

I Got Promoted... Oh, Shsh-t!!

By Dania Dbaiibo Darwish

A dear friend of mine recently got promoted to the position of the CEO of this reputable huge firm. I met with her just yesterday to discuss the great news only to find out that she was terrified by the news. Shock waves of worry were still coloring her perception of her pinnacle professional life. Instead of being a chest-thumping Tarzan, she seemed cornered like a pray. I found her gritting her teeth mulling about the tantalized situation that firm was in. She thought that the prospects of enacting a directional shift towards growth were poor as demonstrated by the successive CEOs handling that same post. I saw things differently; and started dissecting with her the different aspects of her worries. She was disempowering herself with negative thoughts and bleak attributes of the situation; and that needed to change. She can't decline such an opportunity and has all the right to worry, but whining about the problems surrounding her added responsibility did not serve her much. We first changed the term "problems" into "concerns". We then started focusing on how to dissolve or solve those concerns. She had already begun that, and as we sat there more solutions surfaced.

Our dialogue led to an attempt at adopting a more empowering stance; thus, allowing more reign for positive thoughts. What she needed more than ever, now, was to muster all her energy and arm her self with few pivotal basics:

a) Faith. Fate/life (not the board members) has chosen her to have this post. There is something precious in there for her (a lesson, a reward, or an experience). She needs to trust what the cosmic energy is giving her! It is meant for a reason. A more "let's look at it as a challenge" stance is to be adopted. Why not explore the marvels of having achieved and have a taste of being there at the top? She has worked real hard for a post that by now she deserves. She has all the expertise and the right credentials.

b) Positive beliefs about her yourself. Henry ford once said: "Believe you can, and you can; believe you can't and you're right"; and this is not just a quote. Accumulated research suggests that those who believe in themselves (and their capabilities) do succeed; those who are hesitant and are doubtful don't often make it. Even if she had doubts in some

areas, she is better off in focusing on what she is good at. Weak areas can often be delegated to subordinates to handle, or rectified with time.

c) Knowledge. She needs to get hold of all sorts of information needed for that new post. A gradual expansion of her knowledge data base was a requirement now more than ever. She needed to allow herself sometime to recap on filling the necessary gaps. She can't possibly know all the details in the world, but can surely be selective. A supportive team can be the perfect back up providing her with the required essentials.

d) Experts, family, & friends: She, lastly, would need to contact those who were in a similar position and learn from their mistakes. Consultations with field experts were to be prioritized; Furthermore, modeling professionally the success stories of prominent figures would be an asset and a good guideline. At the same time, she needed to stay surrounded by family members and friends. She now needs additional eyes and ears to redirect her once she drifts away with the added responsibility. Family members and friends love her; and she needs to be open to their suggestions on a personal level.

In addition to equipping herself with the above resources, she needed to utilize additional strategies to succeed on her new endeavor. Our discussion touched on:

1. Having a clear vision of what that new role entails. Moreover, it was important for her to establish the legacy she wanted to leave behind. All outstanding organizations have clearly stated "Vision" and "Mission" statements. They hang these everywhere. Why wouldn't the same apply on us as people? She needed to write these in her journal. It facilitates goal setting in order to achieve the mission. Research suggests that 97% of those who achieve their goals actually write these down. It keeps one focused and organized. No one has to be overly rigid once the goals are specified (reassessment and revision can be undertaken as the need arises). Clarity is a key to success.

2. Added responsibility might lead to over-working herself. She needed to keep an eye on "her-self" as a person (with all her extended roles as mother, wife, friend, etc.....). No one on his/her death-bed ever wished having worked more. All regret the precious moments not spent with

loved ones. Some work-family balance needs to be struck and stays in check.

We discussed more specifics that worried my dear friend; and addressed each in sundry ways. When one impregnates action steps to any area of concern, the seeds of more solution focused coping emerges. It's OK to acknowledge worries, but more importantly to process these and de-emphasize their grandiosity. As my friend and I departed, I deeply wished my friend to have become more galvanized to face a "challenge" not a "nightmare" as she perceived it to be. I assured her of lending my full support. I know it is really difficult to coach friends, but I just couldn't resist the urge to be there with my "coach hat" on. As I mentally reviewed the points we discussed, I considered these applied not only to the case of her promotion per se, but to handling our professional roles any time along the way of progress.....

