

Don't Just Swing Harder, Change Your Stance!



*Three Strategies to Lower Anxiety
While Raising Your Leadership*

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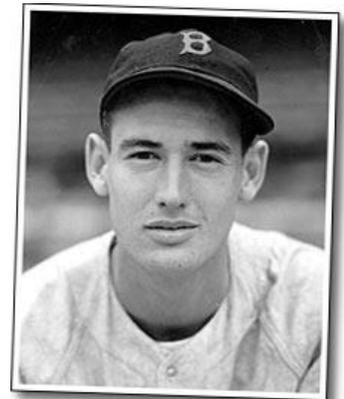
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Introduction

Two-time American League MVP and baseball great Ted Williams led the league in batting six times. No one else has batted over .400 since his .406 in 1941. Needless to say, the man knew a thing or two about hitting a baseball. But even the best hitters will occasionally fall into a batting slump.

Williams said that ***when you are in a batting slump, you don't just swing harder; you change your stance.*** What a great lesson for those who lead! More than likely, you are one of those people who lead, care, and give their best – and often get stuck in a pattern of swinging harder.



Think about it. Do you have a family member who just can't act responsibly? How about someone at work who always has a reason for not pulling her weight? Maybe you have a friend who continually makes self-destructive choices. Or you regularly encounter a close-minded person who refuses to see the truth or the error of his ways.

How do you typically respond? Maybe you give friendly advice. You gently try to convince. You warn, you push, you scold, and you threaten.

Frustration and tension build. You tire from overfunctioning for the one who's underfunctioning. You decide to quit bailing out irresponsible people. You promise yourself you won't keep paying for the carelessness and laziness of others. But you keep doing it.

You swing harder, but nothing changes.

However, you CAN change your stance.

You are not alone. This scene is played out every day in families, work groups, and social groups all over the world. And people like you—**“go-to” people**—people who others respect and depend upon for wisdom, guidance and leadership, either wear out, get sick, or give up.

They become weary of swinging harder. You may be tired of swinging harder, too. You may even doubt your abilities to lead, even though you get great feedback about your gifts, knowledge, experience and abilities.

Good news! You don't have to swing harder. Why don't you try changing your stance? I'm going to provide three strategies that will help you do just that.

First, though, I want to talk about the reason why you and I, and everyone else leans towards swinging harder as a strategy for moving forward (even though it doesn't work), and why we rarely think about changing our stances.

We remain stuck in a pattern of swinging harder because of a pervasive life force called anxiety.



Poorly managed anxiety is a KILLER of excellent leadership.

This is true whether you lead in the family, community, or workplace.

We'll go over strategies that can help you lower your anxiety for more effective leadership, but first let's cover a few basics about anxiety and its effect on the body and the brain.

Anxiety: A Pervasive Life Force

Anxiety is *essential* to life. We can't escape it; we can only manage it. **Any effort to be free of anxiety is foolishness.** Not only is it impossible, but disastrous!

Who would keep an eye on their toddlers if they were not worried about their well-being? We remember to keep appointments, strive for excellence, plan for the future, and drive defensively because of concerns about what would happen if we didn't.

We watch our weight, manage our finances, and keep our word because we are concerned about our health, resources and reputation. Anxiety serves us well.

It also bites us. Anxiety can rob us of contentment even as it propels us to achieve. ***If we don't strike a balance, we will eventually crash because resting seems counter-intuitive to the anxious mind.***



After all, there is always one more sales call to make; one more person who might be helped; one other detail we might have overlooked which could be the difference between success and failure.

There are a myriad of ways we can fall behind, be overlooked, come up short, or disappoint, and these keep us anxious. **If we do not manage our anxiety, the negatives will always outweigh the positives to the detriment of our health, our jobs, and our families.**

Everyone is anxious. There are no exceptions. We cannot function without anxiety.

The issue is: ***How can we manage anxiety well so that we can lead effectively over the long haul?***

We can, if we understand a bit about how it works, AND devise a few effective strategies to minimize its effects.



(If you prefer to skip straight to the strategies, go to page 14.)

