Managing Mistakes
By Joe Cramer

In today’s busy work environment, it’s easy for mistakes to be made. Perhaps someone you were counting on to perform a certain task drops the ball when you were depending on them. Or maybe you are the one who made a mistake. In today’s business world, it may seem common practice to hide or cover up your mistakes or even blame someone or something else. The way we handle mistakes can set us apart as Christians and allow us to lead by example.

In my early years as an advisor, I would learn by watching my mentor (who I no longer work with). Whenever a mistake was made, he was quick to blame it on his staff, a glitch in technology, or try to brush it off as if it never happened. He always found a way to spin the truth to protect his credibility and maintain the perception that he was an expert and a trustworthy advisor. It was as if admitting to any mistake showed weakness and might expose him as being unprofessional and inexperienced.

It’s important to do your work with excellence and try your best to avoid mistakes—but mistakes do happen. In my experience, there is a better and more effective way to handle mistakes:

• Make it up. No, don’t make up excuses…. make it up to the client. Pay their bill, discount your services, buy them a cup of coffee, or send them a gift card. Take care of the problem your mistake created before the customer, client, or coworker even asks.

• Go the extra mile. Humility and confidence are required to admit to a mistake—while you have your client/customer, coworker engaged with you, go the extra step and ask them in an attentive manner what else you can be doing to better serve them—and listen!

By admitting to your mistakes with integrity and turning a negative situation into an opportunity to better serve those around you with excellence, we can continue to set good examples of what it means to be Christ in the workplace.

On a recent trip, my luggage was lost on a direct flight to Chicago. The baggage claim attendant, Sonja, apologized (even though it wasn’t her fault), updated me every 15 minutes, and promised me she would find my luggage and deliver it to me. An hour after I left the airport, she found my luggage and told me she would have someone (a nice guy named Herb) drive it to me in South Bend, two hours away. The world needs more of us in Christians in Commerce and more people like Sonja and Herb, working with excellence and going the extra mile to take care of people in the marketplace.

• Honestly admit your part in the mistake. Everyone makes mistakes, but it takes a certain kind of humility and integrity to honestly admit when you messed up. My clients have respected and appreciated when I was honest about my mistake and this has created even more trust in turn.

• Communicate intended improvements. Communicate to your client/customer/coworker any plans and procedures that have been put in place to catch potential mistakes before they happen. People will appreciate the additional steps you have taken already.

Joe Cramer is a financial advisor in South Bend, IN. Since 2015, he has been part of the CIC Southbend/Elkhart Men’s Chapter. He hosts a Challenge Group discussion every Tuesday evening at the Healy Group after work. Joe can be reached at joeycramer@gmail.com.

PRESIDENT’S CORNER
I once read that forgiveness is for our benefit. I didn’t believe it until I experienced it myself. A few years ago, I experienced a loss of several thousand dollars from a contractor who lied to me about finishing his work. Until I forgave him, I was suffering more than he was.

I was surprised to hear later that he planned to repay me someday. I told him I didn’t want the money, I just wanted him to get his life back together. One night, he stopped by my house and my wife and daughter and I prayed with him and forgave him. I don’t know if his behavior will ever change. It’s up to God, not us, to change others.

In the prayer Jesus taught us he said, “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.” Our responsibility is to be set free from the pressure, anger, and weight of an unforgiving attitude.

Whatever our situation may be, we cannot afford to hold on to an unforgiving spirit. We must release others from the debts we feel they owe us. Forgiveness is powerful and necessary for both parties.

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Feeling Forgiveness

Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. (Cor 2:7)

I work for a Christian company, a distributor of religious education materials. Several years ago, when I was a young programmer, I made a mistake that virtually shut our company down for three days. When I removed some testing language, I failed to tell the program when to stop. I knew something was wrong the moment I stepped off the elevator. Several people informed me they couldn't access the computer system. I rushed to the computer room, dropping all my things outside the door, including my excellent lunch of leftovers.

When I got inside, it was clear that my program had run amok. I was devastated. My boss joined me and soon the company president and vice president came as well. After we killed the program, the president’s first response was to lead us in a prayer for wisdom in figuring out the extent of the damage and how to repair it. He patted me on the shoulder and assured me it would work out.

It was bad. I had combined two-thirds of our item database into a single item. The order takers couldn’t take orders because most of the items didn’t exist. Accounting couldn’t invoice our customers. We couldn’t receive or ship items at our warehouse. Every aspect of our business ground to a halt.

