

Book review: The Five Temptations of a CEO: a Leadership Fable By Christina Pang

Thirteen I am but reading a book which seemed to be far beyond my reach, or rather anyone's reach. The Five Temptations of a CEO: a Leadership Fable by Patrick Lencioni. Looking at the sophisticated title imprinted on the cover, I knew that it was not a fantasy story. Nevertheless, I began to flick through the white pages.

In the beginning, the story began with a high-tech corporation CEO Andrew O'Brien meeting an old janitor Charlie on a train unexpectedly. Andrew thought ridiculously as the janitor started to talk about how Andrew was actually failing as a CEO. The proud CEO was at first annoyed but gradually, inspired by what Charlie said. He realized he was indeed falling into a trap, the five temptations of a CEO. Briefly, he met some other men, who used to be CEOs too. Sharing and learning from their experiences, Andrew finally understood fully all the temptations. In the end, the fading company was once again scintillating in the market.

The five temptations were told by Charlie clearly and radically. Charlie outlined the five temptations of a CEO as:

- Desires to guard career status
- Consistently remain popular with subordinates
- Unfailingly make correct decisions
- Constantly strive for an atmosphere of total harmony
- Always appear invulnerable

Using simple stories to clarify and develop the temptations' meanings. Lencioni managed to let us not only fully understand the temptations but also finally let us understand how it collaborated with our lives as well. Although at first glance, the book seemed to be only aiming at CEOs, leaders and people who wanted to be leaders. But eventually it even blended into a thirteen years old girl's life, my life.

It was absolutely true that we all strived for an atmosphere of total harmony and popularity. For example, teachers usually praise students who have done something good or correctly. However, if we ever contradicted a teacher's teaching. We would never be able to gain this teacher's admiration. Simply because we created conflict, we did something different. New. We did not follow what the teacher intended to teach us. Of course, some comments were always good but did you ever realize that in the end, the teacher always rebutted your idea and said that

it was wrong? We all tried not to do something wrong because we would not want our teachers to shout or scold us. We *all* tried to preserve harmony.

However, Lencioni clearly stated that 'productive ideology conflict' was good. Nobody has the same opinion, that's why we all can come up with different ideas leading to conflict. Imagine if nobody came up with any new ideas, how can the society change? Productive ideology conflict can help create new ideas to improve the community. Conflict progresses the society whilst conformity does not.

Another trap that we all fell to constantly was by not giving ideas and therefore unable to make a definitely correct decision. We were afraid to give our suggestions and ideas because we weren't totally sure if our ideas were correct. Therefore we also hesitated when trying to unfailingly make correct decisions. We are not God. We all make mistakes in our life, but we don't just cry or avoid making decisions. We *learn* from our wrong decisions. And simply just say, 'I'm sorry' like Charlie's father.

There's also a famous proverb saying - Good words are hard for the ear. We do not like hearing bad things about ourselves from our friends or subordinates. However, if we all shut it aside, we would never be able to learn anything or change ourselves. The opinions can only benefit us no matter how harsh they sound. These are the true opinions that people think about you, and respond it not by shouting at the person to 'shut up'. Learn from it, learn to change yourself. You'll gain respects from everyone gradually. Respect is not something you just gain if you are nice and harmonious. One day, when your company failed, being nice to your subordinates wouldn't gain you any respect.

In conclusion, it was not just a book for leaders. These traps, invisible to the naked eye but deep and dangerous in reality. We all fell for it. It was a really inspirational and innovative book. A believable and life learning fictional story merged out from the real world.

I could not guarantee after reading this book we would all be able to overcome these temptations. But one thing I'm sure is that we would some how try to overcome these temptations and learn from our mistakes. One day, people, who created havoc and pandemonium, would be the people leading the world into a brighter future. Patrick Lencioni's story motivated me to

Strive for everything,
Listen to everyone,
Learn every time,
Accept every idea and continue
To progress everyday.

- End -