A Broad Overview of Anxiety: Acute and Chronic

Acute Anxiety

Anxiety falls into two broad categories. The first is **acute**. Acute anxiety is the response to *real* threats experienced in a *limited time frame*. The threat has a definite onset, can be dealt with specifically, and brought to a conclusion.



For example, you awake in the night to a strong smell of smoke that indicates the house is on fire. You experience *acute* anxiety as the threat of fire is real and has a definite onset.

If you have children or pets in the house you will take specific actions to see to their safety. After you are out of the house and the blaze is dealt with, your anxiety will lower some, depending on the resulting consequences of the fire.

Again, this anxiety is acute because it is tied to a definite problem with an onset that requires actions until the event is handled or subsides.

Acute anxiety is intense, but relatively short-lived. **Important, though, is what happens in your body during this time of acute anxiety.** The brain and body marshal physical responses of all kinds to deal with the threat. Here are just a few on the next page:

- ❖ **The brain initiates the release of steroid hormones and neurotransmitters** that kick the body into high gear, including norepinephrine, dopamine and cortisol.
- ❖ **The thinking part of the brain is bypassed** so that the body can react quickly.
- ❖ **Heart rate and blood pressure increase.**
- ❖ **Breathing becomes more rapid** to provide the oxygen required to burn fuel.
- ❖ **Blood flow decreases in the skin** to prevent loss in case of an injury, **and is sent to the muscles and organs** to prime them for action.
- ❖ **The mouth becomes dry and the digestive system slows** as nonessential functions give way for essential ones.

The body stays in this state until the threat is over. When relaxation begins we realize—stress exhausts us!

A similar bodily response happens when you receive a pink slip at work, when a car pulls out in front of you, or when your toddler slips away from you in a crowded mall.

All these threats are treated the same by the body. *These responses have ensured our survival through the millennia.* They are good and necessary, but these responses diminish and bodily functions return to normal when the threat passes.

Chronic Anxiety

If the responses to acute anxiety are working to keep us alive, the responses of chronic anxiety are working to kill us.

The second broad category of anxiety is **chronic**. Unlike acute anxiety that responds to real threats, ***chronic anxiety is an ever-present emotional and physical response to imagined threats that have no apparent onset and no closure.***

In other words, our bodies remain in a tense state even though no threat is apparent. Since these responses are *not as intense* as the energy of acute anxiety, we become accustomed to their vague, constant companionship to the point we seldom recognize our condition as anxious.

For example, an over-involved mother may not think of herself as anxious. She simply wants her children to have the opportunities and resources to be successful.

A small business owner, who works way too many hours, doesn't think of himself as anxious. It's just that no one on his staff can bring expertise to his clients like he can.

The top salesperson may not think of herself as anxious; she is just increasing her income while her clients benefit from her products.

All of the reasons cited as to why these people work so hard, are valid. Just like you, they care. They have strong values. They take pride in their work.

But something else is true as well.



A tape – a constant train of thoughts constantly play in their heads, and in ours. The thoughts are so subtle and constant that we become accustomed to them.

The messages are part of our inner programming, and we are not quite aware of the contents of the tape whispers to us. What runs through our heads is something like:

- ❖ What if I don't cover all my bases?
- ❖ What if she is disappointed in me?
- ❖ Everyone is counting on me.
- ❖ I can't let them down.
- ❖ I can't quit now.
- ❖ If I don't do this, it won't get done.
- ❖ Nobody cares about this as much as me.
- ❖ I have to get them to be more careful.
- ❖ I wonder what they're thinking?
- ❖ What if they get upset with me?
- ❖ I can't stand to see her unhappy.
- ❖ What if I screw up?

These tapes, and hundreds like them, will keep playing until they are intentionally changed out.

