

It's Not Greener On The Other Side Of The Fence

It's Greener Where You Water It

By David Irvine, Best-Selling Author and Leader's Navigator

My clients appear to come in two categories. One group works and leads in amazing cultures that inspire greatness, but there are unhealthy pockets of entitlement and negativity that suck energy out of the system. The other group works and leads in unhealthy cultures that suck the energy from the healthy pockets of good people who are making a positive contribution. Both kinds of organizations lose great people. Take a moment to reflect on which group you are in.

It seems to be a part of the human experience to come up against resistance. Before you fire someone or exit a relationship that is causing you grief, here are six strategies for sustaining your passion, your values, and your focus – your authentic presence – when you are around people who seem to be conspiring to suck the life force out of you.

1. **Take some time to get clear on why you are there.**

There are two reasons for being in any relationship: to *learn* and to *love*. Whether it's a marriage to a spouse or a marriage to your place of work, before you think of leaving, ask yourself what there is to learn, and what there is to give. If you exit the relationship before you learn what you are meant to learn, or leave before you have given it your all, be assured that you will meet the same problems in your next relationship.

2. **Stop blaming and complaining.**

The moment you decide that all blame is a waste of time your life will change forever. Focusing on “those people,” is a defense against your own responsibility. When you stop blaming and complaining, you create space for something new: creative problem solving, gratitude, inspiration, learning, and time to get past self-centeredness and entitlement.

3. **Take accountability for changing the environment, even if you have no positional leadership.**

Create a healthy pocket around you. Remember the Law of the Echo: whatever you give out will eventually come back to you – ten fold. If you want more appreciation, be more appreciative. If you want to feel valued, bring more value to others. If you want more love, be more loving. If you want better service, get busy and serve.

4. **Take the higher ground.**

A client told me about arriving to work on time after shoveling both hers and her neighbor's driveway and driving an hour through a snowstorm. One of her employees, half her age, lived five blocks from the office, and used the snowstorm as an excuse for staying home. I'm not talking about martyrdom or a lack of common sense. If you've lived through Canadian winters you know that some days it only makes sense to stay home. But on this day it was about accountable action. And while this person won't get any awards for her choice, she will get the gift of self-respect that comes from choosing character over comfort.

5. **Stop fantasizing about exiting the relationship.**

While fantasizing is an understandable human response to pain, it's also an escape from reality. It keeps you from sitting down and looking honestly at the truth of your life. Before take off, the flight attendant first tells you where the exits are. This is useful information, but you don't spend your time in the air obsessing about the way out. Exiting is a strategy of last resort.

6. **Make a decision.** When you sit on the fence, all you end up with is a sore rear end. The antidote to stress and pain is decision. By looking inside and discovering the truth of your current reality, you may decide that:

a) you have learned all you needed to learn, given everything you can and staying where you are is eroding your values, so it's time to move on; or

b) you need to suck it up and change your attitude; or

c) you aren't sure yet, but you will stay put, step up, and renew your commitment while you are here.

Regardless of your decision, remember: it really isn't greener on the other side of the fence. It's greener where you water it.

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