By 2 p.m., we had a plan. To recover all the lost data, we had to go back to our last good backup and slowly apply each change to the database until everything was back to the way it was right before I started my program. It would take three days.

While we waited for our offsite backups, I stepped out of the computer room for the first time in six hours. I saw my long-anticipated lunch and realized it would be foolish to eat it unrefrigerated. Just as I was trying to figure out what I was going to do, one of the order takers came around the corner with a bag from Burger King. She had seen my poor leftovers and knew I would need help. It was an excellent lunch.

Throughout the next three days, no one said a critical word to me. At least once an hour, a coworker would stick his or her head in with a prayer or word of encouragement. I was covered in kindness.

Once the system was back up, I had to go to the warehouse. George immediately came up and thumped me on the back and said “Have you ever seen the warehouse so clean? We were able to get a lot done while we were down.” That was the extent of it from the warehouse.

The next Friday as my boss was heading out the door, she reminded me to double check my code one more time and start my program before I left.

I can imagine a workplace where a person making such a mistake would be punished for years. It could have been brutal. That wasn’t what happened. Throughout the whole experience, I was forgiven over and over by the words and actions of my coworkers.

PRAY:

Lord, give me eyes to see moments of forgiveness expressed in action. Teach me to grow in being a forgiver in word and in action.

REFLECT:

What can I do to comfort through forgiveness in my words and in my actions?

DISCUSS:

Share about moments where you have received forgiveness expressed in action. What will you do to prepare to forgive in words and actions in the future?

2018 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN UNDERWAY

We continue 2018 with a BOLD VISION for a BRIGHT FUTURE. With a goal to influence 20,000 lives by 2020, let’s invest in our mission together with prayers, financial support, and personal effort.

We’ve opened doors to thousands of Christians at several large corporations. We continue to grow our social media outreach. The Annual Conference provided inspiration and a sense of renewal for attendees to face future challenges. We have launched a new monthly podcast series. Join us in realizing this bold vision to support others in being Christ in their workplaces.

How can you help?

Encourage a new generation of Christians to meet the call to align their careers with God’s mission by donating online at www.cicintl.org/agc18. Thank you for your continued prayers and support!
Harboring Unforgiveness  
By Frank Adamo

"And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins." (Mark 11:25)

I have had the opportunity to serve as a manager in my company in seven different management positions. When I went to work for a smaller division of the company I confronted an unexpected complication. I was immediately challenged to "fit in" with their culture.

PRAY:
Father, show me where I still harbor unforgiveness or resentment in my heart.

REFLECT:
What can I do to rectify this situation? When will I reach out to that person to ask for forgiveness?

DISCUSS:
What are the consequences of unforgiveness and how can it affect you?

Forgive and Forget  
By Christine Ziegler

As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:12)

Several years ago, I made a mistake that virtually shut down our company for three days. It became a defining part of who I was as a computer programmer. I was always aware of what I had done to the company and my coworkers. The experience has enabled me to comfort others who have made significant mistakes at work. I often say, "It's going to work out. And hey! You didn't stop the company cold for three days." It can be comforting to know that someone else made an even bigger mistake and survived.

When programmers meet socially, the conversation often turns to programming horror stories. Recently I started to share my story, and Joan, my supervisor at the time of the event, listened as avidly as the others. As the story went on, she looked confused, as if I wasn't making any sense. Later, I told Joan I was surprised by her response. She said, “I have absolutely no memory of that incident at all.” I was stunned. In her statement, I understood complete forgiveness. I had never before experienced being forgiven and having an incident literally forgotten. It was a moment of incredible freedom for me. I have moved past my guilt and regret to participate fully in working for my company and with my coworkers.

PRAY:
Lord, there are areas where I have forgiven but not forgotten. Show me how to put others' transgressions as far away as the east is from the west.

REFLECT:
Remember when mercy has been shown to you. What could you do to be ready to forgive and forget?

DISCUSS:
Share a time when you were forgiven and the offense was forgotten. How did that mercy affect you?
Modeling Forgiveness  

By Frank Adamo

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. (Colossians 3:13)

Over the years I have had the opportunity to experience many email writing styles. Six years ago a new manager joined us. Before Bill and I had a chance to meet, he started sending me emails about a program we were working together.

