



## Angels, Darksidiers and Fence-sitters

Jack leaned back in his chair, thinking about the last few weeks. Most of what Jangbu had taught him was working very well. Jody, one of his subordinates, was a good example. Her recommendations were not always acceptable at first. However, when he used the Socratic Method with her, she thought carefully about his questions and either explained her thinking process to him or modified her recommendation to make it workable.

He had found it difficult to let go of his

preconceived ideas about how to solve problems and make decisions in his department, but when he gave Jody room to think for herself, she surprised him with some very creative approaches. He found that he was getting more satisfaction out of her success than he used to get out of solving all the problems and making all the decisions on his own. And Jody really seemed to be enjoying her job.

Three more of his 32 subordinates, Jim, Jason and Jill, seemed to be reacting in the same way as Jody, taking the initiative to bring him recommendations whenever they found problems to solve or decisions to make. They too seemed happier at work.

However, three other subordinates really worried him. Bart, Becky and Bob rolled their eyes and shook their heads when Jack announced his new expectation that they start to think at work. He talked to each of them several times to explain his new expectation and to remind them that he expected their full support. His attempts at persuasion seemed to have little impact. Yesterday at lunch he overheard them talking about him to his other subordinates.

Bart had said, "He's just trying to get us to do his job."

Becky had agreed, "We aren't paid to think at work, so why should we?"

Bob concluded their argument by saying, "Just ignore him. This will go away like every other management initiative around here."

Their attitudes infuriated Jack.

His remaining 26 subordinates were noncommittal. They seemed cautious, but they continued to do their work the way they always had, putting in their time and rushing home at the end of the day. It was as if they were waiting for someone or something to push them in one direction or the other.

Jack was tired of waiting. As much as he enjoyed seeing Jody, Jim, Jason and Jill take on responsibility for thinking at work, he knew that he wouldn't get the results he was after unless he could get the whole team pulling in the same direction. It was clear that Bart, Becky and Bob were pulling in the opposite direction and were having as much (or more) influence on the uncommitted majority as he was. He was losing patience with them and with himself.

This whole Journey To Teams seemed stalled. Why couldn't he convince them? What was he doing wrong? He stood up and paced back and forth in his office.

"Jack, what on earth are you thinking about?"

He turned quickly to his door. It was Marty.

"Come on in. I'll tell you all about it," he said. They sat down and he shared his frustrations with her

while she listened carefully.

"I understand what you are saying, Jack," Marty said. "Throughout my career I have had my share of great subordinates, but I've had others who were a real pain in the neck. I never did learn the secret of getting them excited about the changes we were making in my department. I wonder if this is a problem Jangbu ever experienced on Mount Everest?"

"I don't know," admitted Jack. "Why don't we call him?"



Five minutes later, Jack had Jangbu on the speakerphone.

"Hello, my friends," he said. "I assume that because the two of you are calling me from work that you are seeking more mountain wisdom?"

"We sure are," Jack said. Quickly he explained the problem that he and Marty had been discussing. "Is this a problem you ever encountered on Mount Everest?"

"Jack, what do you think I would do if I had a climber who did not want to go up the mountain and actively worked against the team?" Jangbu asked. "Do you think I would keep him tied to us?"

"No, of course not," Jack answered. "He would hold back the rest of the group and stop them from getting to their goal."

"That is right," said Jangbu. "Take out your copy of the map and write this down:"

### THE 10-80-10 RULE

- 10% ANGELS
- 80% FENCE-SITTERS
- 10% DARKSIDERS

Jack looked at what he had just written on the map (see map 7). Then he started to nod. "I think I understand what this means," he said. "Ten percent of the people who work for me are Angels. They understand the advantages of the changes I am trying to make. Not only do they support these changes in front of my face, they also try to convince their peers that they should participate too. On the other hand, another 10 percent of my team are definitely Darksiders. They are actively trying to convince the other people on my team to pull against the changes I'm trying to create."

"That's right, Jack," said Jangbu.

"I bet I know who the fence-sitters are," said Marty.