Over time, damaging physical side effects of chronic anxiety take their toll on us. Our bodies react to the imagined threats just as they do to the real ones. For sure, *the intensity is less, but because the body expends energy over the course of years, the effects can be devastating.*

Medical researchers have known for years that chronic anxiety lowers the immune system. This can lead to all sorts of symptoms. *Here are just a few associated with chronic anxiety:*



- ❖ Constant colds and sinus issues, as well as asthma
- ❖ Back pain
- ❖ Skin rashes
- ❖ Gastrointestinal issues such as stomach ulcers and Crohn's disease
- ❖ Headaches
- ❖ Autoimmune disorders such as arthritis and fibromyalgia
- ❖ Infertility
- ❖ Infections
- ❖ Heart issues
- ❖ Depression

All of this to say: chronic anxiety may not be easily recognizable, but it is a beast!

Anxiety and Leadership

Chronic anxiety is the fuel for the type-A personality.

If you are driven, you have a high level of chronic anxiety. And that anxiety has paid dividends.

Driven people get things done. Since their achievements benefit others as well as themselves, no one—not they nor anyone else—thinks to manage the anxiety until problems arise.

And problems will arise. **Unmanaged anxiety is a fierce enemy for a leader.** Aside from the obvious physical toll of long years of chronic stress, what does this enemy do?

The higher the level of chronic anxiety, the lower your capacity to think globally, plan strategically, organize effectively, respond thoughtfully, or get in touch with your creative and playful side.

These are all higher functioning skills that take place in the prefrontal cortex (PFC) of the brain. Do you remember one of the effects of anxiety on the thinking area of the brain? Anxiety **bypasses** that area so that the body can react more quickly. Reactive fight or flight is necessary for survival, but it's not great for leadership.

When anxiety remains high, options disappear as focus narrows. Even the ability to consider the ideas of others becomes limited. Thus, **irritability increases** among team members and **morale decreases**. The capacity for **teamwork is thwarted** and **solutions are hard to identify**. *This keeps the anxiety high and in place.*

You know all of this, but what you may not know is how to lower the chronic anxiety so that you can stay connected to the thinking part of your brain (PFC).

I'm going to offer you some strategies that you can put into place without compromising the drive that shapes who you are. The goal is to exercise influence while managing the anxiety that compromises your leadership.

Strategies to Lower Anxiety

Reality check: chronic anxiety exists both in you AND the system or organization you are a part of.

You can ONLY manage the anxiety in YOU. If you lower the anxiety in yourself, your lowered anxiety will **likely** have a positive impact on your organization. That is not guaranteed, however, because you have no control over those things outside of you.

However, managing your anxiety will **definitely** have a positive impact on you, both physically and emotionally.

I'll give you three strategies – in no particular order – for you to try. Some personalities gravitate to some of the strategies more easily than to others. **Try the ones you think will fit YOU.**



Strategy #1

Take a Dumb Pill



A dumb pill is a metaphor for the permission you give yourself NOT to have a solution to someone else's problem. In other words, it's a way of saying "No."

People hand their anxiety to you. Every single day. And you hand yours to them.

Most of the time you will take the anxiety handed to you. You now have an extra load to carry – another responsibility that you didn't have moments before.

Think of anxiety like a baton in a relay race. Sometimes it is yours to carry. You need the anxiety because the responsibility IS yours. You need the energy fueled by anxiety to make a change, or maybe to do a job with excellence and in a timely fashion.

There are times, however, when you should not carry the baton. You need to hand it off to someone else whose job it is to carry it for a while. Someone else will need to have the anxiety to make a change or do a job.

And just as two people cannot simultaneously carry a baton in a race, neither can two people carry the same amount of anxiety about the same issue.

Taking a dumb pill is a strategy for not taking the baton.



Let me illustrate...

A non-profit I worked with years ago was twenty percent behind budget. The board responsible for overseeing the budget and raising funds called an emergency meeting and asked me to attend.

The tension in the air was palpable. Anxiously, the team wondered aloud what to do for about twenty minutes. At that point they turned to me and asked, “What do you think we should do, Steve?”

Being the rescuer my family of origin bred me to be, I quickly pulled together some thoughts and came up with several recommendations. I was proud I could provide good solutions.

It just so happened that I volunteered to do every one: send out letters, make personal appeals to larger donors, etc. The group listened intently, nodded their heads in agreement, and left the room feeling greatly relieved that someone was going to handle it.

