can get you the help you’re looking for.”

“John, if I could tell you what’s wrong, I could probably fix it. I don’t really know where to start.”

“Just give it a shot, my friend, and we’ll figure it out together.”

“OK. Here goes. You know when we worked together to find my professional staff?”

“Sure I do. You’ve got some great people on your team, Carl.”

“You know, John, I thought I had great people, too. We started out great. Now, I’m not so sure. They seem to be running at about half-speed the last few months. We’ve got some tensions between people, and we’re not working as efficiently as we did before. I really don’t know what’s happening. Business is still pretty good, but I’m concerned that if I don’t figure out what’s going on with my staff, I’ll be in trouble before too long.”

“Sales are good?”

“For now, yes.”

“Your profit margins are OK?”

“Yes, but they’re slipping a little.”

“So, your main concern is with the people on your team?”

“Yeah. They just don’t seem motivated. I’ve tried everything I know to do to motivate them and to get them to work together better. They’re just not getting it.”

“Well Carl, I could kick this around with you, but it’s not really my area of expertise. I’m great at business process stuff, and I’ve got some ideas about leadership and team dynamics that I would be happy to share. But honestly, people issues aren’t really my strong point. Have you thought about getting a leadership coach to help you?”

“A leadership coach? What’s that?”

“A leadership coach is someone who understands leadership issues, knows how to diagnose leadership problems, and can help you fix them.”

“John, I don’t have leadership problems! I have people problems! I’m killing myself here! I work 70-80 hours a week, and they’re not pulling their weight!”

“OK. OK. I hear you, and I think I understand your situation. But you called for my help. Didn’t you?”

“Well, yeah... I did.”

“Didn’t you say that you had done everything that you know to do?”

“Yes, but...”

“Well then, would you be willing to get a different perspective on your situation?”



“I guess so, but I’m not interested in any psycho-babble, mumbo-jumbo, head-shrink advice. I just want to fix this problem so that I can get on with business.”

“Carl, I’m not talking about psycho-babble, mumbo-jumbo, head-shrink advice. I am talking about working with someone who can look at your situation without an emotional connection. Someone who can help you diagnose the real problem so that you can get it fixed. I’ve worked with a leadership coach on some issues here in the home office before. It has always helped me. In fact, I know of a great coach in the Atlanta area who might be able to help you.”

“Alright, John, I’ll give it a shot. Let me have his name and number. I’ll call today.”

# Chapter Three

## Meeting The Coach

*“Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without the strategy.”*

Norman Schwarzkopf

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“Good afternoon, Robert Alexander speaking.”

“Hello, Robert. This is Carl Daniels, with Jackson Home Remodeling in Kennesaw. John Wilson from the Jackson corporate office suggested that I give you a call.”

“Hello Carl. John told me that you would be calling. How can I help you today, sir?”

“Well, Robert, I’m not sure that you can. I’ve got some employee problems that are causing my business to slip a little bit. I called because John thought you could offer some insights to improve my situation.”

“You know, Carl, I’m not sure that I can help you either. I have had some experience helping business owners improve their businesses, but maybe I’m not the right person for you.”

“Uh... sorry, Robert. I didn’t mean to imply that you aren’t good at what you do. It’s just that John said you are a leadership coach, and I’m not convinced that I have a leadership problem. I think that I have an employee problem.”

“Really? Why do you say that?”

“Well, for one thing, my employees just aren’t very motivated. I’ve tried everything that I can think of and they just don’t respond.”

“Go on, Carl.”

“I hired people with good backgrounds. People who appeared to perform well in their previous positions, but they’re not performing here. In fact, once I got to know them, I realized that they sort of irritate me. They do OK work, but not excellent work. I’m just not satisfied that I have the right team. Frankly, Robert, I’m thinking of replacing at least two of them, maybe three.”

“Who are the people that you’re concerned about?”

“Just my professional staff. The carpenters and subcontractors seem to be OK.”

“How many people are on your professional staff?”

“Four.”