“They are the ones who are playing it safe. They won’t commit until they see who wins. And when one side

THE 10-80-10 Rule:  
10% = Angels  
80% = Fencesitters  
10% = Darkiders

## Camp I



## Base Camp

### COLLECTION

*creator*

TRADITIONAL  
SUPERVISOR

*a.k.a.*

BABYSITTER

*whose goal is*

ENFORCE  
RULES

*members treated  
or behave like*

CHILDREN

*members become*

DEPENDENT

### WORK GROUP

*creator*

COACH

*a.k.a.*

INDIVIDUAL  
BUILDER

*whose goal is*

SELF-DIRECTED  
INDIVIDUALS

*members treated  
or behave like*

ADOLESCENTS

*members become*

INDEPENDENT

**New Expectation:  
Recommend, Get Approval,  
Then Act!**

**Use the Socratic Method**

**All Change is Loss:  
Supervisors fear losing control  
Subordinates fear getting control**

**Chasm of Fear**

wins they will jump on the winning side and claim that they were there all along.”

“That is correct,” said Jangbu. “If you do not deal effectively with the Darksiders by either causing them to change or removing them from your organization, on what side do you think the fence-sitters will fall?”

“They’ll fall on the darkside,” said Marty. “It’s easier for them because they can avoid the pain and anxiety of changing. And why should they change if there are no negative consequences for ignoring you?”

“Why would we keep someone tied to our team here at work if they don’t want to come along on the Journey To Teams,” said Jack.

“So, how do we deal with the Darksiders?” Jack asked.

“On Everest, we’d untie them and send them down the mountain,” said Jangbu, “but that won’t work for you.”

“We will use our Progressive Counseling Process,” said Marty. “It consists of three steps. The first step is called a verbal warning. The supervisor tells the subordinate exactly what expectations are not being met, exactly how the subordinate needs to change and the consequences of either choice. Although this first step is called a verbal warning, the supervisor must still document the conversation in writing and store it in

the subordinate's personnel file."

"What if the subordinate improves his behavior after the verbal warning?" asked Jack.

"He will continue to be a member of the team," answered Marty. "However, the documentation will remain in his file for a probationary period of several months. If he doesn't change his behavior after the verbal warning, the supervisor moves to the next step called a written warning. The written warning is similar to the verbal warning, but this time the subordinate sees it in writing, which increases the seriousness of the situation for him."

"And what if the subordinate still does not want to change?" asked Jack.

"The last step is called the final warning, followed by termination if no change occurs," explained Marty.

"It seems to me," said Jangbu, "that throughout these steps the subordinate is aware of the consequences. If he is terminated he can't blame you. He terminated himself."

"That takes a lot of pressure off me," said Jack. "All I am doing is communicating the facts and the choices to the person."

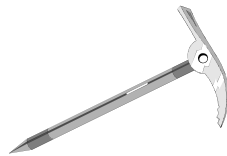
"There are two purposes for the Progressive Counseling Process," Marty said. "The first is to give the subordinate a chance to change. You will find that

one-third will change, one-third will quit and the other third will have to be terminated. The second purpose is to reduce the probability that your ex-subordinate will sue your company for wrongful termination.”

“Well, Jack,” asked Jangbu, “what are you going to do now?”

Jack looked at Marty. “I am going to give the Darksidiers a chance to change, but if they don’t, I am going to remove them from my team.”

“Good for you, Jack,” replied Marty. “Don’t punish yourself and the rest of your team for the sake of a few selfish people who are not willing to change. Many organizations out there still want order-taking robots instead of people who can think for themselves. Let them work at those places.”



## CLIMBING TIPS

Steven Covey, in his book, *Principle-Centered Leadership*, wrote: “In order to empower a person, he must be trustworthy, and trustworthiness requires two components: character and competence.”

To his words I add the following: A coach’s job is

to build competence, not character.

Parents can shape a child's character, but only a combination of the hard knocks of life and the hand of God can change an adult's character. Many supervisors spend the majority of their time trying unsuccessfully to "save" a subordinate of poor character. Meanwhile, the rest of the individuals on the team are the ones who really deserve the coach's time. Deal with your Darksiders fairly, but efficiently. Don't let them hold you or the rest of your people back.