When Bill was soliciting our help, his emails were terse and even a bit snarky. If we didn’t respond within a few hours the email would escalate to management. I fell into the trap. I would sometimes respond back in a similar style and even “copy all” to make my point. This was a mistake. Those emails tended to be nonproductive, causing dissension for our team. I saw a pattern developing and knew that this was uncharitable and beginning to hurt our team’s reputation.

I decided to call Bill when I received his next email. I found him to be somewhat soft spoken, intelligent, with a committed desire to work with me. Later that week we had a meeting with the customer. To my surprise, he was congenial and productive.

I took Bill aside after our meeting and congratulated him for leading the team. I also apologized for my terse emails and he apologized as well. I found that after I asked for forgiveness on a one to one basis, and he accepted, our business relationship took a huge step forward.

Years later, many of us still work with Bill. I take the time to counsel my staff when I’m copied on one of Bill’s emails. I explain his style and suggest they give him a call to work things out. The Holy Spirit has brought this communication issue all the way around.

Frank Adamo has been a member of CIC since 1987 and is a member of the Central Mesa Chapter. He has been married to his wife, Sheila, for 42 years. They have three grown sons and 12 grandchildren. Frank is a Senior Contracts Manager in the Law and Contracts department at Honeywell. He can be reached at fadamo12@cox.net.

Room Registration Open for 2018 Annual Conference

This year’s CIC Annual Conference will be held on October 5-6 at the Embassy Suites Bloomington, MN. Please mark your calendars! An Annual Conference Planning Committee is already hard at work to ensure this will be a conference of inspiration, renewal, and fellowship for all attendees. Minnesota is beautiful in the fall. We hope you can join us!

Room reservations are now being accepted at the conference hotel. Contact Embassy Suites at http://embassysuites.hilton.com/en/es/groups/personalized/M/MSPWEES-CIC-20181003/index.jhtml

Or call them at 952-884-4811 or 1-800-Embassy. Ask for Group: Christians In Commerce or Group Code: CIC.
I think a common misunderstanding among many of us is saying to ourselves, “I’m not a leader; I’m not a chapter president, a service council member, a Challenge Group leader, or a part of music ministry, I’m just a person who happens to go to meetings.”

“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:11-12)

I think this misunderstanding nullifies what the Ephesians passage above says. I believe it is somewhat problematic because it neutralizes apostles, prophets, evangelists, and teachers; that’s you and I, along with others in CIC already positioned in the marketplace.

When we are neutralized, we don’t take action. When we do take action and engage parts of society, culture, or commerce there is a high degree of redeeming value every time we do that.

I truly believe Christians, and specifically CIC brothers and sisters, are the most strategically placed soldiers to confound Satan and his army in the workplace.

As CIC works to educate, motivate, and activate, each of us has an essential role to play in God’s plan. From the founding fathers and up, with our challenge groups and chapters, we should connect each individual’s passions and abilities to God’s calling in their lives, to transform the workplace culture as a coworker in and with Christ.

**Educate one another.** Discover your place in God’s story, by understanding how God has uniquely equipped you through Christians in Commerce to become an influencer.

**Motivate one another.** If we want to see deep sustainable changes in our culture, it requires people working with one another. We’re motivated when working with one another, not alone.

**Activate one another.** We need to be finding service opportunities that match your passion and life experiences in this ministry.

CIC has been handed to us by God our Father, to encourage and equip one another to make a difference in the marketplace. “One-anothering” is a vital part to the church and we can’t ignore it.

It is only by the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit, which enable us to be God’s presence in the workplace. So as we enter and exit our homes and workplaces, expect to be empowered and equipped to do the work that the Lord has called us to do.

Excerpt from Terry Cassell’s general session speech at the 2017 Annual Conference. Watch the entire presentation at [https://vimeo.com/241420425](https://vimeo.com/241420425).
Résumé and Eulogy Virtues

The following is an excerpt from our recently launched Nine to Five Podcast featuring a conversation between Steve Becker of CIC and Dr. Michael Naughton, Director of the Center for Catholic Studies at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, MN.

CIC: In our previous conversation, you noted the importance of resume and eulogy virtues, could you expand on that?

MN: We are often impressed when someone tells us they are president, or CEO, or when they publish 10 books. We often don’t even know that our fundamental mode is resume. There is nothing wrong with that because there are times to sell yourself. When I’m applying for a job, I have to sell myself.

CIC: It’s easy for us to get caught up in the resume virtues that talk about what we’ve done, rather than eulogy virtues that define who we are.

MN: That’s correct. Resume virtues have tended to squeeze out the importance of the eulogy virtues, which are always about relationships.

