



Tweet

Share this Page: 



Tweet



Productive Leaders

Mary Kelly, PhD, CSP, CDR, US Navy (ret)
Keynote Speaker | Business Consultant | Author



Why Your Leadership Instincts are Wrong



I was talking with a dad on my Little League team about his children. He and his wife struggle with how much they should let the kids do by themselves, even if that independence means that the kids experience failures. They are sometimes unsure about when they as parents need to step in to protect their kids from being hurt.

Do you give your kids the answers or do you have them look up information? Do you help with homework by giving them the solutions because they get it gets done goes faster, or do you encourage them to work through the problems? Do you catch your kids every time they stumble, or do you let them fall so they can pick themselves back up?

Our instinct, of course, is to make it easier on those we care about. That might be exactly the wrong approach. Letting people struggle builds resilience.

Good leaders care about their employees. They don't want their people to experience disappointment or failure. Leaders often struggle with how much we should do to help our people.

Our instinct is to help when we can and do what we can to alleviate others' struggles, and provide answers when we know them.

This instinct may be exactly wrong.

Think about a baby learning to walk. They crawl, try to stand, fall, and try again. Very few babies think, "Hey, this walking thing is just not working for me. I am going to stick with crawling." My sister's daughter used my dog, Dolly, as she learned to walk. She grabbed

handfuls of Dolly's fur in her little toddler hands and used Dolly as a ladder to stand. Then Dolly would try to walk away and my niece's little feet would move to stay with the dog. My niece's dog-enabled walking attempts resembled a drunk man trying to hang on to the side of a moving train.

My niece, like most babies, continued to try and eventually succeeded. When we rush in to pick them up or carry them all the time, they will not learn to walk on their own.

But it is tough to watch.

We don't like to watch failure and frustration, especially when we can prevent it.

Have you gotten a new phone lately? As you transitioned to the new device, did you experience frustration? I did. The new operating system meant some of the features I use daily had a different interface. More than once I reminisced about my old phone. It was annoying until I learned the new procedures.

Sometimes we have to let people try so they learn how to do things on their own. Even when it means mistakes will happen. Even when it is tough to watch. Even when you can carry them.

Leading means letting people learn.

Questions or feedback on this article? [Please comment here.](#)

Mary in the News

Find Mary featured on these pages!

- **Forbes:** [Why Leaders Fail, And Why The Fix May Be Simpler Than You Think](#)
- **Reality Check with Craig Price:** [2016 NSA Speakers Roundtable](#)
- **American Management Association:** [5 Simple Ways To Build Clout – By Gaining Employee Trust](#)
- **Marianne Pestana Book Club:** [Why Leaders Fail](#)



We have over \$700 of freebies in our special [Why Leaders Fail page!](#)

One of them is the Leadership Development Assessment tool, which will help you assess your self-perceived strengths and areas for improvement.

<http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/2442186/Peter-Barron-Stark-s-Leadership-Self-Assessment>

Why Leaders Fail and the 7 Prescriptions for Success
Mary Kelly PhD, CSP, CDR, US Navy (Ret) & Peter Stark CSP, AS

Book Information and Order Form | Speaker Kit | Media Kit | Course Handout | FREE Leadership Articles
| Read an Excerpt | Share on Social Media | **Take the Leadership Development Assessment** | Book Testimonials | Book Bonuses
| Invite Mary to Speak | Book Mary for Radio Show or Podcast | Call Mary for Coaching

www.7PrescriptionsForSuccess.com



P.S. For bulk orders, or to book my keynote, Why Leaders Fail, please contact me directly at Mary@ProductiveLeaders.com or at 719-357-7360.

Mary is already being booked for conferences and events into 2017 and 2018! Let's schedule your event!

We don't assume, so here is a brief list of what we do:

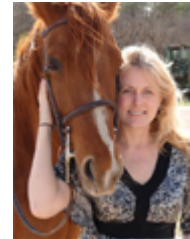
1. Motivational leadership keynote and breakout speaking for conferences, conventions, banquets, and events
2. Leadership programs particularly for the real estate, insurance, medical, and financial sectors
3. Executive coaching to improve strategy, business processes, and profits
4. Strategic business planning

Call Mary at 719-357-7360 or email at Mary@ProductiveLeaders.com.

Thank You for Being Part of Our Community

Do you know anyone planning a conference who needs a motivational leadership speaker, or a business that needs a push forward? Please [contact me](#). I sincerely appreciate your referrals!

Mary C. Kelly



Would you like to use any of these articles in your newsletter or website? Please include this byline: With over twenty years of leadership experience and a diverse background leading teams in the U.S. and abroad, Dr. Mary Kelly makes leadership a reality for all levels of an organization. Register for free newsletters at ProductiveLeaders.com

ProductiveLeaders.com | Mary@ProductiveLeaders.com | 719-357-7360