Without thinking, **I willingly accepted their anxiety that they handed me.** As a result, the committee members left the room feeling better because their work was over, and I left feeling burdened and pressured because my work was just beginning.

I took the baton. And neither party recognized it.

I should have taken a dumb pill.

A dumb pill usually comes in the form of a statement that you can use in almost any circumstance.

When you feel a knot form in your stomach and begin to move slowly up into your chest, instead of taking the anxiety that is being handed to you, simply say something like, “Gee, I don’t know what I would do.”

Or maybe, “I’ve never encountered that before, but you are pretty capable and I’m sure you will figure it out.”

Taking a dumb pill is **counter-intuitive** for most of us “go-to” people. We are in the habit of offering advice, giving directions, solving the problems of others, or trying to get others to be more responsible.

We keep doing this because of the payoffs associated with overfunctioning:

- 1) The need to feel needed and appreciated
- 2) The desire to justify our salaries or positions
- 3) The satisfaction of helping others and making a difference
- 4) We perceive it’s necessary to move into higher-level leadership positions
- 5) We haven’t thought about, or don’t know how, to do differently

(We also keep taking the baton because of external pressure and internal guilt and fears. I deal with this MUCH more fully in the final strategy on Resistance, beginning on page .

There are at least three reason, though, that you want to quit carrying the anxiety that others hand to you:

- 1) Anxiety remains elevated in you which fatigues your body and wears on your emotions
- 2) Others remain dependent on your functioning and are less likely to become responsible
- 3) Without the chance to solve their own problems, others have few opportunities to celebrate successes or learn from their failures

Long term, continually solving the problems for others hurts both the leader and the organization. A change of stance is needed, and taking a dumb pill is one way to change your stance.

Since the situation I described with the non-profit occurred on a yearly basis, I learned from that pivotal meeting. The next year I came prepared to take my dumb pill. I had a strategy planned before the meeting and I just observed the process and watched for the right moment to take my pill.

Sure enough, the meeting tracked as I expected since we were behind budget once again. The tension was thick, and at one point all the heads turned anxiously towards me and asked, “Do you have any suggestions, Steve?”

I said, “I’ve got to say that this has got me stumped. The only thing I can think of is that we all buy a lottery ticket and hope for the big payout.”

It was one of my finer leadership moments... Really!

The group looked at me (for what seemed like a minute, but was no more than a few seconds), and then turned back to one another. **Over the next thirty minutes they solved a problem for which they were responsible.** They formulated a plan,

including how it would be implemented. The plan was not only very good; it didn't require me to do a thing! **I left the meeting feeling free and energized, and they left feeling positive about their efforts.**

Taking a dumb pill not only managed my anxiety, but also led to a productive outcome.

Isn't that the goal of good leadership?

Can you think of a circumstance where you need to take a dumb pill?

- ❖ Maybe when your grown (but still immature) child comes crying that he once again doesn't have enough money this month
- ❖ Maybe when a coworker drags her feet until the 11th hour, then calls at the last minute asking you to solve her dilemma.

Give yourself permission NOT to solve every problem that comes your way, **especially** if: 1) the person(s) has the capacity to solve it without you; and 2) you repeatedly bail the person out.

You will feel guilty for taking a dumb pill. But that's what keeps you stuck overfunctioning for others. When you realize that failure to take the pill wears you out, prevents others from maturing and learning, and keeps them dependent on you, maybe it won't be as hard to swallow.



**To combat that guilt,
remember this truth:
ANXIETY IS NOT
EQUALLY SHARED.**

You can be overly anxious about your spouse's excessive drinking, but if you are, your spouse will not be—at least not nearly to the extent that you are.

Substitute whatever you want into that scenario and it will remain true. If you are overly concerned about the quality of your co-worker's work, the co-worker's concern will not be as great.

If you are excessively worried over your daughter's boyfriend, she will not be.

If you are too anxious about your parent's health issues, your parent won't be as anxious.

So chill. Take a dumb pill.

Just perhaps, the other person will start to get anxious about his/her situation (and maybe start to feel enough pain) and do something about it.

But as long as you keep doing the work and carrying the baton, others will let you.