CIC: So how can we work on balancing these virtues in our own lives?

MN: Cardinal Ratzinger once said, “One of the most profound things in our life is not what we have achieved, but what we have accepted.” When we have accepted failure, sickness, and you finally understand it, there are deep insights that can occur from that.

At the Center for Catholic Studies, we have over 250 majors and minors, and I’m really happy about all those things that help my resume. But, the deepest things have often come from that daily silence, worship, and receiving the word. It’s those things that ultimately transform me.

CIC: It also strikes me that when you’re young; you’re concerned about the resume virtues because you’re concerned about your trajectory ahead and where you are going to end up.

MN: That’s right. With students I deal with on a day-to-day basis, I’m really concerned about their resumes. We talk about their achievements and about them selling themselves. The students will say, “All that eulogy stuff—prayer, vocation—I’ll put that off because I need to get a job.”

CIC: So it’s clearly important that we work on both.

MN: A colleague once put it to me this way, “What if we did that with eating? Well, I’m just going to eat meat for the next couple years and then in fifteen years I’ll get to the vegetables.” That’s not the way life works. So yes, I have to focus on the resume virtues, but at the same time, I have to focus on these habits of Sabbath, worship, and relationships.

NEW PODCAST

Introducing our new podcast, Nine to Five, conversations with Christians aligning their careers with God’s mission and being Christ in their workplace. We’ll feature interviews with experts and conversations with Christian men and women sharing their work experiences. Listen, share with friends, and let us know what you think!

March is the season of Lent, and a time for repentance, but it is also a time to share God’s love with those in need. We wanted to devote this month’s news section to sharing some stories from some of our members about how they are giving back to their communities. Bob Neubauer of the Beaverton/Portland Men’s Chapter shared:

For years, my wife and I had a desire to become involved in some type of outreach work in our community. After getting laid off from my job in the banking industry, I met the founder of Transitional Youth, a nonprofit organization in Portland, OR. Transitional Youth is a Christian organization whose work is to help youth on the streets move from homelessness to community. Bert and I met for coffee. When he shared his story, the Lord spoke to me about doing some volunteer work for their group. I was eventually offered a paid position to do development and fundraising. What a blessing it has been for me to minister to those in need! Let me share one victory story about a coworker with whom I am blessed to work.

Rhona was born in New Orleans and lived in her parents’ car for the first seven years of her life. As the family moved west, they ended up in Portland. Due to family issues, Rhona found herself homeless and on the streets of Portland at the age of 13. Within a year, she was pregnant and on drugs. God intervened in her life and she sobered up almost instantly when she gave her life to him.

As an adult, Rhona became involved with Transitional Youth and has been able to give in return to the less fortunate. She has been serving the streets of Portland for years and ministers to the youth. Five years ago she had a vision to open a coffee shop for the youth and she opened the doors in January. “Braking Cycles” (so named because Portland is the #1 bike capital of the nation, as well as #1 in homeless youth per capita) is decorated with pennies demonstrating GOD’s love for the least of these.

Jeanne Belmonte of the Northern Virginia Women’s Chapter shared: My volunteering efforts of feeding the homeless started in Seattle, WA, and continued when I moved to Alexandria, VA. In Seattle, after hearing that my church fed up to 700+ hot meals in a Sunday afternoon, I was inspired to help. Knowing how difficult it was to get staffing on holidays, I would drop-in on Mother’s and Father’s Day, plus Easter to name a few. Del, the main volunteer organizer would either put me to work on the floor doing set-up for meals or assign me to a service station. It was buffet style with great food, like fresh salmon, cut fruit, and a local favorite: Ivar’s Chowder! It was touching to greet and serve each person. Each time I left there I felt as though the Holy Spirit subtly filled my tank. Upon moving east in 2012, and with a desire to continue my outreach, I heard good things about Christ House, a center that provides food to the hungry, shelter to the homeless, and clothing to those in need. It helps individuals recognize their abilities, develop self-sufficiency, and maintain their self-respect. I help prepare and serve the meals, plus do clean-up on Taco Sunday—a very popular meal! I’m thankful to have the opportunity to serve where the Holy Spirit is so present.
Christians in Commerce Prayer

