

## Columns

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### Your Bold Action

*Ellen C. Wells*



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A bold action is half of success.

That's what a recent fortune cookie has assured me, at least. And the more I mull it over, I can't really argue. Not to get too political here, but we'd all agree our incoming President had some pretty bold campaign moves, right? And he's the one getting the keys to the castle.

Thinking on it a bit more, I have executed one or two bold actions myself, when I was younger. Like the time I said no to a proffered cigarette when I was hanging out with friends after school. Or the time I informed the science teacher a few someones were cheating on a test when she had stepped out of the room. You might call that tattling. I call that upholding a code of human decency. Whatever we tag it, I'd say it was pretty bold of

me. (They never did beat me up in the parking lot like they had threatened.)

When I think back on some of the turning points in my life, those two examples are usually front and center as bold actions I took to head down the path to success. I thwarted the status quo. I opted to take action rather than have action happen to me (acquiescing to the cigarette, allowing cheating to happen). Oh sure, I've taken some bold actions that led me down the complete opposite path, as well. Who hasn't? (This is where you cock your head to one side, think about that time you did that thing that wasn't so great, wince a bit, and then acknowledge I am correct.)

It's January—a time for new beginnings. Rather than sticking to that typical New Year's resolution list, liven things up a bit. Consider stepping outside your norm and taking a bold action. Here are a few suggestions:

- 1. Raise your minimum wage to meet staffing needs.** Current federal minimum wage is \$7.25, perhaps slightly higher in your state or community. Talk to your current workers and ask if they're having trouble making ends meet. And help them do something about it.
- 2. Offer paid family leave.** The U.S. is one of just two developed countries that don't mandate paid maternity leave. Would offering family leave to mothers, fathers and parents of newly adopted children help you hire

and/or retain valuable employees?

**3. Sell differently.** No one wins in the race to the bottom. You can't compete with the box stores on price. Rather, sell on service. It's like that Coke Zero "and?" commercial: We'll sell you this plant and ... our service or expertise or our amenities or ... And it's not for free, either. Give your customers a valid reason to pay more for that plant and that something else the big boxes can't offer. Sell differently, and maybe you'll be able to finance the first two items above.

**4. Turn to a different channel.** Or pick up a different paper. Or take a different route across town. Or talk to someone new. Or go on vacation to a different spot. My point is to get a different perspective. There can be so much safety in sameness, and that safety can turn around and bite you in the bum. Seeing what's on the other side could lead to a better understanding of Nos. 1 and 2.

**5. Couch it in compassion.** The biggest, baddest, boldest action of all is one that is taken with no other intention than to express compassion, a word which has its Latin origin in "to suffer together." One of life's greatest privileges is to have a surplus that allows you to share someone's burden. If you've got it, choose to give it.

They are suggestions, of course. You're welcome to be bold in any way that suits you. And we all have our own ways of showing it. But folks, we're older now. Take the bold actions that don't make you wince thinking about it years from now. **GP**