

Productive Leaders

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Are you a leader who encourages innovation??



People will make mistakes. They will disappoint you. They are going to fail.

This is especially true if they are taking risks.

It begs the question. Are you encouraging innovation or the status quo? People who are perfect in their jobs never fail. They also never take risks. Is that the work environment you want to promote?

Great leaders encourage risk taking.

Great leaders encourage forward thinking.

Great leaders actively push their team to develop new ideas.

Why? Because great leaders know that the only way to develop products and services that our clients will use in ten years is to start developing them now.

What are you doing to help your people break out of status quo thinking? What are you doing to create an environment that serves your future clients?

As a leader, you have to push your teams past the point of being comfortable. How do you start this process of creating innovative thinkers?

1. Ask **difficult** questions. What can we do to improve our process, product, service, or idea?
2. Ask **really difficult** questions. Can what we do be outsourced? Can what we do now be automated? Will we need human workers to do this in 10 years or can robots do this?

3. Ask **uncomfortable, really difficult** questions, the kind that hurt your brain. Who are we serving in 20 years? What will they need and want? Are our current skill sets going to be able to accommodate the future work and the future workforce? How can we develop and create the future?

Last week I met with Thomas Frey, world famous futurist, at the [DaVinci Institute](#). We discussed the possibilities of the future, such as what cities would look like if everyone used driveless cars, and no one owned a car. Parking lots and traffic tickets would go away, and all of those complementary goods and services that go with them would disappear. It is hard to imagine not needing to own or rent a car, or even learn how to drive. We discussed ethical issues as well, such as how old children need to be to ride to school alone in a driverless car. The benefits, of course, are easy to imagine. No fear of growing older and being dependent on others for transportation. Less traffic. Less pollution. But just this one example lends itself to long discussions about the future of work.

As leaders today we need to be leaning into the next wave of innovation, and we can only do that by encouraging our people to take risks. Reward ideas, even the ones that don't seem possible, by taking them seriously.

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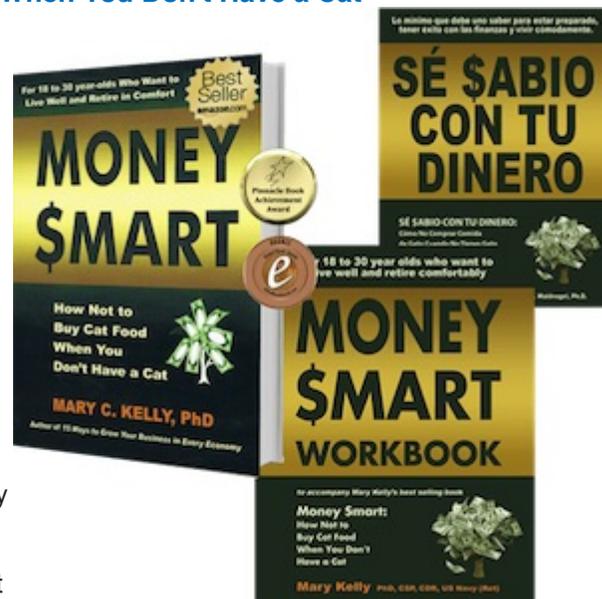
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Mary C. Kelly



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