

Seduction of the Herd

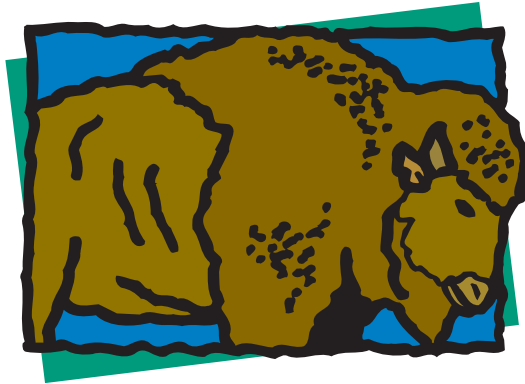
By Dan Bolin

"HEAD SMASHED-IN BUFFALO JUMP" is the unusual name of a provincial park near Calgary, Alberta. Native Americans used this site for centuries to hunt buffalo, stampeding them over an obscure cliff at the edge of the prairie. Herds of buffalo met their destruction following a strong bull charging headlong in the wrong direction.

Boards, like buffalo, can fall victim to the notions of a strong, forceful leader who has no idea where he's headed but moves with confidence and power. Our uncertainty leaves us vulnerable to the seduction of misguided confidence. This happens in boardrooms more than we like to admit.

When we're unsure or uneasy about a difficult decision, we often look for certainty at the expense of wisdom. We're willing to form a herd, rallying strength through numbers. How can so many buffalo be wrong? Belonging is a powerful force that generates a feeling of security which can lead us headlong over the cliff of error.

Board members are not inoculated from the 'belonging'



virus. At times, board members sit back and vote for foolish directions and policies, instead of voicing a wise but contrary opinion. To avoid the possibility of being isolated from the herd or rejected by the leader, some good ideas are never voiced, and the ministry suffers as a result.

We all long for the security of strong leadership in the face of indecision and belonging during times of uncertainty.

However, the leader must forge ahead with competence as well as confidence, and followers must be willing to risk rejection and possible isolation to fulfill their role as members of a healthy board.

At times, we mistake compliance for unity. We fail to express our opinions, thinking we may hurt others or disrupt the group harmony. Pray for God's leading, seek his acceptance over that of people, and address issues objec-

tively. Unless we're willing to risk rejection and isolation, the ministries we represent are at the mercy of the loudest voice in the room – whether or not it's headed in the right direction.

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Kingdom Leadership

By Emily Odegard-Jamieson

A WISE GRANDMOTHER IS THE BEST OF CEOs—she knows the big picture, listens well, discerningly imparts wisdom, and consistently and impartially pursues her people. Her discipline is firm, her touch is gentle and her encouragement is perfectly timed. Akin to great mentors and bosses, my grandmother has undoubtedly left a mark on my life.

During my college years, "Gommy" sent newspaper clippings and coupons across the country biweekly to keep me abreast of hometown events and to help me save a few pennies. In the midst of exams, one of her celebrated packages arrived; inside, a carefully snipped magazine clipping read: "*Do what you have to do, when you have to do it, whether you feel like it or not.*"

Thinking it was pertinent to the time at hand, I posted the clipping above my desk. Over time, those words became seared on my conscience. I couldn't put off anything without remembering them, and was driven back to whatever task called for my attention. I frequently kicked myself for putting those words in a place where I could so easily see

them. Discipline hurts.

I'm often consumed, along with Paul, by the conundrum of not doing the things I want to do and doing the very things I don't want to do. And there are a million books out there to answer my questions. However, please notice that the above message is not titled: "19 Words That Will Change Your Life." I guarantee that if a stranger had imparted those same words, they'd have fallen on deaf ears. The reason those 19 words were set in my heart was because of *relationship*. I had been pursued with love by the person who gifted me with that wisdom.

Likewise, it's Jesus' relentless pursuit of us, and the enjoyment of a relationship with him, that causes his words to take root in our hearts, and for us to become people who are passionately engaged, and glorifying God in *all* things. Ken Blanchard exhorts us to "lead like Jesus." In the same way, let us pursue people, engage in relationship, and demonstrate a passion that's contagious and a spirit that's humble. And let his kingdom come, today.

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