Strategy #2

Ask Powerful Questions

Good questions are impossible to ask when your anxiety is high.

You can ask a reactive question when you are anxious or stressed, like, “What were you thinking?” or “What are you doing?” or “Why did you lie to me?”



A reactive question, however, will rarely yield good outcomes.

A friend of mine once said, **“You cannot plant insight into an unmotivated person.”**

How true. No matter how anxious you are about another person and her well-being or functioning, that will not motivate her to change or to function at a higher level. Advising, warning, cajoling, pleading, or any other form of direction usually falls on deaf ears.

The reason? Telling someone what to do is born out of the anxious part of your brain, not the thinking part. On top of that, direct statements do not engage the thinking part of another’s brain (the PFC), unless that person is already moving **towards** you (i.e., wants to hear what you have to say).

So, in effect, when you tell others what they need to do or to understand, you are speaking out of the wrong part of your brain, and into the wrong part of their brains.



And that keeps the anxiety raised in both you and them.

You have a better chance of influencing, and lowering the unhealthy anxiety in you and in the system, if you ask powerful questions instead of directing others. *Questions inspire thinking in others, and are more likely to create initiative and buy-in as well.*

This means that you have to step back, take a breath, and control the urge to give advice or direction by thinking of a **question** instead.

This will not come easily if you're not used to it. Here are some compelling reasons to practice asking questions, and then I will give you some examples of questions you can try.

Reasons for asking powerful questions:

- 1) Questions require that you move into the thinking part of your brain.** Your best leadership will only come to the surface if you are primarily operating out of your prefrontal cortex rather than your amygdala. A good question moves you into your thinking center and out of your fight/flight center.

- 1) **Questions help to regulate anxiety.** If you can't think of a question, then you're still operating out of your amygdala (fear center). Trying to think of a powerful question, (even if one doesn't come to mind), will lower your anxiety and increase the likelihood of better outcomes.
- 2) **Questions promote insight, creativity, and energy.** Good questions invite others to think, while at the same time communicating that they are able to come up with a solution. When other develop their own insights and plan their own actions, they are much more likely to have energy around them.
- 3) **Questions move the recipient towards action better than statements.** If I were to say to a friend, "You need to slow down and give up some of your responsibilities because you are wearing yourself out!" she would probably respond with, "I know. I know." She would agree with it – even realize it was true – but the response would likely be automatic and she probably wouldn't think about how to make changes.

But if I asked, "If your husband asked that for the sake of your marriage, would you please give up at least one big responsibility, which one would you give up?" she is far more likely to think about what she would give up, instead of just saying, "I know, I know."

Good questions can be difficult to ask if:

- ❖ You are not in the habit
- ❖ You are in a hurry
- ❖ You are too anxious
- ❖ You are in an organization that discourages questions.

But if you give this a try, try to avoid the ***less-helpful*** questions on the next page.

QUESTIONS THAT ARE NOT AS HELPFUL

Why questions. These make others defensive.

“Why did you do it like that?”

Accusatory questions. These shut others down and/or makes them angry.

“What were you thinking?” “Whose fault is this?”

Leading questions. These are questions that are disguised as direction – and that discourages exploring. Often the second word in this question is “you.”

“Wouldn’t you rather approach it like this?”

Closed questions. These limit thinking and conversation as they only require “yes” or “no” answers.

“Did your talk with the patient go well?”

Avoid these as much as you can. The first three are driven by anxiety, while the fourth one does not promote conversation.

Try some of the questions on the next two pages for better outcomes.

QUESTIONS FOR BETTER OUTCOMES

Exploratory Questions

- ❖ What are your thoughts about that?
- ❖ How might you look at this differently?
- ❖ What possibilities have you thought of thus far?
- ❖ On a scale of 1-10, how important is this to you?
- ❖ Where are you stuck with this?
- ❖ What do you need to gain more clarity around this?
- ❖ What are you responsible for here?
- ❖ What's the responsibility of others?

