

# LEADERSHIP IS DANGEROUS

Avoiding 4 Traps Every  
Leader Will Face



Joseph Lalonde

## What others are saying:

Joseph's new e-book is a must read for new leaders and a great refresher for established leaders. The mark of a successful leader is his ability to endure and remain in the fight.

-TJ Trent

[www.borntwolead.com](http://www.borntwolead.com)

"Leadership is Dangerous" provides a look into 4 traps every leader will face. Whether, you're new to leadership or are a seasoned leader this book will help you to successfully and effectively lead for a lifetime.

- Dan Black

[www.danblackonleadership.info](http://www.danblackonleadership.info)

In Joseph's new book, Leadership is Dangerous, he really puts his arm around the new (and not so new) leader and leads them step by step towards being a great leader and avoiding the traps along the way. I would recommend every leader read this quick, inspiring book.

Mark Sieverkropp

[www.sieverkropp.com](http://www.sieverkropp.com)

As a leader in a small organization I am responsible and accountable to our entire company. Joe highlights the 4 leadership traps and how to avoid falling prey to these 4 traits that can easily take advantage of any leader. This eBook has found me at the right time and has given me great advice on how to move forward and be a better, stronger leader for my team

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# Leadership Is Dangerous

Avoiding 4 Traps Every Leader Will Face

You're probably excited to be a leader. You may have come upon the title in a different way than I have. That's okay. There's so many different ways to be chosen to be a leader.

Some leaders are called. They're asked by others to step up and lead. To take the mantle and run with it.

Other leaders worked their way to the position. They started in a lower position and rose through the ranks to obtain the title of leader.

And still other leaders accidentally stepped into the role. These leaders saw a need which needed to be fulfilled. No one else was stepping up so they decided to step in and do something about it. No one called them. No one asked them to do it. They just did it.

Whatever way you became a leader, it's okay. You did the work to become one. Whether it was the choice of others, rising through the ranks, or choosing yourself. You're at a point in your life where you are a leader!

Good for you!

### **What It Means To Be A Leader**

Sometimes we become leaders by accident. It leaves us wondering what leadership means for us. To be honest, it can mean many different things.

Leadership means:

- **You have followers:** There are people who are watching what you do. They're waiting for your next move so they can follow in your steps.

You may not always see who your followers are but they're out there. They can be friends, family members, or complete strangers.

Be on the lookout for who's following after you.

- **Being a leader means you have responsibility:** Did you ever read Spiderman growing up? Before Peter Parker's uncle Ben dies, he says something to Peter. He uttered the words "With great power comes great responsibility."

How does this relate to you? You've been given the power to lead others. You have influence over your followers. This gives you power. With this power comes great responsibility. Be sure to lead with this thought in mind.

- **Your choices no longer affect just you:** That's right. Your choices now affect others. Your followers may feel the repercussions of the choices you make. The bad choices you make will reverberate through your organization.

If you're married, you know this. Every choice you make affects your spouse and children. No choice is separate from your leadership of the family.

Now you know what being a leader means. You're attracting followers. You're given great power but also have great responsibility. And your choices now affect more than yourself.

The choices you make affect everyone you touch and everything you do. There will be times when you believe no one is watching you. That's a lie. Once you become a leader, someone will be watching you.

All you have to do is watch the news and you'll see how our leaders are watched. Your steps will be scrutinized. Your decisions will be questioned. And eyes will be watching you.

This is why you, as a leader, need to be vigilant.

### **What I Want You To Learn**

This book is not meant to scare you away from leadership. Not at all. Instead, it's meant to draw you into a deeper understanding of leadership and what may come your way.

I want you to understand there will be trials and tribulations as a leader. There will be landmines that could possibly derail your ability to lead. But you have can sidestep some of the traps that are laid in front of leaders.

I want to give you a gift many leaders were never given. Insight into the traps that many leaders fall victim to.

In this short eBook, I'll be unable to cover every single trap you may encounter along the way. Yet I hope I'm able to cover four of the major traps. You'll also be provided with instruction on how to overcome the leadership traps you'll encounter.

I hope after reading this book you'll be able to engage other leaders on a higher level and understanding. Sharing with younger leaders the traps you've discovered and how they can avoid them as well.

