

# Ouch! Your Silence Hurts

by Gary Tomlinson

“Learning from the school of hard knocks can be very informing, but often the tuition is too high! We should learn from other people’s experiences.” The purpose of this column is to share great business wisdom from the experiences of authors like Jim Collins, Michael Gerber, Gary Harpst, Michael LeBoeuf, Ron Willingham, Stephen M.R. Covey and others. Because when you combine great business education with your own business experiences the outcome you’ll receive is far greater than the sum of its parts.

The wisdom of Leslie Aguilar’s new video *Ouch! Your Silence Hurts* has been chosen to share with you this week. “We all are naturally biased. We all have a tendency to let some of our biases slip into our conversations whether we do so consciously or unconsciously. When that happens, we all lose. Relationships can suffer, cooperation can decrease and our ability to lead or influence others can diminish.”

“Have you ever heard someone say something biased or demeaning and you didn’t know whether to speak up? Have you ever said something unintentionally offensive and wished you could take it back? Would you like to know how to present information and lead discussions in ways that include everyone and avoid bias, stereotyping, discounting or potential discrimination?” If you’ve answered “yes” to any of these questions, *Ouch! Your Silence Hurts* is the video for you. Most of us want to speak up when we see others stereotyped, disrespected or demeaned. But often we stand by silently because of discomfort or the fear of saying the wrong thing or not wanting to look like we can’t take a joke. Unfortunately, that silence can allow the disrespectful behavior to continue.

In her first book and video, *Ouch! That Stereotype Hurts*, Leslie opened the conversation about stereotypes and why people don’t speak up. She shared techniques to use when you hear others make biased or demeaning comments as well as how to recover when you are the one to make those comments. Now, in her follow up video, *Ouch! Your Silence Hurts*, Leslie continues the conversation about stereotypes by exploring more deeply the pivotal role of the bystander. “Often, verbal disrespect is not just an interaction between two people – it can be a group event. The bystanders create the audience or the context for the demeaning joke, slur or statement. So, the bystander is an important player in the scene and he or she has a choice to make, which affects the outcome. The bystander can speak up or can silently collude.” And a key message of her series is that “silence is often interpreted as support.”

Leslie’s new video is very emotional and will inspire conversations that are not always comfortable, but should be had anyway, especially in our organizations. *Ouch! Your Silence Hurts* challenges all of us by asking; “How will you personally respond next time you witness somebody being treated with disrespect?”

*Ouch! Your Silence Hurts* is part two in her powerful series about stereotypes. The DVD includes a 9-minute video, skill-builder exercises, leader's guide and a 1-minute trailer that can be used to introduce Ouch! to your organization. Both Videos, *Ouch! Your Silence Hurts* and *Ouch! That Stereotype Hurts* can be standalone training pieces. But when used together or in sequence, they will deliver an even more powerful impact. Leslie wants the viewer to "remember that one person taking action can inspire others to do the same." Her series on stereotypes can help all of us identify our own biases, explore ways to reduce them and work to communicate in more inclusive, bias-free ways. That's what her book and videos are about. Leslie wants all of us to "Go ahead – Use your voice! Speak up on behalf of respect."

For more information about Leslie Aguilar or to order her book and/or videos, visit [www.thediversitycenter.com](http://www.thediversitycenter.com). You can also learn more about the videos and see a complimentary online preview by visiting [www.learncom.com](http://www.learncom.com) or call Learning Communications at (800) 622-3610.

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