



Confessions from the Corner Office Excerpts
By Pattye Moore and Scott Aylward

A quick note about *Confessions*:

Confessions from the Corner Office: 15 Instincts That Will Help You Get There is a refreshing look at the importance of the “soft skills” of leadership from a former corporate president and a former CEO. Both walked out of their corner offices in their late forties due to burnout, and after a brief respite began Instincts LLC to share the importance of nurturing and developing the leadership instincts needed to make it to the corner office, as well as how to avoid the burnout they experienced. Graduate programs from MIT to Stanford are beginning to recognize and incorporate many of the same “soft skills” of business that Scott and Pattye believe led to their success.

These two former corporate leaders present a “tell it like it is” approach to climbing the corporate ladder. Along the way, the authors are not afraid to expose current management practices they find appalling, and they bust a few stereotypical myths of what makes a good leader. Throughout the book, they illustrate their instincts and observations with humorous quips and real-life stories.

**A NEW CONCEPT FOR CORPORATE AMERICA—
THE CORPORATE SOUL MATE**

This chapter is titled...*Get Married Again—Your Spouse Won’t Mind.*

“Our instinct pushed us to evolve from confidantes to corporate soul mates—two leaders who depended on and needed each other to challenge and debate the business issues of the day.”

“In order for the corporate soul mate instinct to pay dividends, however, there must be a foundation of unconditional trust and honesty between the two of you.... A corporate soul mate provides that hand to squeeze as you jump, and from that squeeze comes the confidence and self-assuredness needed to lead others.”

“Note to spouses and significant others: This concept of corporate soul mates may test the strength of your relationship. It may seem to you that your partner has found ‘someone else.’ If you are the suspicious type, your mind could easily wander and you could begin to doubt your partner’s motivation.”

**THE FEAR LEADERS HAVE OF USING THESE FOUR WORDS:
“I MADE A MISTAKE”**

This chapter is titled... *Oops, and Other Important Words to Lead by.*

“While admitting our mistakes seems to be a lesson most learned in first grade, it appears to be a foreign concept in the business world.”

*“Make a pact with yourself that when a mistake happens, you will step up, own it, express remorse, and promise that you will work to never make that mistake again.... Practice saying these four powerful words: ‘**I made a mistake.**’”*

**FOUR MORE WORDS THAT MANY FIND DIFFICULT TO UTTER:
“CAN YOU HELP ME?”**

“We have noticed repeatedly that as people move up the corporate ladder, for some reason, they find it more and more difficult to ask for help. It shouldn’t be that way, but it is.”

*“And, as the titles and salary increases, we are less willing to say, ‘**I need some help.**’”*

“You should not only look up the corporate ladder in asking for help, but down and across as well.... If you ask one of your peers, or even one of your direct reports for help, you will be amazed at the reaction.”

LEADERS WHO NEED IT TO BE “ALL ABOUT THEM”

“If people think their opinions don’t count, they quickly figure out it’s just easier not to think. We can think of no faster way to ruin a company.”

“Me-i-tis is a slowly penetrating disease that will (and should) choke off any hope of moving up and advancing to the corner office.”

“The wrecking ball has one purpose: to destroy. Ironically, this insecurity in leaders creates a human wrecking ball that can destroy the corporate environment they so desperately seek to maintain and to lead.”

“Remember the story of the emperor who had no clothes? He was naked, but no one dared tell him otherwise. Unfortunately, there are many naked leaders out there.”

TAKING THINGS PERSONALLY AT THE OFFICE

“How many times have you heard someone say, ‘Don’t take it personally; it’s just business.’ Well, it should come as no surprise that we couldn’t disagree more. Think about it. Business is personal. Your career is personal. How you manage others is personal.”

“When we say it’s okay to take it personally, we mean it’s permissible to take the wall down between your personal life and your professional life, and let others see your human side.”