Questions Around Goals

- ❖ What do you want to accomplish?
- ❖ Do you want this, or do others want it for you?
- ❖ What about this goal feels important for you?
- ❖ What will it mean for you to reach this goal?
- ❖ What resources will you need to tackle this?
- ❖ What steps will you take? When will you take them?
- ❖ What results do you hope to get?
- ❖ How will you measure if you've been successful?

Questions About Choices

- ❖ What options are you considering?
- ❖ What kind of energy have you given to considering more options?
- ❖ What do you think will be the outcome if you choose that option? How about the other option?
- ❖ How does this choice line up with your values?
- ❖ How does this choice reflect your best thinking?
- ❖ What will it take to turn this choice into a habit?
- ❖ What will happen if you do nothing at this time?

QUESTIONS FOR BETTER OUTCOMES

Tough Questions

- ❖ You brought up a matter once before that I would like to explore further? Can I ask a few more specific questions about this?
- ❖ Are you interested in what I think?
- ❖ So things aren't working out very well. What do you think needs to change?
- ❖ What part did you play in creating this situation?
- ❖ We've talked about the other person for a while. How about you? What's your role in all of this?
- ❖ Since you can't change another person, how can you best respond as things now stand?

When you ask questions such as these in lieu of giving directions, several positive things occur:

- Anxiety lowers in you and in others
- Better thinking is nurtured
- Energy and buy-in has a better chance of happening
- Motivation is more likely to develop in others

These result in actions that generate better outcomes. **This is a HUGE change in stance for most people.**

It can feel risky to choose not to take the baton of other people's anxiety. I'll not kid you. It IS risky.

Let's explore that in depth in the next strategy.

Strategy #3

Prepare For Resistance

You will face resistance from others 100 percent of the time when you change your stance.

Think of facing resistance as pushing through the sound barrier. The first person to break the speed of sound, Chuck Yeager, was aware of his fear, keep it in check, and kept moving forward in faith that once he get past the resistance, things would settle down to a new normal.



Other pilots could have broken the sound barrier before Yeager, but as the barrier was approached, the jets vibrated so badly that the pilots backed off the throttle for fear that the jet would break apart.

Yeager had a hunch that if you just held fast and pushed through the barrier, it would calm down on the other side. He was right. He stayed his nerves as the jet encountered resistance, and soon a new place of stability was reached.

When any leader or “go-to” person responds in new ways to old patterns and circumstances, she will encounter resistance that is strong enough to bring her back to her old way of functioning.

The challenge is to hold on, stay the course, and let others adapt to your healthier functioning.

If someone is used to you functioning **for** them, they will not like it if you back off of your rescuing ways. Believe me. The underfunctioners will cry out: “Don’t you care?” “How could you be so selfish?” “What will I do?” “How will I make it?” “I need you!”

During this time it is critical to stay with your thinking and not go with your emotions. This will be difficult. You may feel the intense vibrations and be tempted to back off. You will question yourself: “Am I being too hard?” “Should I give her another chance?” Are they right? Am I being selfish?”

The answers are no, no, NO and NO! **If you hang on long enough, you will break through the sound barrier and the resistance will calm down.** You will reach a new normal where you feel lighter and freer.

Resistance **will** come 100 percent of the time if you make changes. Count on it.

If someone depends on your efforts to keep him propped up, you can be sure he will flounder, fail, and maybe become a wreck when you quit.

That will raise your anxiety, you’ll be tempted to jump back into the pattern you were in, and everything will remain as it was – except that you may feel more imprisoned.

So, prepare for the resistance. On the next page are some objections you may hear, and some examples of how you may handle the resistance.

WARNING: I don’t have to live with the consequences of your actions, so only do what makes sense to you and that you think right.

If you hear, “Don’t you care?” you can respond with, “I care very much. But the issue is, ‘Do YOU care?’ If you do, you’ll figure out a way to manage your life.”

If you hear, “How could you be so selfish?” think about the reality – that you are taking care of your *self*, which is a lot different from being *self-ish*. The underfunctioners are actually the selfish ones, wanting others to do the work they need to be doing.

