



Don't expect others to defend you

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DEAR CHIEF: Last week I was extremely disappointed in the aftermath of a massive finger-pointing incident in our company. After several of us managers clashed heads over important issues and tasks, corporate headquarters sent in someone to assess the situation. Basically, supervisors and workers were interviewed for information and perspectives and I later learned that some of my associates did not defend my actions like I thought they would or should have. Should I have expected this or should I have expected them to defend me?

THE LONE RANGER



DEAR LONE RANGER: It can certainly be difficult to rely on others to have your back during stressful times or corporate witch hunts. Sometimes you are simply left standing alone when others should be standing next you and backing you up. As much as you'd like others to defend you, it isn't wise to expect them to. Many people won't speak up during moments of truth--they'd rather stay silent (out of fear of reprisal).

The television show *The Apprentice*

was a prime example where this type of behavior was common. The show created teams of individuals to work together for certain business objectives. Generally, as the team took shape, a clear leader emerged, along with legitimate team players. And at the bottom of the group there was usually a slacker. If the team lost a challenge, they had to go before Donald Trump and explain what happened. Quite often, the team leader blamed the incompetence or inefficiency of the slacker and the slacker refused to take the blame. And the only way to get to the truth was for Donald Trump to listen to the story from the other two team members' perspectives. Yet, almost every time, those team members chose not to get involved. They wouldn't defend the leader or the slacker. There are a few possible reasons for this:

- 1) They knew staying neutral was their best strategy to look out for themselves.
- 2) They didn't like the leader or the slacker (for whatever reasons).
- 3) Maybe they didn't know or understand enough of the situation and wisely chose to say nothing about it.

Anthony Parinello learned that it's important in many work-related scenarios to realize that, in the end, you have to rely on yourself. In his

book, *10 Secrets I Learned From the Apprentice*, he examines how there can be plenty of times when you will be left standing alone when things heat up. He recommends keeping a paper trail of clear documentation about your actions so that you can readily defend or justify yourself if necessary.

Lastly, when you are standing on that stage alone defending yourself, do everything you can to not push the blame onto others, even when it's warranted. Keep your mindset solution-oriented and continue moving in the direction that is most beneficial to you and your company or organization. If mistakes were made (by you or others) learn from them and proceed forward with the drive and determination to prevent them from reoccurring in the future.

Loyalty is a great thing but always know that when things go badly, others will scatter like a soldier avoiding a hand grenade.



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