“Carl, do I understand correctly? You have four people on your professional staff, and you’re thinking of replacing three of them?”

“Yeah. I think I hired the wrong people.”

“Why do you say that?”

“It’s just something about the way they go about doing their work that bugs me. They’re not very productive, and they don’t take suggestions very well.”

“Tell me about that, Carl. Give me a quick synopsis of what you see with each of them.”

“OK. I’ll start with my Sales Manager, Isaac Dalton. He’s the one that I struggle with the most. He’s great with clients. He’s great on the phone. He can tell a story that makes everyone laugh, and he’s fantastic at creating leads. He just has terrible organizational and follow-up skills. I’ve asked him to file weekly sales reports and to create a sales data base so that we can structure our customer follow-up system. I’m sure that we are missing opportunities because of his sloppiness. And since I have started pushing for more organization and structure, he has started to withdraw from me. He just doesn’t want to do what needs to be done.

“Then there’s my Customer Service coordinator, Sharon Innis. She’s the kindest, warmest, friendliest person I’ve ever met, and...she drives me nuts. Once she’s on the phone, she won’t get off. All of our clients love her — and they should. She doesn’t know how to say no. She’s practically giving away follow-up services on jobs after the initial contract is completed. I’ve tried to talk to her about the problem. She just sits quietly while I talk. She doesn’t have conversation with me of any kind. The next thing I know, she’s talking to my accountant, Christine Stevens, about how rude I am and how I don’t appreciate what she does for our clients. And then she doesn’t do much of anything for the rest of the day.

“Christine is a little easier to work with. I’m pretty sure that I need to get rid of Isaac and Sharon, but Christine may be OK. She’s neat, logical, orderly, and consistent. She does great accounting work. Sometimes she’s a little slow to act. For example, yesterday I asked her to run a quick financial report. I just wanted a 1 or 2 page overview statement. She took all day and created a 12-page document. She’s not real bad, but I am a little concerned.

“And finally, there’s my Production Manager, Doug Caldwell. He’s a little rough with people, but he sure does get things done. Sharon and Christine don’t care for him much, but I’m not too concerned as long as he gets the carpenters to do their job.”

“So, Carl, your assessment is that Isaac and Sharon are definitely a problem, Christine might be a problem, and Doug is probably OK. Do I understand correctly?”

“Yeah, that’s accurate.”

“You’ve got a problem with at least 50% of your professional staff, maybe 75%, and your assessment is that they are the problem. Is that correct?”

“Well, when you put it that way, I’m not so sure. That sure is how it looks to me.”

“Carl, are you familiar with John Maxwell?”

“Sure, he writes books on leadership and people skills.”

End of sample text.

To read the rest of this eBook purchase the full download [here](#).

For additional information about Guy Harris and what he offers, continue to the next two pages.

# **A sample of Guy's keynote topics...**

## **Confessions of a Recovering Engineer: Learning to Apply Soft Skills in a Hard World**

Laugh with Guy as he discusses his efforts to “develop a personality.” Why a “Recovering Engineer”? Because you never truly get rid of your core personality — you just learn to control and adapt it. Guy will share the principles that have helped him learn to relate to people as well as he does naturally to facts and figures.

## **Don't be A Noyed**

When people work together, conflict will probably happen. In this talk, Guy presents a humorous look at the application of key conflict resolution concepts.

## **Lessons from Legendary Leaders**

Today's leaders looking for strong role models and mentors can turn to the history books. Walk through time with Guy as he uncovers lessons we can learn from great leaders of the past. Learn to apply them so that you can become a “legendary leader” in your sphere of influence.

## **Channel 3 or Channel 4 — Are you tuned in?**

Guy will cover key principles in working and communicating with people in a quick, light-hearted, entertaining fashion. In just a few, fun minutes, learn how to stay in tune with other people.

## **Faith or Fear? You choose!**

We choose our response to life's challenges. There are really only two choices — faith or fear. Your choice can make the difference between success and failure.

If you would like to book Guy to speak at your event or to conduct training on the concepts in this book, please  
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