Father,
You are my Lord and Creator.
You entrust me with a place of stewardship in your creation.
Fill me with your Holy Spirit:
That he may teach me to pray and live in Christ and as Christ;
That he may teach me love for family, friends and all people.
   A love that is selfless, humble, and wise;
That he may teach me stewardship of the talents, time, money and possessions you have given me.
   A stewardship that serves, is generous, and brings honor to your name;
That he may teach me faithfulness to your call to Christians in Commerce.
   A call that unites us and builds your Kingdom in the marketplace.
Through Jesus Christ who is Lord.
   Amen

Vision: Being Christ in the workplace

Mission: To encourage and equip Christians to be God’s presence in the workplace by the power of the Holy Spirit, exercising faith, integrity, and excellence

Values:
- Growing and being transformed in Jesus Christ
- Manifesting the gifts of the Holy Spirit
- Building strong brotherhood and sisterhood
- Serving God and expanding his Kingdom in all aspects of our lives
CIC has really helped me to merge my spiritual life and my business life. Many people live separate lives when it comes to their spiritual life and what they do in the workplace. CIC has helped me to develop a mindset to be a better person to my coworkers. It has made me a happier person too. I start out Mondays with my Challenge Group and enjoy laughing and talking about God. It’s a good start to the week.

Steve Lieser

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How many times had I missed the opportunity to be his disciple in the workplace? If I know the Lord, why don’t my colleagues know? The Lord had blessed me with a Christ-centered childhood, yet I found myself being selfish with my knowledge. Somehow, I became so consumed with my own faith journey that I was keeping the Good News all to myself. I can’t keep Christ to myself; souls are at stake. The Great Commission must come first on my daily checklist. What’s on the top of your to-do list today?

Sophia Norman

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“CALLING IS THE TRUTH THAT GOD CALLS US TO HIMSELF SO DECISIVELY THAT EVERYTHING WE ARE, EVERYTHING WE DO, AND EVERYTHING WE HAVE IS INVESTED WITH SPECIAL DEVOTION, DYNAMISM, AND DIRECTION LIVED OUT AS A RESPONSE TO HIS SUMMONS AND SERVICE.”

OS GUINNESS, THE CALL
A CLEAN START

It was a busy Saturday at the cleaners. The lobby was filled with mostly women and a man holding a small child. Joe was called to the front counter. Finding out that Joe was the owner, the man threw a pair of pants at him, hitting him in the chest. Then he unleashed a torrent of expletives, and began to scream about what a lousy business Joe operated.

The child in his arms began to cry and the customers and employees were wide-eyed with fear. The pants had a large iron burn in one of the legs. Joe’s cleaners did not use dry irons so they couldn’t have caused the damage. That information only infuriated the man even more.

Joe asked the value of the pants. The man said they were worth $565 since they were part of a suit. Joe went to his office, wrote a check, and took it to the man. He snatched it out of Joe’s hand and stormed off. About 20 minutes later, Joe was called to the front counter to meet a lady with a concerned look on her face.

She introduced herself as the wife of the angry man. With tears in her eyes she held out the check Joe had written moments earlier, and asked, “Why did you do it?” Joe told her that he served a mighty God who would have been disappointed in him if he had allowed her husband to leave in that state of mind. He was concerned for the safety of other drivers and for their baby.

“He went to the wrong cleaners,” she said.

“No,” Joe said. “He came to the right cleaners.”

Joe has experienced much forgiveness from his past. He is indeed a new creation. He is more than just a virtuous man doing good deeds; he is a member of the family of God manifesting the characteristics of Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

This new life that Joe is living manifests the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The fruit of the Spirit was not new to Paul’s first century audience. Every good Greek or Roman admired them.

Paul’s letters were saying something radical. It is the power of the Holy Spirit that is expressing the life of the Creator in his people.

Because they shared in Jesus’ death and resurrection, Christians were not imitating him but alive with the very characteristics of God himself.

The implications are huge. Without the Holy Spirit and the characteristics of Christ, we cannot glorify God in our jobs or transform the world.

God does not promise us wealth or status, but he does promise to share his very life in us. As we share in our Father’s work, we draw on this life. We can be ready and willing, but our ability comes from the Holy Spirit at work within us.

The fruit of the Spirit is God being manifested in us as it was in Joe. This is incredibly good news. This life is ours, in Christ Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The epilogue to the cleaners story is that the man later called Joe and asked if he was welcome to return and be a customer. Over the next nine years, the man shared how his encounter and Joe’s mercy was a turning point for him. It played a big part in his healing from anger issues.

This is one of 20 Snapshot Podcasts. To hear more go to workingforourfather.com/podcasts/snapshots/