



Shifting the Monkey: The Art of Protecting Good from Liars, Criers, and Other Slackers

Todd Whitaker (Editor)

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Poor employees get a disproportionate amount of attention. Why? Because they complain the loudest, create the greatest disruptions, and rely on others to assume the responsibilities that they shirk. Learn how to focus on your good employees first, and help them shift these "monkeys" back to the underperformers. Through a simple but brilliant metaphor, Whitaker helps you reinvigorate your staff and transform your organization.

Shifting the Monkey: The Art of Protecting Good from Liars, Criers, and Other Slackers Details

Date : Published January 30th 2012 by Triple Nickel Press (first published December 30th 2011)

ISBN : 9780982702970

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Format : Hardcover 128 pages

Genre : Leadership, Education, Nonfiction, Teaching, Business

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From Reader Review Shifting the Monkey: The Art of Protecting Good from Liars, Criers, and Other Slackers for online ebook

Melanie says

Quick read with entertaining stories. Reminds any leader to remember what is important, as opposed to what is noisy.

Julian Walker says

A light read with useful tips on managing people and issues.

This simple concept about controlling responsibility provides a nice introduction into management techniques, is easy to grasp, and straightforward to read.

The author gives good illustrative examples and it makes the process easier to implement in real life.

Mitzi says

This book was given to me as a gift by my principal. We had recently had a discussion about why I seemed to constantly be pulled into situations involving students who were not part of my caseload (I am a school counselor), even when the student's assigned counselor was available. Although I will always help any student in crisis, whether they are "my student" or not, I am often approached by teachers, staff, and even the school resource officer regarding non-emergency situations that should be addressed by the student's assigned counselor. This led to a discussion about how competence is often "rewarded" with more tasks/work. My principal agreed that I have too many "monkeys on my back," and a few days later this book was left in my box with a note from her... It was a very nice gift from my principal, and I'm very grateful to have the kind of relationship I do with her where I can discuss these concerns openly.

The book is good in premise and concepts, but not very forthcoming with solutions for shifting the monkey when you are not the leader or one in charge. This book was written from a boss to employee perspective. My colleagues are not my employees, and the dynamic is not the same. This book didn't really offer any solutions for a colleague to colleague approach. And what about when it's someone in an authority position who is inappropriately shifting a monkey to you?

I always enjoy books that can challenge my perspective and get me to think in new ways, but I would have found this book to be much more valuable if solutions had been offered for situations where one is NOT the boss.

Susie says

This book will help me think differently about dealing with people. I plan to put some type of monkey on my desk as a reminder! I've had the privilege of hearing Whitaker speak, and I just gave his book What Great

Principals Do Differently to a friend who became a principal for the first time.

This book is very blunt and direct, so it's very easy to "get the point"! Take this sentence, the first in the Epilogue: "There's a never-ending supply of lazy, uncaring, and poorly performing workers who will happily shift their monkeys to anyone and everyone they can." Yet, a basic theme throughout the book is "Treat Everyone Well". All too many of the situations Whitaker describes hit home; at times, my school is a real jungle! This book can help guide the way administrators deal with staff, and teachers deal with students. However, I do think some things are different in dealing with students, but the idea of giving everyone a chance to improve, communicating high expectations, and not creating a plethora of rules, issuing threats, etc would work well in a school setting.

Some of my favorite points:

- don't even talk about excuses and blame
- "sidle up": don't provide a dividing line for those who like confrontation
- talk as if you expect things to be done, and on time
- address a whole group with praise, and also individuals in private. On the other hand, don't issue blanket blame statements, as those who cause problems will figure they're not the only ones.
- protect your good people; isolate them from envy, and don't give them all of the hard tasks because you know they will do them; allow them to pass on volunteering
- give autonomy to your best producers (as teachers are getting less and less autonomy) and ask for their advice (what a novel approach in these days!)
- reward efforts rather than results (hear this, testing proponents?)
- most people ARE good
- it's okay to give preferential treatment to some, as long as others see that they have a chance to improve and build capacity as well.

I wonder about the irksome lady in church and the athletic foundation man mentioned. Have they read the book? What do they think?

I like the quotes that are given, rather than a general suggestion of what to say. Now, how do I get this in the hands of people who could really benefit from its ideas? Am I shifting a monkey to do that?

Jeremy Duffle says

Good, practical tips on handling and dividing work load.

Stephanie says

Quick read with value about not shifting blame or making others take on the work of the less hard working. Referred to it when experiencing frustration in my own work place, when many felt being penalized for some co-workers misusing or not abiding by intent of policies or procedures. Glad that Kerry recommended it, it was valuable, but not earthshattering. I liked what he proposed as the direct approach to addressing poor behavior and also focusing on strengths and what people did well.

Hope to talk more about it at future book club--as wasn't remembering Carla's example of "indirectly" trying

to address problem employees or "making up an issue", I thought he was more about direct feedback---but also focusing on those that are doing things well and acknowledging specifics about that to the general group.

