

## Something About You Reminds Me Of A Kung Fu Movie

### Shek Kin, Is That You?

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Kung Fu Movies! Do you remember any of the classic Bruce Lee action-packed movies? Well, those aren't the movies alluded to in the title. Instead, I'm talking about the movies that comprise the playlists of the martial arts midnight marathon on small cable networks, movies like Five Fingers of Death, A Fist Full of Talons, and Ten Brothers of Shaolin. As you can see, these aren't necessarily Academy Award winners. But here's a spoiler alert, if you aren't careful your direct reports might cast you as the lead charter in a similar type of cinematic catastrophes.

The hallmark of these often low-budget, high-animation, and talent-dearth movies was the incredibly poor matching of the video and audio tracks. What people in the film and broadcast industry refer to as dubbing. Dubbing is the process of recording and/or replacing voices following the original filming. Because many of the early Kung Fu films used actors who didn't speak English, and the movies were dubbed to be viewed around the world, this mismatching of audio to video was quite common.

While the loyal Kung Fu aficionados will endure the agony of sound effects and words that are incongruent with the picture on the screen, your direct reports and associates are not so patient and not so loyal when it comes to incongruence in your leadership behaviors.

Your direct reports are constantly evaluating the alignment of your proclamations and your practices. Nothing is more powerful than a leader who says what he or she means and performs as promised. And nothing is more distracting and disorienting than a leader whose actions are antithetical to his or her announcements. When the direct reports detect even the slightest deviation, it's assured that distraction, demoralization, and disorder quickly follow.

Here are 6 strategies to ensure your leadership audio and video remain aligned and congruent:

**Know What You Believe** - It is impossible to align your deeds and declarations if you are unsettled and indecisive regarding your beliefs and values. Values clarification is fundamental to congruence as a leader.

**Highlight Your Intentional Congruence** – Go out of your way to make those in your sphere of influence aware of your intention to be congruent. It helps them see even the simplest or smallest of examples of congruence as links in a long chain instead of random isolated incidents.

**Define What You Want To Communicate** – Being clear regarding the message you want the team to hear and retain helps you also identify the actions that could complement the communication.

**Compliment Others On Their Congruence** – As one of the most brilliant strategies to promote a culture of congruence is complimenting and rewarding others for their displays of congruency. The law of reciprocity will kick in, and once your team knows you are watching them, they will pay additional attention to how your actions and words match up.

**Get Feedback Often And From A Variety Of Sources** – Intention is good; impact is king. Check in with others to get a sense of their experience of your level of congruence. Make sure your sources come from various departments, divisions, and levels.

**Proactively Communicate The Reason For Deviation** – Of course, in a dynamic and demanding world - things change. If for any reason you find yourself committed to making a decision that is inconsistent with your stated course of action, proactively communicate your rationale. This will help to minimize some of the negative fallout.

The producers and directors of early Kung Fu films emphatically, but erroneously, embraced the philosophy espoused by former President George H. W. Bush, "Read my lips." Perhaps they should've heeded (as should each of us in leadership roles) the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, "I can't hear you. What you do speaks so loud that I cannot hear what you say."

**Leadership Lesson:** In the old Kung Fu flicks the incongruence of the video and audio was entertaining - for most, and accepted as par for the course. But in leadership, incongruence is not entertaining, amusing, or the key to building a cult following. In leadership, congruence is a necessity! When a leader's words and works diverge, the resulting confusion and frustration invariably erode efficiency, productivity, and profitability.

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