

REPRIMANDS

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An important aspect of a reprimand is that it be CORRECT. In all traditional structures, correctness is determined by *consensus*. This means that private reprimands risk being unauthoritated power trips rather than corrections of non-constructive behavior.

(Golly, does this mean that I am reprimanding the posting of reprimand messages on the bboard. Let's see: is the information that was posted correct, consensually validated and consistent? ...)

In a team environment, reprimands cannot be uni-directional. Basically, it's this way: if a higher authority sees fit to reprimand a subservient, then *the higher authority is at fault* for not being an authority (Yes, the Reagan syndrome). If, on the other hand, the responsibility is bi-directional, then we need mechanisms for sending reprimands upward in the decision tree.

This is all from Great Volumes of Teaching Wisdom. Teachers cannot blame students for poor performance without condemning the teaching itself. (Corollary: management cannot reprimand staff without condemning the management.)

The issue, folks, is *locus of responsibility*. Don't be buffaloed into thinking it's your fault. If someone is bitching at you, its equally their fault.

All reprimands must be accompanied with solutions to the *mutual* problem if they are to be taken seriously. From this light, the reprimand belongs to the company as a whole, and should therefore be public. (Yes, I will post a complaint whenever someone advocates secrecy.)

When are reprimands appropriate? Maybe when someone acts without authorization, to the detriment of the corporate body. The prototypical case is stealing, followed closely by lying to achieve local gain. These too are public issues, otherwise the judicial system would be secret.

So, if you find yourself being reprimanded:

1. Determine if the reprimander knows that he is addressing himself.
2. Determine if the content at fault has been officially delegated as your responsibility.
3. Distribute the blame accordingly.