



**“If one has to submit, it is wasteful not to do so with the best grace possible.”**

***Winston Churchill***

## **Graceful Termination**

There are few things in life that can be more debilitating than losing one’s job – regardless of whether it was an individual’s termination or a mass lay-off. Many of us, including me, understand directly what it’s like to be terminated by a former employer – and believe it or not, it’s a difficult process for both sides – whether you’re on the delivering or receiving side of the equation. The silver lining, however, is that everything happens for a reason (per God’s plan) and, as we shared in our [Maccabeus Insight piece for December of 2021](#), perspective really is everything.

It’s truly sobering to think that roughly 50% (half) of new hires fail – that statistic runs the gamut from entry level positions to Executives to the very top C-Suite roles and across Boards of Directors. Now, just because some new hires are deemed as “failing” at a role, it doesn’t mean that all of those folks are terminated from their companies. Often, companies reassign folks that have been dubbed as “hiring misfires” rather than fully terminating the person. Many companies have learned that it’s a lot less expensive to reassign and, possibly, retrain people for another need in the company rather than completely severing the employer-employee relationship.

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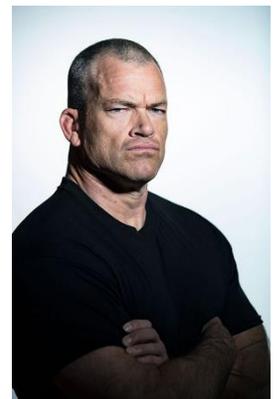
All too often, winning is the name of the game – especially in the Chief Executive Officer’s (CEO’s) role. Losing isn’t something that the world encourages very often and, unfortunately, too much focus can be spent focusing on the outcomes of a situation(s) rather than the journeys that are undertaken and the lessons that are learned along the way. Like NFL Hall of Fame football coach [Tom Landry](#) has said, “A winner never stops trying.” And the “trying” is where people (and companies) should be focusing.



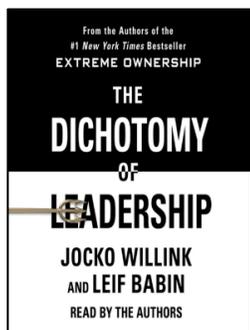
[Tom Landry](#)

The bottom line is an area that usually gets all the focus. Whether in school, at work, in a conversation, or in a story, too many of us leapfrog over the “journey” and just want to know the bottom line – the results. By focusing solely on the results, we can miss the valuable lessons that are key for learning and growing as individuals, teams, Families, groups, companies, etc. Which leads us to the point...

In Executive Recruiting (and in the business world in general), we at Maccabeus see it far too often where people on either side of the equation take a “pass-fail” approach. Meaning, either someone (or a Team of someone’s) fail to deliver the desired results and/or they fell short of their goal and/or objective. [Jocko Willink](#), an author, podcaster, and retired U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander (who was awarded the Silver Star and Bronze Star Medals for his service in and commanding of SEAL Team 3's Task Unit Bruiser), puts it quite bluntly in his book, “[The Dichotomy of Leadership](#)”. For Willink, “there is no growth in the comfort zone” and he’s quick to remind people from all walks of life that they are, “being tested by fire and pain.”



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“[The Dichotomy of Leadership](#)” by Jocko Willink and Leif Babin

In their *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* Bestseller, “[The CEO Next Door](#)”, [Elena Botelho](#) and [Kim Powell](#) found that their study (based on an in-depth analysis of 2,600+ leaders drawn from a database of 17,000+ CEOs and C-suite Executives which included 13,000 hours of interviews) reveals that much of what we hear about who gets to the top (and how they get there) is wrong. They found that while many CEOs set their sights on the C-suite at an early age, 70%+ of CEOs didn’t until much later in their careers. The study also found some revealing truths about CEO’s educations – including that only 7% of CEOs are Ivy League graduates and 8% graduate from college. The bottom line on their study showed that 45% of CEO candidates had at least one major

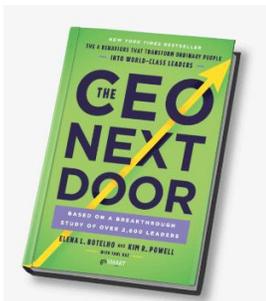
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career blow-up and, of those that got fired, 91% ended up finding a new position that was as good or better than their last one.



