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**PEOPLE**

**CAN YOU HANDLE THE TRUTH?**



## **CAN YOU HANDLE THE TRUTH?** **LIFE LESSONS for BUSINESS OWNERS**

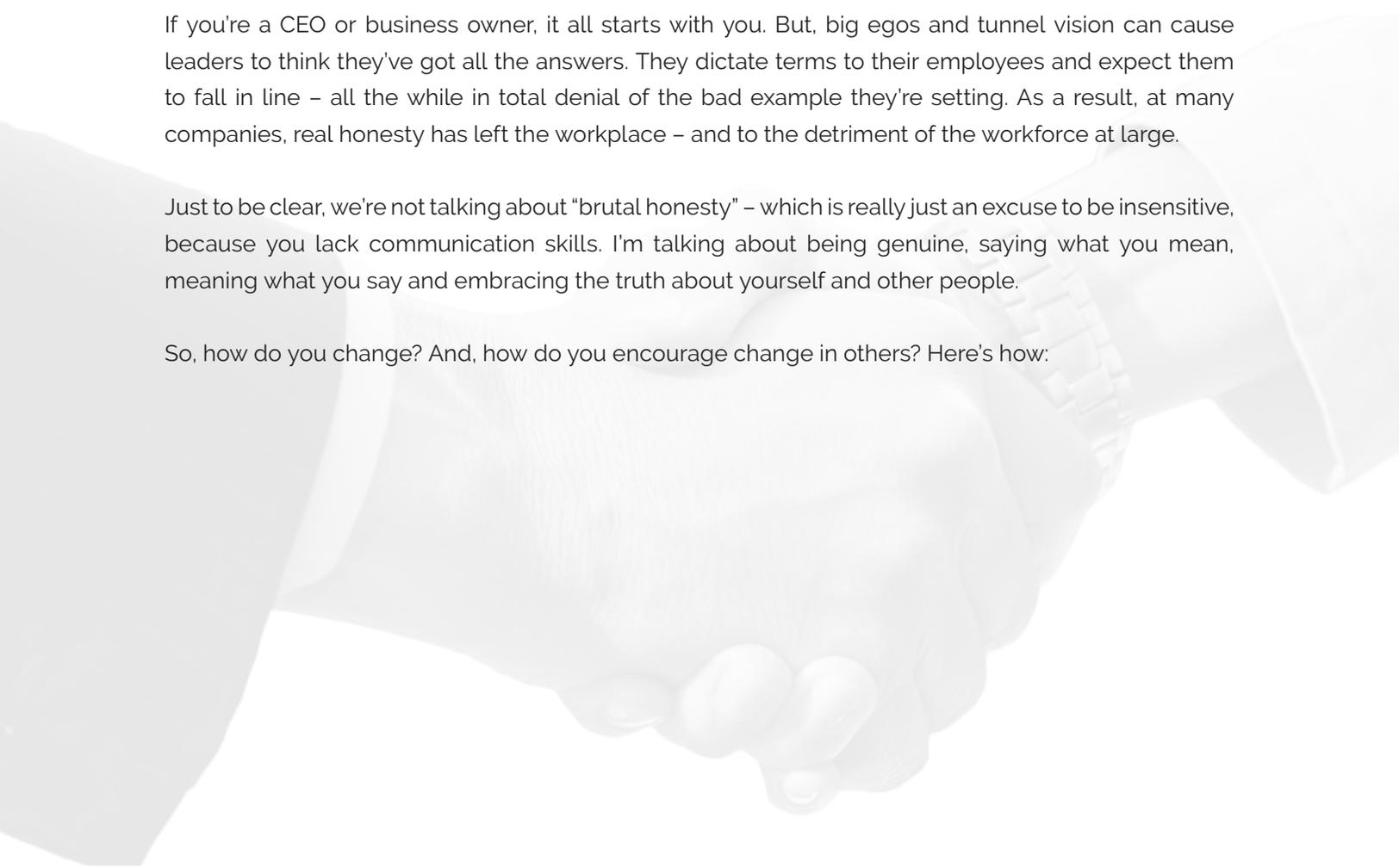
Recently, I've heard a lot of people talking about "the truth." Truth and honesty have become relative terms – what's true for one person might not be true for another. But, I'm not talking about opinions. As a business coach and a leader, when I talk about "the truth," I mean understanding what's real about ourselves and the people around us – moving beyond denial, and getting to the heart of who we are, what we do well (and what we don't) so we can set an example for others and truly lead. It's a lesson we all need to learn, if we want to be our best.

