

# The 7 Deadly Sins Of Progressive Leaders

By Carole Nicolaidis

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Thousands of years ago and miles away in Ancient Greece, Heraclites, a wise man known in the west as “Heraclites the Dark”, said, “Although this truth [self-awareness] is eternally valid, men are unable to understand it. Not only before hearing it but even after they have heard it.” His words are so true.

Great leaders are not afraid of listening to the truth. They actually demand this from their mentors, friends, partners and, most importantly, themselves. They know that if they do not hear the whole truth about the way they act and behave they will never excel. Now, let me ask you this: if great leaders recognize that they constantly need to open their ears and hearts to self-awareness in order to find success, why is it so difficult for us to do the same?

First, why is it so difficult to see our own shortcomings? And second, why don't we simply eliminate the things that block our way to success? There is not an easy answer for either question. There are several common things that keep us from achieving excellence. If these are handled properly, we free ourselves for betterment in all areas of life.

**Lack of Forgiveness** - The inability to forgive yourself and others is one of the greatest energy wasters that you can have. Robert, a successful business owner and a dear client of mine, struggled with a poor decision he made four years earlier. He could never forgive himself for losing a lot of money in his business. However, once he embraced the fact that even imperfect decisions could result in something good he was able to refocus and move forward with confidence. Robert lost almost a million dollars, but he managed to build a \$20 million business within the next three years. Self-forgiveness allowed him to move on and learn from his painful life lesson.

**Damaging Habits** – Habits are generally viewed as actions: smoking, drinking, self-doubt. However, one of the most damaging habits (or rituals) is procrastination. This is the number one killer of dreams. Like most habits, procrastination can be difficult to overcome. Here's help. Ask yourself the following questions. “Why am I procrastinating on the decision?” “What am I feeling that prevents me from moving ahead?” “What will ultimately happen if I do not eliminate procrastination from my life?” “If I do eliminate procrastination, how much more joy will I have?” “How will it make my life better?” Make a conscious commitment to start eliminating this, and other damaging habits, today.

**Inability To Say No** - This is another difficult habit to deal with. Saying yes when you want to (or need to) say no causes feelings of anxiety and drains energy. Saying yes to a customer who you know you can't help. Saying yes to your manager when you know you can't meet his deadline. Each time it happens, the choking grip tightens around your neck. In order to free yourself for bigger and better things to come, begin taking steps toward assertiveness today.

With all diplomacy, tell the customer that your product is not designed to do what he needs. Perhaps you can offer another solution for him. Let your manager know that you can complete the project with better results if he is willing to move the deadline back a week. I know it is easier said than done, but if you are committed to excellence taking control must be a priority.

**Life Purpose** - I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to have a purpose in life. If you don't, all the motivational and time management training in the world will fail. All the workshops, books, CD series and videos cannot create a purpose. They build on what you already have. If you are unclear as to your life purpose, there will be nothing to build on. When you have a compelling purpose, focusing on and achieving your goals becomes a much easier process. Finding your life purpose can start with these two questions: "What do I get the most joy from?" "What was I doing the last time my entire world 'felt right'?" Your answers will give you some great insight into what your life purpose is.

**Being Judgmental** – Being judgmental is an exceptional waste of energy that accomplishes nothing. Diversity is the spice of life. While you may not agree with or appreciate another's attire, culture, personal habits, speech or business practices; being judgmental only harms you and hinders your ability to succeed.

**Losing Emotional Control** - Emotions are your internal guides and have tremendous power over how you behave. However many leaders mistakenly allow their emotions to control them, rather than guide them. Emotional suppression and outbursts create blocks between you, your employees and your loved ones. They construct walls that stop you from accomplishing your goals. If you are an emotional "stuffer" or explode easily, please take the time to seek the help you need. Progressive Leaders will tell you that emotional consistency is a tremendous tool for achieving success.

**Giving Up** – Have you ever known someone that would throw up a white flag each and every time a complication occurred? Regardless of the severity, every obstacle was immediately considered as a failure rather than a minor setback. Is that person you? Perseverance is a key quality of progressive leaders. Giving up too soon can mean sacrificing success and achievement. Before throwing in the towel, exhaust every resource.

These seven deadly sins are the most common ailments progressive leaders face. It is important to eliminate these things as they weaken your leadership character. It is also advisable to perform a periodic clean up in order to keep these trials from inching their way back into your life. Progressive leaders know that identification and elimination of wasteful behaviors leaves a path that's open wide to personal and professional victory.

Carole is President and Executive Coach of Progressive Leadership, offering executive coaching, organizational development consulting and leadership development training. Improve your business relationships, communication, team performance and bottom line starting now. Visit <http://www.progressiveleadership.com> for more info & subscribe to Carole's FREE Ezine.

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