

## Master Your Language Before Leading Others

Many people have an undercurrent of negativity and it's so far under the radar that they don't even know they have it. It's the nit-picking complaining about what someone should have done, how someone hurt their feelings and how they should have responded...how the weather should be but isn't. The first step is to accept what IS and quit "shoulding" over everyone and everything.

This was a post I crafted on [Facebook](#) one day after I'd had enough with a family member's negativity.

Recently I had a glimpse in the mirror to see negativity within myself. I want to share the "story" with you then break it down so you can use my challenges to help you on your journey of self-improvement.

I got up early on Saturday to go to the Gym. I had it all planned out. I'd put in a hard workout followed by a protein shake as a treat, and a trip to the grocery store on the way home. When I got the gym I learned that the gym didn't open for an hour. I decided to go ahead and grocery shop and return to the gym after lunch.

I arrived at the grocery store and there was very little fresh produce. No romaine lettuce???? My mood started to take a downward turn. I saw a stock-person walking toward me and I said, "I really arrived at the wrong time didn't I?"

"Why is that?" he asked.

"There's almost no fresh produce," I answered.

"The truck is late today." He answered back.

"That stinks!" I said, letting him know how disappointed I was.

Then I caught myself, and I softened a bit, and said, "Thanks anyway."

"What is it you were wanting anyway?" he asked.

"What I wanted was some fresh romaine lettuce."

### *That's When I Realized It*

I teach managers and leaders that when people pout, complain, or hint, it's because they want something and don't know how to ask for it. They think their negativity will help them get it by hinting, pouting or acting like a victim!

OMG! How can I teach this stuff and STILL make these same mistakes?

Instead of asking for what I wanted, I complained!

Instead of seeking clarity, I made an assumption!

One disappointment easy to handle. Two is my breaking point? Really????

As I've said before, the exciting thing about the journey of enlighten is that there's always more work to be done. I am working on mastering my thinking and my language, and I don't think I will get to the finish line any time soon.

It would have been just as easy to simply say, "Hey, would you go check to see if there is any fresh romaine in stock?"

Here are the lessons I learned about making the commitment to be an enlightened leader:

1. You will always be self-examining and course-correction.
2. Your life will be an open book.
3. You will always have room for improvement.
4. Your failures always offer rich lessons.
5. You're never going to be perfect---get over it.
6. Tendency to judge others? Watch out. Your turn is coming.
7. Share your mistakes with others to give them courage.

As I thought about these lessons, the employee approached me with a fresh stock of romaine lettuce. "The truck just arrived and I had to do a little digging, but here you are."

What if getting what you want whether it's from an employee, a co-worker, or a board member is as simple as asking for what you want instead of assuming or complaining?