I also hope you'll realize you're not alone. There are many other leaders facing some of the same traps you're facing. And many other leaders have come through those traps to see another day. Once you realize this, your difficulties can be lighter as you'll be able to seek out others who have been in your situation.

It won't always be easy. There will be days you'll want to discard your title as a leader. I encourage you not to give into this feeling. It's only going to be temporary as you weave your way through the trappings.

Once you arrive on the other side, you'll be glad you stuck with leadership. You'll have gained new skills. You'll have new experiences and stories to share on how a leader grows. You'll be better able to relate to those leaders who have failed and fallen short.

Are you ready to dive in and discover the trappings every leader will face? I hope so because I'm ready to share it with you!

The four trappings we'll discuss in the book are Isolation, Greed, Settling, and Avoidance.

## Trap 1: Isolation

There's an old saying about leadership. It goes

"Leadership is a lonely place to be."

The worst part about this is that the saying is often true. Leaders tend to lean towards an isolation mindset. This is the first trap I want to talk about.

Isolation in leadership often happens as you gain stature and begin to see success come your way. You start to see yourself in a different light. You become someone others seek out.

The problem arises due to the fact you only have so much time in your day. Just like everyone else, you have 24 hours to get things done.

With everyone clamoring for attention, you begin to feel overwhelmed and draw back. Revealing yourself to a trusted few or, if it's bad enough, no one else.

Why do we do this? Most likely it's because we begin to feel guilty that we cannot help or meet with everyone who desires our attention. We feel if we can't meet with one, we shouldn't meet with any.

And the vicious trap of isolation begins to wrap its dirty hands around you.

To avoid the feeling of letting others down, you withdraw to your own world and take care of your own business. Neglecting anyone else.

Can you see how isolation is a trap? You become withdrawn and begin to lose the personal touch you originally brought to the table.

You can break this trap. It's possible and I'm going to give you some words of wisdom on how you can overcome this dangerous situation.

The first thing you need to do is realize you can't reach everyone. There's no possible way for you to meet everyone's needs. You're one person and you're limited in the amount of people you can personally touch.

Now this isn't a bad thing. It's the truth and the sooner we're able to come to grips with it, the sooner you're able to break free of the isolation.

Next, you need to realize you can do for one what you wish you could do for everyone. This is quite the struggle as our desire is to help everyone. But we can't touch everyone. Which is why you must start with the ONE person you can help.

Reach out and offer a helping hand to one person who needs it. Don't worry if you can't offer the same to everyone else. Focus on this one person. Give them the attention they need and push them forward.

Now, here's the really cool part. By starting with one person, you're actually helping more than the one. This person you helped, he'll go on to help another person. Maybe more. The help you have given him has now been extended to others. And you've helped not just one but many.

Another place we find ourselves becoming isolated is in our friendships. We become leery of the motivations of others. Who are our real friends and who are coming to us just because we've obtained a position of power?

This is something you've got to get out of your mind. RIGHT NOW.

Sure, you'll come across people who want to be around you because you're in a position of authority and they'll try to abuse it. It's not fair but it's a price we must pay for being willing to lead others.

Instead of becoming isolated from those seeking relationships, we need to become aware of the fact we need these friendships.

We become stronger when we're surrounded by others. They lift us up and encourage us to carry on.

Ecclesiastes 4:12 puts this fact plainly. This scripture states:

**"A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken." (NLT)**

If you're a believer, you can't ignore this verse. It's telling us we need to be standing together with other people. Guarding each other's backs. Being there for one another.

Close friendships help us stand tall and stand strong. When trouble comes, your friends and family are going to be the ones telling you you've got this and to keep going.

And therein lies the major trap of isolation. It keeps us from relationships and moving forward. We're easily defeated when we're by ourselves. However, having two or three people surrounding you will keep you strong.

Decide today the two or three people you can join with to share the trials of leadership with. Make a commitment to one another.

Let each of you hold the others accountable. Be ready to lift up the friends you have made when they're down on their luck and questioning their value.

Within this group of close friends, you'll also, hopefully, have the advice of wise counsel. This is another benefit of getting out of isolation. You'll discover you're able to consult with your wise friends and make better choices.

Proverbs 11:14 says

**Where there is no counsel, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.**



What does this mean for you? It means you need to have people around you. Those 2-3 people who are willing to give you counsel and encouragement. Don't neglect this vital facet of your leadership. You'll need it more than you will ever realize.

