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THE CLEAR VIEW

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The Courage to Walk Away: Protecting Workplace Culture

By: Marcel Brunel - President at The Brunel Group

In the world of city management and emergency services where emotions run strong, opinions vary, and stakes get high, the passion for one's job is not just a personal matter but a cornerstone of effective leadership and healthy workplace culture. As I draw on insights by working with over 90 plus Texas municipalities, it is becoming clear to me that the decision to remain in a role that no longer inspires can have far-reaching implications, not just for the individual but for the entire organization. The emotional well-being of leaders in roles such as city managers, police chiefs, and fire chiefs is crucial. These positions, by their nature, set the tone for organizational culture and morale. When a leader is disengaged, it doesn't just impact their performance; it trickles down to every level of the department, affecting overall morale, productivity, and even public perception. If someone gave you a dull axe and paid you a fair amount of money to go into the forest and cut down trees for 8 hours a day with that dull axe, how long would you last?

Leaders in these roles must be emotionally literate and self-aware. We must emphasize the importance of understanding one's emotional landscape. Recognizing when your heart is no longer in the job is a critical aspect of this awareness. The implications of staying on while feeling disconnected are significant. It can lead to a lack of enthusiasm, reduced creativity, and a general air of negativity, which can be infectious.

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Empowering Your Career Journey: Unleashing Leadership Potential

By: Dalton Rice - City Manager, City of Kerrville

Embarking on a career in the public sector, or navigating a shift within your professional journey, can be both thrilling and challenging. The key lies in recognizing the opportunities for self-discovery and growth as you take the next step in your career.

Drawing from a wealth of mentors, personal experiences, and professional insights, I have learned the importance of embracing a non-linear career path. The initial excitement may wane when faced with the realization that someone else may have a similar positive outlook with differing qualifications. Rather than succumbing to defeat, it is crucial to delve into introspection to identify what truly sets you apart.

In navigating different styles of leadership, I have intentionally adopted practices that distinguish my approach:

1. **Never forget where you came from:** Grounding oneself in one's roots provides a solid foundation for personal and professional growth.
2. **Not everyone's 100% is your 100%:** Acknowledging diverse perspectives on effort allows for a more empathetic and understanding approach in professional interactions.
3. **Make authenticity core to your life:** Authenticity fosters genuine connections and builds trust, both essential in professional and personal spheres.
4. **Ask more "How can I help you?":** Proactively offering assistance cultivates a collaborative and supportive environment.

While these principles are not an exhaustive guide to leadership, they encapsulate a mindset that has been instrumental in my journey. Taking the next step in your career is not just about progression; it demands intentional effort, self-accountability, self-awareness, and consistent action.

Throughout your professional voyage, when confronted with unsettling remarks or experiences, take a moment of reflection. Ask yourself the hard questions, embrace the sometimes uncomfortable answers, and, most importantly, take actionable steps towards improvement. Remember, the journey toward leadership is not linear, and every setback is an opportunity for growth.

In conclusion, the path to taking the next step in your career is paved with opportunities for resilience, self-awareness, and a commitment to continuous improvement. Embrace the challenges, learn from them, and watch as they transform into stepping stones toward realizing your full leadership potential.

Marcel Brunel

President at The Brunel Group



A former US Army Airborne Ranger and Texas A&M Psychology graduate, Marcel Brunel has spent the last 25 years working with organizations as an expert in psychometrics and talent development. While working closely with many government and private organizations, he provides innovative, state-of-the-art assessment tools combined with the most current and complete performance development skills and strategies. Residing in Farmers Branch, Texas, Marcel lives with his wife Susie of 27 years and is the father of Sydney, Jonah, and Adrienne.



The Courage to Walk Away: Protecting Workplace Culture

In such dynamic fields, where decisions can have life-altering consequences, being fully present and emotionally invested is non-negotiable. Leaders set examples. If they are merely going through the motions, it sets a precedent of mediocrity and disengagement.

This can dangerously permeate through the ranks, leading to a workforce that is less motivated, less committed, and ultimately less effective.

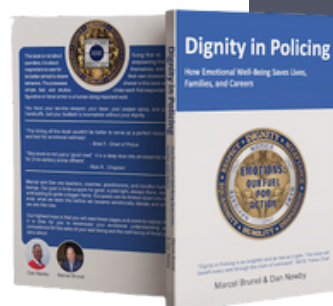
Moreover, staying in a role without passion or love for it can lead to burnout. Burnout not only affects mental and physical health but also impairs decision-making, problem solving and relationship building abilities. For city managers, police chiefs, and fire chiefs, where clear-headedness is essential, this can have disastrous consequences.

However, deciding to walk away requires immense courage and self-reflection. It involves acknowledging that one's journey in a particular role has reached its natural conclusion. This decision, though difficult, can be incredibly liberating and beneficial for both the individual and the organization. It allows for fresh perspectives and new energy to lead these critical departments. Self-scouting is always good to do.

Leaders need to remember that their well-being and emotional state directly influence their teams and, by extension, the community they serve. Walking away is not about giving up; it's about recognizing that the best service one can offer at times is to step aside and let new ideas, focus, and enthusiasm drive the department forward. Things evolve. We need the flexibility to ensure that we can evolve too.

In conclusion, city managers, police chiefs, and fire chiefs must be vigilant about their emotional connection to their work. Recognizing when it's time to move on is not just a personal decision; it's an act of responsibility towards their team and community.

By stepping away at the right time, they safeguard the health of the organization's culture and ensure that their departments continue to thrive under new, passionate leadership. This self-awareness and courage to act not only exemplify true leadership but also ensure that the department's culture remains robust, positive, and forward-moving. **We retire from work, not from life.**



Clear Career Professionals

<https://clearcareerpro.com/>

➤ Upcoming Opportunities:

City Manager - Morgan's Point Resort

Director of Development Services - Anna

➤ Recent Placements:

Andrew Devaney - Lockhart - Building Official

Karla Young - Collinsville Finance Manager

Bryan Creed - Heath Public Works Director

Troi Johnson - Sweeny WW Operations Manager

➤ Clear in Action:

Michael Boese and Brian Beasley facilitated the City Council/Executive Staff Goals and Priorities Retreat for the City of Huntsville, focusing on strategic planning and alignment.

Danny Kistner presented "The Fire Service Culture Change Dilemma" at the TMHRA Civil Service and Labor Relations Workshop in Conroe.

Brian Beasley and Kelly Kuenstler are working with the City of Devine to update their Human Resources Manual and provide staff training.

Kent Myers will be attending TML Mid-Year Conference in San Marcos.

Michael Boese will be attending the TPCA Conference in Galveston.

"Dignity in Policing: How Emotional Well-Being Saves Lives, Families, and Careers," is now available for pre-order in the Kindle Store! Get ready for the official release at the end of February!