

Welcome to the twelfth edition of Jennifer Selby Long's *Traveling Light*. Are you blessed with the talent and opportunity to lead? *Traveling Light* will skyrocket your impact and lighten the load inherent in your life. It's based on the work of executive coach and management consultant Jennifer Selby Long. Copyright 2008 Jennifer Selby Long. All rights reserved.

## **You're Not a Loser...and Other Deep Insights You May Have Missed Along the Way**

Lately, I'm noticing a certain drop in confidence among some outstanding people. Three clients in two days have shared the following:

- "I'm so incompetent in this job." (He isn't.)
- "My boss is so smart and so visionary, I feel like he's way up there and I'm way down here. I don't know why he picked me to join this team." (Her boss is my client, too. I know why he picked her. It's because she's good, she's trustworthy, and she can handle the big stretch.)
- "I'm not an expert in that." (She is. She's just not a deep technical expert, which at her level, she shouldn't be. That would mean doing her team members' work instead of her own.)

And this is a pretty typical week for me lately.

I've worked directly with countless bosses at all levels and in every imaginable industry of every imaginable size. We've partnered together to do succession planning, organization design, and talent management, under good circumstances and during times of great organizational crisis.

This insider status helps me get something you may not be getting – direct insight into how your boss picked you and he or she *really* expects. I'll let you in on few secrets:

1. Odds are *excellent* that you were chosen for the role you're in because you were the best choice out of several strong contenders. You were not, however, the perfect choice, because that's a fairy tale. It does not exist. Stop imagining that there's a perfect CIO, VP, Architect, Managing Attorney, or whatever you may be, that you need to hold yourself up to.
2. Even if you were just best of several bad choices, or the only person they could find, who cares? It's a chance to prove to yourself and to others that you are capable of a lot more than you or they think.
3. The same applies if you were part of an acquisition.
4. Your boss knows you're not the expert in much of anything. He or she just doesn't care. You're there to be an excellent leader who delivers results and continuously strengthens the organization for the long term.

This is not to say you can get by with knowing nothing about the function you lead. If you feel a little unsteady without more education, ask your direct reports for a mini-tutorial, or attend a conference with them or invest a little time in some training, but dedicate most of your ongoing development to your leadership and management skills. That's how you add value to the business. You're better than you think. Cut yourself some slack!

## **In Memorial**

I'm sorry to share that Diane Weston passed away earlier this month. You may remember Diane. She did many 360-degree-feedback interviews and reports for my clients, and we worked together on the BAAPT board for several years. Diane and her husband, Rob, became close friends of ours. This picture was taken at our wedding.

Diane was a true inspiration for lifelong learning. She decided to go back for her master's degree at age 50, after which she began teaching at several colleges and universities in the Bay Area. Diane had already worked as a researcher and consultant, and she was starting the next chapter in her career.

She also had quite an artistic side. The garden she and Rob created looked like something out of a Better Homes & Gardens photo spread, she made lovely jewelry, and she was a master seamstress. I have fond memories of traipsing through Florence in search of a little shop where she had bought a decorative plate a year earlier, because she wanted a matching one to hang in her dining room. I happily carted it back for her. She was the kind of person for which it's a joy to do that sort of thing, because she would do the same for you.

I will always remember her elegance, intelligence, wit and kindness. I will miss her terribly.

## **Reminders**

March 31

Last day to enroll in Private Coaching Program:

[http://www.selbygroup.com/coaching\\_individual.html](http://www.selbygroup.com/coaching_individual.html).

May 9 – 27

On vacation in Spain. Slight change of dates. I'll be available for client consultations May 8 until 3:00, at which time I head to the airport and say, "*Adios! Hasta la vista!*" All coaching client engagements are automatically extended three weeks, so you won't miss a thing!

Contact us for further information at: [lighten@selbygroup.com](mailto:lighten@selbygroup.com).

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