Knowing you have others you can count on will strengthen the confidence you have in your leadership. You'll hear the honest feedback of those that love you. You'll feel the hands of those same friends lifting you up when you fall. You'll get the inspiration and encouragement you need when you feel you cannot continue leading anymore.

Tell isolation you're done with him. He no longer controls you with the fear of what others will do. You're ready to stand with others who have your back.

Make a choice and make those friendships!

## Trap 2: Greed

Greed is the next trap we'll talk about.

It's easy to fall into as excess is touted as the thing to have. More cars, more money, more followers, more of everything. Have you found this to be true?

I have and I've noticed it's a trap.

How many times have you been to a seminar where the speaker talks about all of his wealth? And how you can have it to? More than one I bet.

But when you hear his story and how he came into all of his riches, what do you feel? If you're like me, you feel envy and the desire to have more.

See how easy it is to fall into greed towards money?

Look for ways to resist the allure of money and material possessions. I've found reading the material of minimalists helps me to push this desire away.

Guys like Joshua Fields Millburn & Ryan Nicodemus who write at [www.theminimalists.com](http://www.theminimalists.com) share their journey from having the "indicators" of success to living a minimal lifestyle. They've moved towards a simpler life and it's helped them combat the desire of monetary greed. It's also helping me realize that I don't need it all either.

Well, it's not the only form of greed that will grasp you and try to kill off your ability to lead.

The place where greed gets me is in trying to gain a larger audience, a bigger tribe. I have a desire to reach out to others and give them tools to lead better. I want to share my knowledge with them.

And then greed rears its ugly, little head up and tells me I need more followers. That I must be constantly expanding my influence. That I need to be noticed more.

There's nothing wrong with this desire until it becomes all-encompassing and it rules over my life. It's something I have to combat daily.

To combat this, you need to set boundaries. Maybe it's you only check your stats once a month or not at all. Whatever it is for you, discover it and fight against the greed.

Greed also comes at us in relation to our time. Time is precious and it's something we can never get back once it's spent so we'll often try to hold onto it with all we've got.

We'll hoard our time and try to give attention only to ourselves and those we love. As a leader we've got to realize we're called to give our time to others whom we don't even know.

Our employees and followers are looking for someone who's invested in them and not just themselves. They need someone who will lead and guide and give of their time.

I know you can't give all of your time to your followers. I can't either. But I'm sure we can give more than we think.

Create a schedule of when you can be available to answer questions and personally mentor a select group of followers. Offer your knowledge by writing or speaking or creating a product they can use to further their growth.

You don't want to overwhelm yourself. That's for sure as that's as bad as being greedy with your time. Find out what works for you and implement a way to get rid of the greed you have with your time.

## Trap 3: Settling

The next trap many leaders face is settling. Settling for poor performance from a team member. Settling for good enough. Settling for small goals.

Settling is another easy trap to fall into. It rolls right off of our tongues. Think of all the times you've settled.

- I don't deserve to be leading so I'll step aside for now
- We can't do better as a team
- I'm used to these results. They're good enough

When is the last time you've heard yourself mutter one of these lines? Recently, I bet. If not, you've uttered some other line that says you're settling.

Now you may be asking yourself: What's wrong with settling? There's a lot that is wrong with settling.

It gives us underperforming team members. They may be on the wrong seat or even the wrong bus. But they're holding the team back. And you've kept them on because they're comfortable and you're comfortable.

It gives us lackluster results. When we settle for sub-par results, we tend to get sub-par results. This brings down the quality of work we're doing and give the organization a poor image. It may also result in lost customers, employees, or even injuries.

It gives us a lack of satisfaction. Giving in and settling causes us to care less for the projects we're working on. Knowing the results will be less than stunning, we stop caring. Less caring leads to a poor product. And creating a poor product leads to a lack of satisfaction.

Can you see how settling can creep in and destroy leadership? It slowly breaks down the team, creates poor products or results, and destroys our satisfaction in creating a product or result you can be proud of.

We've got to move away from the trap of settling. To do this, you'll be required to shift your mindset into one that requires quality and sees results that meet the standards of your organization. Without this mindset change, you'll fall back into settling for poor results and performance.