[“The CEO Next Door”](#) by [Elena Botelho and Kim Powell](#)

While the study by Botelho and Powell was eye-opening for many (earning the due to CMI Management Book of the Year 2019 Award), it’s what we at Maccabeus see at each and every client that we support. Executive Recruiting is a very inexact science and nobody in the search industry has a flawless record – whether at a top search firm or a boutique firm. Clients and Executives need to be honest that we all operate in a very competitive global economic environment where people can experience both the highest of high’s and the lowest of low’s – and, honestly, everyone should expect a bit of both across their career (again, like Willink’s comments on “being testing by fire and pain”). But that doesn’t mean that we remove God from the process. In fact, God is core to the process and those who honor Him, tend to be very successful. Companies need to always remember Who we’re truly working for – whether commending an Executive or terminating one – as we are all God’s Children.



[Chris Patton](#), CEO of [His Way at Work](#)

So, if we do find yourself in the difficult position of having to terminate an employee (including the CEO), there are some things that we need to focus on from a Judeo-Christian perspective. [Chris Patton](#) is the CEO of [His Way at Work](#) and the former President of his Family’s third generation of automotive dealerships, the [Mike Patton Auto Family](#). Chris leveraged his Judeo-Christian upbringing to bring Christian values into both of his CEO roles. Recently, Chris had [Bill Higgins](#) (Founder & Managing Director of MindWare, Inc.) guest post for [His Way at Work](#) on “[Six \(6\) Keys to Graceful Terminations](#)”; all of which of the following (from the article) are focused on dignity, value, and Grace:



[“Why Does Your Business Exist?”](#) by [Chris Patton](#)

1. **Be Personal:** If at all possible, meet with the person face-to-face. It’s terribly impersonal to receive this news over the phone or even via a video conference, and it’s easy to feel like the person delivering the news took easy way out. If the person resides in another city, telephoning and/or video conferencing may be the only way, but it must be the last choice. In [Matthew 18](#), Jesus instructs us to meet with a brother that has sinned against you in person. While the situation is different, the principle is the same.



2. **Be Honest:** There was a problem with the way some believers in the New Testament were welcoming those not walking in truth. John wrote to “the chosen lady” in [2 John](#) to warn her of this. He was kind, gentle, and affirming, but he also spoke the truth. Don’t mince words with the terminated individual. Let them know the decision has been made and the reasons for making the decision (e.g. performance issues, budget containment, or other valid reasons). This approach will ensure they’re not confused or think there is still a way to salvage their position. Don’t apologize. Don’t tell them everything will be okay. Don’t tell them they won’t have any trouble finding a new job. Don’t tell them they’ll feel better after they sleep on it. Don’t tell them how badly you feel about the decision. All of these can be viewed as condescending, even if said sincerely, since you still have a job. Assure them God is still at work, and He’s not finished with them yet.
  
3. **Be Gentle:** Paul discusses this principle in [Galatians 6](#) in the context of a believer caught in sin, but the same principle applies here, as well. In verse 1 of [Galatians 6](#), Paul says to restore the person “gently.” The word gently in the original has in mind the care and compassion of a doctor firmly but tenderly setting a broken bone. You need to be firm, but you also need to be gentle. Don’t rush roughshod over the person. Inform them of the decision, but be willing to listen to their pain, to their frustration, to their anxiety without feeling the need to change the decision; or, alternatively have an outplacement coach that will do this on your behalf.
  
4. **Be Affirming:** A termination can feel very demeaning to the individual being laid off. It’s like what they were doing wasn’t of value and/or like their time invested with the organization was wasted. Whatever the reason the person is being terminated, there is always something in them that can be affirmed. At one point they contributed something of value to the organization. Find that and reflect back to them the value of that contribution. Or identify what you see as strengths they have at the present and tell them about



those. If they're being terminated for performance reasons, be sure to let them know their performance is not what it once was, with examples to demonstrate your point, and that they still have something to contribute to another organization. [1 Corinthians 12](#) is a chapter devoted to this purpose; everyone in the body of Christ has a purpose and is of value (as it is in your organization). Mirror that back to the individual being laid off.