“It’s okay to be genuine and to display real emotion. It’s okay to care about more than the bottom line. And, if the time calls for it, it is okay to cry. In other words, taking it personally is about leading from the heart.”

THE BLACKBERRY INFILTRATION

“We believe that corporate executives are losing their ability to truly listen. In fact, we think this deterioration is reaching epidemic proportions.”

“Our fear is that reading and responding to e-mails during meetings has become so commonplace that executives no longer even regard their behavior as being rude, disrespectful, or insulting. Not only have executives stopped considering it rude, we believe subordinates see this behavior as acceptable and copy it. It is not acceptable.... This, ladies and gentlemen, is an epidemic of disrespect, and what concerns us is that those spreading it don’t view it as wrong. Instead, they see it as a badge of efficiency.”

“It would do everyone some good to go back to the lesson we were all taught in kindergarten: ‘You don’t talk when someone else is talking.’ You may ask if it is the same as talking if you are typing or reading, and the answer is yes.”

THE COCOONING OF CORPORATE EXECUTIVES

“We want you to think about something: a door. That’s right, a door. The simple four-letter word that defines a partition between your office and the rest of the company is, in our view, the culprit in what we call the ‘cocooning of corporate executives.’... This eight-foot by three-foot piece of wood has a symbolism and a power seldom seen elsewhere in corporate America.”

“We have all worked for those individuals who view the office as a testament to their struggle and treat it as a squatter would a piece of unclaimed lakeside property.... They should be viewing their offices as a launch pad at NASA from which they go out to explore and better understand their universe.”

“Too many leaders operate under the guise of ‘if someone wants to meet with me, we’ll meet in my office because I’m senior in title, and my office is bigger.’ While most won’t admit it, this practice exists in virtually every office in the country. Yet, when you put it down in writing, it appears to have its roots in some elementary school experience with a sandbox.”

THE OBSESSION WITH INSTANT COMMUNICATION

“We believe that our obsession with instant communication is contributing to the dumbing down of corporate America. That’s right. Corporate America isn’t getting smarter. It is getting dumber. Our addiction to ‘fast’ is dramatically limiting our ability to think and to innovate.”

“We think someone should invent a cloaking device that prohibits you from sending an e-mail or voice mail to anyone in an office next to you. Then you would be required to talk to him or her.”

“You may take great pride in the commitment to respond to e-mails and voice messages instantly. You are certain that the bigwigs will be impressed because they see that you’re thinking about work even at 2:30 a.m. Guess what? We’re not impressed, and neither is your boss. Send us a message at 2:30 a.m. and we think you are drunk from a night out, you need to get a life, or you need a better mattress.”

“Let us ask you how many times you have been behind people in line who can’t stop talking long enough on their cell phones to give an order. They slow the process down and often get something wrong because they don’t have the common courtesy to cut short their conversations.”

SCOTT AND PATTY’S BACKGROUND: A PROMISE. A SECRET. AN INSTINCT

Scott: *“I had finally landed in the place I had always dreamed of—a real live advertising agency.... I packed up my Pinto and off I went to test myself and start my career.”*

Scott: *“I was forcing myself to laugh at the latest AIDS joke and other gay-lifestyle-related quips...the jokes were not funny to me. I was a gay man, but those words were never spoken to family, friends, or even to myself until that day.... As I look back, I realize that those hurtful jokes on the golf course motivated me to prove to myself and my colleagues that success is an internal decision, a choice.*

Patty: *“My husband of six years came into the kitchen and told me we needed to talk....he had met someone else and wanted a divorce and that he was moving out immediately.... There had been...no warning.... I suddenly became the mommy and daddy, chief bottle washer, and sole breadwinner.”*

Patty: *“I made a decision and a silent promise to my daughter. I would do whatever it took to provide the life for Melissa that I had envisioned. I had absolutely no idea how, but I was determined to find out.”*

For more information on the book, or to schedule an interview with the authors, please contact Kristen Schremp at Kristen@kaspublicity.com or 703.928.5527