What can be done to help shift from a mindset of settling to a mindset of quality results? I'm glad you asked. It requires you to take swift action and a change of habits. Are you ready to discover what needs to happen?

## Begin by seeing that settling is hurting your performance and your team

**members.** Low standards and mediocrity brings everyone down. They feel their work is unimportant and they can do a poor job. What's it matter anyways? Nothing great is expected from us. Let's do the least amount of work so we can relax and kick back.

**Move into calling your team to accountability.** Lay out a template of what results will and will not be accepted. Discuss with the past issue of settling and where you're moving to. Let them know it's no fault of theirs but a fault you've discovered. Show them how settling has hurt the team and the great results you expect to see with this new move.

**Model the desired behavior.** Chances are, you may have been part of the problem. Where you? If you found yourself slacking off and not doing the best job possible, know that part of the problem was you. Decide today that you will change your attitude and behavior. You will be responsible and you will make wise choices when it comes to doing great work. Apologize to your team for your lack of effort. Apply yourself towards achieving the results that you want to see from your team. Become the leader and do the work required.

**Track the progress.** The only way to tell if you're moving forward and not settling for poor results is to track the progress and results of the work being done. It's not fun and it gets messy when you have to call a team member or yourself out on the floor for poor performance. But if you're not tracking the progress of quality work you'll never know if you've improved what needed to be improved.

If you make the shift in these four areas, you'll begin to see a shift towards accountability and creating quality products or results. Keep it up and your organization will gain the recognition it deserves.

I hope I didn't come off as too harsh in this chapter. It's not what I wanted but it's what needed to be said. We need to see settling hurts the whole team. We need to see our teams need to be called into accountability. We need to model the behavior we desire. And we need to track our progress. This is where the results will come from.

One note on settling. Don't mistake settling for being an empathic leader. There will be times when a team member needs extra time or training. It's not from a lack of desire to do quality work. It may come from a struggle at home or a need for more training.

Assess the situation. If training or a little time off appears to be the solution, be willing to work with the team member to resolve the issue. Help them succeed so they can help the company excel. Not only will you have helped a team member improve, you will have made a team member who sees their value. This can be more valuable than actually getting quality results from him. It creates a team member who is committed and dedicated to the team. Isn't this what you really want? Someone who buys into the vision?

Now, get out there and stop settling within your organization. The people you're serving deserve better and I know you're going to give it to them!

## Trap 4: Avoidance

The last trap we'll discuss is avoidance. Now, what do I mean by avoidance? It's shirking the responsibility of leaders to confront the issues and problems that are occurring in your organization. You may avoid:

- Confronting poor performance
- Confronting negative attitudes within the workplace
- Employees or customers who you find annoying
- And a myriad of other situations

When we begin avoiding people and situations that make us uncomfortable, we give up a portion our leadership. We're saying "I'm unwilling to step up and take responsibility for this situation. Instead, I'll leave the bad situation the way it is."

Putting this into words makes it sound bad, doesn't it? I know there have been people and situations I've avoided. There were, of course, justifications in my mind on why I'm avoiding rather than confronting. A lot of it has to do with the fact I didn't want to hurt anyone's feelings.

For me, it was the greater good and having peace that "encouraged" my avoidance. I thought I was doing good.

Your avoidance issues probably give you the same feelings. You're keeping peace. You don't want to rock the boat. You want smooth sailing.

The cold, hard truth is avoidance only leads to those desired outcomes for so long.

Sure, for awhile, you'll see peace and harmony. Until the tipping point is reached and confrontation is inevitable and sudden.

Reaching this point, you begin to spew all of the problems at once. And the team member didn't even know there was a problem. They're caught off-guard and respond in kind.

Instead of reaching the boiling point, you could have confronted the issue when you first noticed the problem arising.

What could have been done instead?

Take the slow road. Approach those involved in the situation and let them know things aren't right and you're there to help fix the issue. Inform them you want to keep them around as they're great workers but the actions they're taking are producing a hostile work environment.

Let's break down the process to kill avoidance. You'll be better off for it.

Begin by examining situations as they come at you. What's your reaction to them? Do you want to bury the issue or confront it? If it's the latter, confront it and deal with it.

If it's the prior, look at the issue and examine why you want to bury it. Is it because it's really not important or is it because the situation makes you uncomfortable?