Holly says

Easily a leadership book I could read every year. Quick read with helpful reminders.

Jessyca505 says

1. Where is the monkey? 2. Where should the monkey be? 3. How do I shift the monkey to its proper place? I am a huge fan of Todd Whitaker, and this is a great and practical book for any leader. I like the no nonsense approach to handling difficult employees while treating everyone as if they are good. Protects your best workers is a must. I hope I can only be the kind of leader that my employees need of me!

Christopher Hunt says

I give this book an "meh." Lots of theory and not a lot of workable solutions. The premise is on target and aptly describes many organizations but the author's recommendations are not always plausible. Sometimes you have to realize that there are workers who are liars, criers, and slackers and the only solution is to fire their asses.

Kimberly Duffle says

Great book about how to not only delegate, but delegate in a way not to punish employees!

Carla says

I really don't like these kind of books, but read it for book group. It was ok. The metaphor of the monkey seemed very odd to me, but some of the basic ideas of civility and addressing the problem people or policies directly were good. He lost me, though, when he then suggested dealing with problem workers indirectly--for fo example, "confiding" with them that people were talking about them in an attempt to get them to act differently. I really think that it's better to be straightforward with people instead of inventing imaginary gossipers, and it could lead to unintended consequences. And they might not care what others think, as he readily points out elsewhere in the book.

It was blessedly short.

Heather says

The book says it will address “the art of protecting good people from liars, cryers, and other slackers.”

However it should say the art of not being a crier, liar, etc.

The absolute only time “the crying monkey” is mentioned is the last chapter of the book. The advice is “Learn to control your emotions! The work environment, especially, is not the place for your tears. You may need to take a good look at yourself to realize how manipulative and ultimately relationship killing this technique is. Handle your own responsibilities and stop trying to unload them others”

So really it should say “to avoid BEING the crying monkey”.

It gave absolutely no advice for how to deal with the cryers or the liars. Just says control yourself. Don’t cry at work. Don’t lie at work.

Mind you that’s the last chapter of the book. The beginning is filled with redundancy, redundancy, redundancy. It just gives one example after another of problem people in problem activities. And from absolutely every different corner of the world. From stores with don’t steal signs, customer service phone numbers where they make a punch in the numbers, etc. we are all aware of these annoying things in life. And perhaps it was my own expectation that this was going to be a book related to supervising education professionals. I think there was only one educational example in the book.

Really this guy sounds extremely annoying. Like he has gathered an audience and now feels he can just use his own name to air all of the annoyances in life. Which has its pros of notifying the world of father in discussions. But also it seems heartless.

When the woman at the bank asks how are you today? He proceeds to tell her actually there is a problem one of your tellers does crossword puzzles and doesn’t use eye contact.

For that person who works at the bank perhaps I contact is something difficult for him. Or social situations of something difficult for him. And the crossword puzzle’s help to keep him Able to do his job. Especially as an education professional I would think you would know a little bit about people’s needs. I’m not saying hey let the guy do crossword puzzles while taking care of customers, but a bank teller really just have to stand there in between customers. Why not let his boss be the one to be OK with or not OK with how he uses his time between customers. He Basically undermined her as well. Leave those human beings alone. Go into the bank, make your transaction. and if you can’t make the world a better place by being kind then just be quiet. You don’t know what that guys going through. Perhaps the manager was aware that he had gone through something like lost a child in last year. Or perhaps she knew that he is always willing to come in or cover at other branches. That was her way of rewarding him. Or perhaps she just didn’t want to confront him. Why do you get to dictate how the bank manager manages her employees? You got a little bit of fame and decide you’re better than everyone.

Basically this guy seems like the most annoying guy on earth. The complainer.

When he did give advice for how to deal with people it was just restate your expectation over and over. So if

someone is complaining, you just say I'll need that report by four. And ignore any of their concerns.

OK I'll stop with my complaints. There were a few good tips in here. Like maybe five sentences of useful information. But honestly those tips were things that pretty much any good manager should already know. If you didn't know them then it's kind of scary that you're in that position. So I guess some people may need this book. Or just a list of the few things.

On a sidenote every problem person's name was a females name. When she does this, when she does that, Melanie, Heather, Jessica, etc. just an observation. It might be because he comes from the education field so he probably works with many females. But he didn't seem to have a problem coming up with male names for the good employee scenarios.

Kevin Driskill says

Excellent resource for interpersonal relations and especially for management and supervisors. How to protect good employees and encourage poor employees to do better. An entertaining, informative, quick read.

Kendra says

This book is excellent for leaders who supervise others and/or who work with difficult people. It helped me reframe the way I approach situations where I need to deal with either chronic or one-off individual behaviors. One colleague commented that the word "monkey" is used too much, but I found that to help drill in the point of the book, which is to ensure that the monkey is where it belongs. Fairly short and easy to read.

Laurie McKay says

This is an excellent book for leaders. It allows for self-reflection and gives some ideas when you, or a co-worker, are taking on too much responsibility.