If you hear, “What will I do?” ask, “What would you like to do?” Underfunctioners usually cannot give you an answer. That’s okay. It’s a good time for you to take a dumb pill. Let their anxiety rise high enough to make some changes. If you feel the need to give a response, then refer to the questions in Strategy #2 above.

Dealing with resistance requires a level of inner calm so that you can think clearly about what is right and what is for the greater good.

Without clarity, you will continue to act out of compulsion rather than from choice.

Without clarity, you will not be able to anticipate the typical feedback you hear when others sense that you may not be their crutch any longer.

The most effective way to get into your thinking is to breathe. You must think about your breath. Think “inhale” as you are inhaling, and “exhale” as you are exhaling. Do this for a few minutes.



Carve out some time where you can think, pray, or meditate. If you don't take the time to get clear about what is right, what is important for you, and what is the best action for all concerned, you will back off and return to your old ways instead of pushing through the resistance.

And that can be costly.

Case Study

One small business owner I know kept an underfunctioning employee on his payroll for too long. His reasons were several. He had known the man as a friend for a long time. He knew the man's age would make it difficult to secure other employment.

But the real hook was that the man's wife was chronically ill.

Because he tolerated the man's poor performance for too long, the employer started to lose his best workers. When he informed the man of his decision to let him go, the man started to cry and said, "How will I take care of my sick wife?"

Feeling like an ogre, the employer kept the man on. His business continued to decline as the better workers left due to the inequity of having to do their work and someone else's. The business is still open, but performing at about a third of what it once did. The owner is not happy, the employees are not happy, and the customers sense that and don't return.

You can apply that same principle to your family. Will the poorest functioning or unhealthiest one continue to control how everyone else functions? Or will you get really clear, push through the resistance, and change your stance so that a new normal can be established?

Benefits of Changing Your Stance

You always have a choice when something isn't working well. You don't just have to swing harder. You **CAN** change your stance.

You CAN take a dumb pill and give yourself permission to not be responsible to solve everyone's problems.

You CAN ask powerful questions which lower anxiety in you and in others, as well as elevating thinking, commitment and energy in all parties for better outcomes.

You CAN push through the resistance when those around you don't like the difference in your functioning. They will blame and plead, and even get sick in order for you to take care of them once again.

I will not mislead you. This will be challenging for several reasons:

- ❖ Chronic anxiety is pervasive and propels us in ways we cannot see because we are so used to living with it.
- ❖ Most "go-to" people are hard-wired to overfunction for others. Backing off is counter-intuitive and feels wrong, selfish, and uncaring.
- ❖ It is difficult watching others struggle or fail, even though you know there are valuable, life-changing lessons in doing so.
- ❖ It takes time to change your stance and since it isn't easy, many people give up, concluding it is just a cross they have to bear.
- ❖ The majority of people simply do not have the ability to do this alone. You need a support group or the help of a trained professional.

Just as Ted Williams continued to hone his swing under the watchful eye of a coach, so it is that **many people need a coach, a guide, a mentor, or a seasoned friend to encourage them to make a shift and stick with it.** Make the effort to find someone who is willing to help you and guide you.

I welcome the chance to speak with you and your current situation and to explore what changes you would like to make. I have been helping people professionally for over 30 years.

I invite you to email me at steve@stevecromercoaching.com so that we can arrange a time to have a 20-30 minute call. This is a complimentary call with no pressure for you to commit to coaching.

I'm interested in what is challenging for you at this point in life, and exploring with you what may help you move forward. If the time is right and the fit is right, the great. If not, I'll wish you all the best as you continue on your journey, and be grateful for the chance we had to connect.

The **benefits of changing your stance** are phenomenal. Even slight changes yield large results such as:

- ❖ **Greater energy** from carrying a lighter emotional load
- ❖ **Inner freedom** that grows from a healthy detachment from others and from possessions
- ❖ A **genuine joy** of *being* with others without being responsible *for* them
- ❖ **Renewed vigor** for the things that matter most
- ❖ **Satisfaction** in watching others learn and grow from their own successes and mistakes
- ❖ **Greater productivity** due to focusing on areas where you can make a difference

Change your stance. Lower your anxiety. Raise your leadership!