Discovering this motivation will help you move forward and resolve the issue rather than bury it.

Next, take the time to work through the issue. Break it down into simple steps that you can take to approach the issue. You could always:

**Ask for a lunch meeting to discuss the issue.** Eating tends to put people at ease and creates an atmosphere to talk. Don't barge in with an assault on the person. Instead, ask questions that can breach the issue and reach an amicable resolution.

**Share your story.** Take time to describe a time you've made a mistake and the reasons another leader avoided confronting you about the problem. Describe how it made you feel when you finally realized what happened and the avoidance that occurred. Assure the person you're not angry but rather need to clear the air and get things rolling in the right direction.

**Offer solutions.** Instead of attacking instead of avoiding, offer solutions to the problems that you wanted to avoid. Show the team member you're wanting to work through the issues and make things right. When you show an openness to solutions rather than condemnation, people are more open to the correction.

**Move forward.** Now it's time to move forward. Once you've defeated the avoidance, you've got to move forward in the relationship. Don't let the mistakes of the past hold you back. Applaud the employee and welcome them back into the fold.

Avoidance often appears as the savior of a team. You think it will keep the peace. Instead it kills it.

Take the steps listed to overcome the avoidance and build a better team.

Take the time to examine why you're avoiding the issue. Decide on why and determine a resolution.

Move forward with the resolution. Whether it's taking the team member to lunch to discuss the issue openly or it's confronting the issue head on. Take the action needed to resolve it.

Be willing to share the stories you have of past avoidance and how it's negatively affected the team. Let them know it's not what you want for them.

And be willing to offer solutions. Show them you want to work together to get things done.

When you do, you'll finally have overcome avoidance and discover the keys to living free from it.

# Now what?

I hope you've made it to the end of this book with me and the book hasn't frightened you too much. That wasn't the intended purpose. Instead it's to inspire you to watch out for four traps I think every leader will face and must overcome.

Do you remember what they were?

First, you've got to overcome the trap of ISOLATION. It creeps in and tells you it's okay to close yourself off as a leader. Don't buy into it. Fight the temptation to pull away from others. Remember we were created for fellowship and we need each other.

When we become isolated, we become an easy target for discouragement and depression. Join with other like-minded individuals and fight for each other.

Next, you may face the trap of GREED. The desire for more and more. It may be influence, money, or fame. Reject the claim that you must have more to be successful.

Focus on what you have now and enjoy it. As you do, you'll discover more comes to you. It's an odd contradiction but it's true.

Then comes SETTling. The desire to say poor performance is okay and we'll let it slide. Letting poor performance slide will kill your organization. Don't let yourself feel like you can let yourself slide either. It's a death trap.

Demand excellence in all you and your company does. Show the world there are companies looking to do great work and not give into the temptation of mediocrity. Do the work you know you were meant to.

Finally, defeat the trap of AVOIDANCE. Don't let the fear of confrontation prevent you from tackling the big issues of the day. Whether it's confronting a poor performing employee (remember, you've decided that you're not going to settle) or if it's talking to a company you believe is out of your league.

Avoidance only hinders the potential of you and the company. Be a leader and step up to the plate. Take a swing at avoidance and knock it out of your world. You know you can do it, so do it!

Take these four traps to heart. They'll pop up again and again as you progress as a leader. It's your ability to acknowledge and defeat them that will help you become a great leader.

Now you know what you're about to face in the world. Face it with confidence. Know you can defeat the traps. Heck, you can even avoid the traps if you're aware of the traps you may face.

I've equipped you with that knowledge. You can do great work. I know you can do great work.

I also know you have the ability to avoid and overcome the traps that will come your way. Be prepared. Be vigilant. Be a leader.



## Author Bio

Joseph Lalonde is a leadership expert who specializes in helping emerging leaders deal with the struggles that come from leading. His passion is in seeing leaders thrive regardless of their situation. He believes they can succeed!

He shares nuggets of leadership wisdom at his blog: <http://www.jmlalonde.com>. He's confident that young leaders can use these nuggets to grow their skills and lead better.

Knowing you have potential, he offers coaching to those looking to increase their leadership potential, work on personal development, or live a more full and enriching life. If interested in his coaching services, check out his coaching page: <http://www.jmlalonde.com/coaching>

