



CHIEF ♦ EXECUTIVE ♦ BOARDS
I N T E R N A T I O N A L

Chief Executive Book Review # 30

The Five Temptations of a CEO A Leadership Fable

By: Patrick Leoncioni © 1998 ISBN 0-7879-4433-5

The five temptations of a CEO are:

1. The temptation to focus on advancing your career rather than advancing your company. This is a very common mistake made by people at all levels

Career advancement usually comes as the result of the CEO successfully advancing the company

2. The temptation to want to be popular with your direct reports and, as a result, failing to hold them accountable

Often times employees describe a boss who wants to be popular as “A nice guy, but a terrible manager”. Ironically, those who try the hardest to be liked get the least respect

3. The temptation to choose certainty over clarity

Many chief executives do not want to act until they are certain of the outcome. This inactivity can be very detrimental to a company. The goal should be clear, not certain

4. The temptation of harmony. All good companies need dissenters and a certain amount of disharmony among the employees

Without disharmony, it is difficult for a company to grow and adapt to new challenges

5. The temptation to fear being vulnerable. Many insecure chief executives fear being perceived as vulnerable.

This fear can send the wrong signal to the employees