

# L MESSAGE

## Excuses

We have looked specifically at the *lack ofs* that draw us into a cycle of detraction, and the need we have to find traction, but let's look at what works against us finding traction. In effect what causes us to avoid addressing the *lack ofs*.

Let's talk about excuses! What was the last excuse you gave? To whom was it given? Why was it given? And excuse is something we provide for others, when we fail to fulfill our obligations, or our side of the bargain. An excuse aim is to divert the responsibility from us to something else, something that we often think is outside of our control.

Allow me to give you an example. When L-Message was first born, I emailed all the leaders I knew and said: "I have this idea: I will write and send to you a one page reflection on Leadership each week. If you would like to receive it, then I would ask one thing of you, that you read it. If you think it's not for you, or you would not like to receive it, then let me know, and I won't send it to you." There were a few people who declined but on the whole almost everyone I sent it to, by not voicing an objection, agreed to the conditions.

That's all fine! But I speak to people all the time who ask me something about leadership and I say "well do you read the L-Message" (because the opinion they want from me is captured in a specific episode) and their response will be 'Oh, No I haven't gotten around to it yet because...' and there the excuse is inserted. Everything from 'I don't have enough time', 'I have too much work to do' through to 'I don't get a chance to read'.

I hope at this point you are realising what I have discovered. That these excuses are not true! The real reasons lie in things like: *My priorities are stuffed up, I don't see the value in personal growth, I don't like what you have to say, I'm not willing to commit to challenging myself and growing.* But the excuse tends to put the responsibility on a lack of time, a noble work ethic, that it's everyone else's fault, and the result is that blame is placed on an outside influence, and ownership for one's responsibilities fails to occur. Excuses rob us of our potential!

The problem with this is that these *real reasons* are never actually addressed because addressing them means we need to face the truth and change who we are, address who we are becoming, which is often very painful. The danger if we do not, is that we will never break out of a cycle of detraction, because excuses dis-empower us to do so. Excuses deny us the opportunity to face the truth, to wrestle with our inadequacies and change. They deny an opportunity to learn and ultimately they reflect the true character of us as a leader.

So when you fail to fulfill a commitment, don't blame other people or other things, instead look at why you couldn't fulfill your obligations, identify the cause, and put in place a strategy so that the behaviour will never repeat and you'll never have to rely on an excuse again.

**Instead of putting energy and thought into creating an excuse – put that same energy and thought into developing a Do Mind Set.**

### **A note on justification:**

Justifying an action is different to giving an excuse. An excuse shifts the blame from self to another. Justification embraces the lesson that needs to be learnt and commits thereafter to learning it.