5. **Be Helpful:** Provide resources to help the person move on with their life. They may feel like it's the end of life as they know it when they hear the news, but you need to let them know they still have skills and abilities to contribute elsewhere. Be sure they understand that God has not deserted them just because they are now unemployed. When Jethro spoke to Moses in Exodus 18, he didn't just tell him he was not being as efficient as he could be, he also provided resources in the form of counsel on how to delegate some of the responsibility to others. Be sure the individuals impacted understand what their severance package includes (continued medical and other benefits, lump sum payments, continued salary period, etc.). Provide all details in writing so they can refer to them later after the shock wears off. Also review work completion expectations and plans to transition their projects. The person you are terminating requires resources to both affirm their Faith and provide practical assistance in moving forward.
6. **Be Open:** Survivors need to know what the future holds. Let them know why this action was necessary, and how it will enable the organization to move forward to achieving the goals that have been established. Let them know the resources you are providing those individuals laid-off in order to help them see that you're not dismissing people without caring for their future well-being. When Christ was preparing for the crucifixion and to leave His disciples He let them know what was going to take place, the resources they were going to receive in the person of the Holy Spirit, and how they were to move forward. In [John 14-17](#), we read how He helped them understand

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that, while things were not going to be the same with Him gone, they were going to move forward in power.

While terminations are sometimes necessary as economies shift, suppliers change, product lines are altered, and organizational objectives transition to reflect other changes, a termination does not have to be a demeaning, distasteful, and destructive experience. It can launch the impacted individual into a whole new adventure with God, but it needs to be handled sensitively, with grace, and with the Holy Spirit's guidance. As a Judeo-Christian Leader, Executives need to model the person of Jesus Christ in their organizations and ask themselves, "How would Jesus handle a termination?" Actually, He did. Read how He handled Judas in [Matthew 26:20-25](#) and you'll see He practiced what we've been discussing.

Maccabeus' Partners "Genesis-ed" from direct industry careers and actual working knowledge. It's through that knowledge, experience, and wisdom that we're able to maximize our own revelations of the Executive Recruiting process and minimize having to replace formerly placed Executives. We see each and every executive (person) as the Gift from God that they are and Maccabeus routinely works to get to know the Clients, Executives, and Executive's Families first-hand. Maccabeus understands what it's like to relocate for a new career challenge (including move Children and Grandparents) – to be going to a new Company starting a new job in a new town/city possibly in a new state/country (and away from extended Family) with potential new local and national customs and ways of doing business, etc. We've worked across the U.S. States and in many countries in North and South America, Asia-Pacific, the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and Australia/New Zealand. We know how critical a new hire is and what success and/or failure in that role means first hand.

The highest integrity is key to all that we do at Maccabeus. We report first and foremost to God and then to our Clients and Executive Candidates. We are 100% transparent in our approach on all fronts. We tell everyone what we know and don't try to "force" deals to take place. We fundamentally Trust that, if we are Faithful in working as hard as possible on our parts, that the outcomes that are meant to happen will. Maccabeus leverages many different approaches; including the principles found in "[Why Does Your Business Exist?](#)" by [Chris Patton](#).



"Maccabeus is a big advocate for Executives and is not just interested in placing someone for the position but also in the right fit for the Company, the Executive, and the well-being of the Executive's Family.

The whole process goes very smoothly and feels just right from the beginning to the end."

[Dr. Andreas Reger](#), President, [BBB Industries](#)

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In addition to [“Why Does Your Business Exist?”](#), Maccabeus leverages the “1.5-3 Principle”. By being straight-forward and honest with everyone, our Clients and Candidates typically meet each other within 1.5 – 3 weeks of starting a search project. Clients should also expect to complete searches with Maccabeus within 1.5 – 3 months. While our “shock-and-awe” approach in the market is industry leading, we continue to run “through the finish line” continuing to bring more Candidates to the Client throughout the process.

Maccabeus doesn’t believe in any hidden, indirect, or uptick costs. Clients pay Maccabeus a fixed fee for an Executive search project. The fee is divided into a working retainer on the front end of the search (billed in multiple installments) to support our efforts in the market on Clients’ behalf(s); virtually eliminating surprises.

Maccabeus believes in God, our Firm, and our process. We will continue to work on the search as long as it takes and will replace Executives should something change on the Client’s end(s) for up to the replacement terms needed by our Clients. Finding the right Operating and Board Executives takes a tenacity to see through the surface of experiences and to look into the intangibles behind who a leader really is as a person. Maccabeus is committed to and has a strong track record of recruiting and placing to top Executives (for all functional areas) and Board Directors and Chairs across a diverse landscape of industries. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with you and your Board.

*“Grace alone brings about every good work in us.” – St. Augustine*