I had to learn this lesson years ago myself, while running my first business. And, when I moved into coaching and working with other entrepreneurs and business owners, I found that the vast majority are still struggling with the concept.

If you're a CEO or business owner, it all starts with you. But, big egos and tunnel vision can cause leaders to think they've got all the answers. They dictate terms to their employees and expect them to fall in line – all the while in total denial of the bad example they're setting. As a result, at many companies, real honesty has left the workplace – and to the detriment of the workforce at large.

Just to be clear, we're not talking about "brutal honesty" – which is really just an excuse to be insensitive, because you lack communication skills. I'm talking about being genuine, saying what you mean, meaning what you say and embracing the truth about yourself and other people.

So, how do you change? And, how do you encourage change in others? Here's how:



**Figure yourself out first** – I say this a lot: “You are the longest relationship you've ever had.” Nobody knows you better than you do. But, along the way many of us make decisions about ourselves that might not be based in reality. We create our own truth, and it's easy to get lost in the truth we've defined for ourselves – even if others can see that it doesn't ring true, and it keeps us from achieving our maximum potential. You've got to take the time to step back and get real with yourself. Are you open to other opinions, or have you “got it all figured out?” Do you make it a priority to invite feedback – and even criticism, or are others usually “wrong?” Are you someone that your employees can be open with, or do they shy away from challenging your ideas? Ask yourself the important questions, and be open to the answers.

**We've all got blind spots** – In general, your blind spots are the things you ignore, because you don't think they exist. Be willing to listen to others when they suggest alternative ways to do things. Really listen. Are you terrible at spreadsheets and still insisting you handle the company's finances? Are you perpetually late, but insist on handling your own calendar? Guess what? – you've got blind spots. Other people have insight into you that you wouldn't believe, and they can see things that you might never see, if someone didn't point them out to you – both the good and the bad.

**Surround yourself with truth tellers** – Make sure the people around you aren't just “yes” people. The best ideas come when you are challenged, and we only grow when we move out of our comfort zones. Surrounding yourself with people who also see the value in truth and honesty will benefit you and your company, both personally and professionally. “The truth” is we've all got room to grow. There are lessons we can learn from other people, and the seed of our next “big idea” might begin with someone else.

**Accept that you're not perfect** – I'll say it again: You're not perfect. This is a tough one for a lot of people, believe it or not – especially some high achievers in leadership positions. It may be true that you are full of innovative ideas and you may even be a genius, but, everything you think and say is not beyond question. You do not always have the best ideas, and you will make mistakes – and that's okay. Stay open and accept the fact that at times you're going to need the help and input of other people to grow your business and make it better.

You actually can handle the truth. And, you've got to if you want to evolve as human being and a business owner. Start by looking to yourself, but don't let it stop with you. Make sure you're training the people who work with you to lead in the same way. Let others become standard bearers. Whether they stay with you, or move on to found their own companies, they'll take what they've learned with them and pass it on. When that happens, you'll know you're a true leader.

*This article originally appeared on Huffington Post..*

# THE PETRA EXPERIENCE

**The Petra Experience is like a Mental Marathon of focused effort to create a specific set of priorities and a planned process to achieve them... as a team.**

## **Looking to change your business life - forever?**

The daily grind of growing a business is tough... it doesn't have to be that way. We work from our own business experiences while focusing on your business – as coach and an accountability partner. We implement the Petra Process in a way that ensures it “sticks” then we stay engaged to keep you on your path to success and less frustration. We don't want this to be just another thing you start – then it gets ignored and finally dies... let's stop that cycle in your business. The Petra Program 'clarifies' what is most important to be done – by whom, by when – **AND** creates an accountability structure to ensure **IT GETS DONE.**

*Andy Bailey is lead entrepreneur coach with business coaching firm Petra and serves as the Entrepreneur Organization's global membership director. Visit his blog at [www.petracoach.com](http://www.petracoach.com) for more business and leadership insight.*

### **PETRA COACH**

342 Cool Springs Blvd., Suite 203, Franklin, TN 37067 | 615.601.0542  
[www.petracoach.com](http://www.petracoach.com) | [www.facebook.com/petracoach](https://www.facebook.com/petracoach)

