

Preface

During the final decade of the 20th century, *empowerment* became one of the most frequently used words in management. Unfortunately it also became one of the most misused concepts. Empowerment is not about making others more powerful; we really don't have that effect on others. Instead it is about making organizations both more effective and better places in which to spend major parts of our lives. It is about creating environments that promote high performance and high levels of appreciation among individuals.

With this book, we'd like to set the record straight. To inspire a deeper study of empowerment beyond the buzzwords. To show how you can bring the special quality of empowerment to your workplace. To illustrate that empowerment is not about managers losing power but about creating organizations in which everyone, including managers, gains power. To demonstrate how empowerment helps managers become even better leaders. To clarify that employees don't wait with bated breath to be empowered; they simply want to do a better job and enjoy their work in the process. To outline how managers and employees can grow on the job, become more knowledgeable and therefore more employable, and thus become fully empowered.

Together, then, everyone in the organization has something to gain by creating more empowering workplaces. Empowerment doesn't create narrowly focused gains for one individual or group; it does create far-reaching mutual gains for all.

Achieving those far-reaching—and long-lasting—gains is what this book is all about. We share with you the how-to of empowerment, and we expect you to share the techniques with

others. We share with you some fictitious characters whose empowering experiences are based on real-life examples, and we expect you to apply what you learn from them. We share with you what we know empowerment *is* and what we know it *does*. We expect you and your organization to *be* empowering and to *do* empowering things that raise the bar even higher and set new standards for us who aspire to be empowered.

After all, empowerment is about mutual influence, shared knowledge, and the creation of power. We look forward to sharing them with you.

Acknowledgments

Although we are grateful to a many people whose work or ideas motivated us, we are most grateful to our families. Ken's wife Cathy and children Kyra, Kenyan, and Jackson and Mimi's husband Max gave us their unquestioning and enthusiastic support throughout—and served as our inspiration on more than one occasion.

John Woods of CWL Publishing was helpful throughout the book's development, and we're thankful for his expertise. Robert Magnan, editor at CWL, did a fine job of editing the final manuscript.

Without Terry Armstrong, an extraordinary organizational development professional, this book might never have happened. Believing in the power of shared creativity and knowledge, Terry introduced Ken and Mimi, and for that we are in his debt.

Of course, we'd have had no reason to write this book at all were it not for those of you who work every day to improve your organizations and the lives of the people they affect. We hope that reading this book will speed you on your way to both personal and organizational empowerment.

Special Features

The idea behind the books in the Briefcase Series is to give you practical information written in a friendly person-to-person style. The chapters are short, deal with tactical issues, and include lots of examples. They also feature numerous boxes designed to give you different types of specific information. Here's a description of the boxes you'll find in this book.



These boxes do just what they say: give you tips and tactics for being smart as an empowering manager.



These boxes provide warnings for where things could go wrong when you're trying to implement empowerment.



Here you'll find how-to hints to make the empowering journey go more easily.



Every subject has its special jargon and terms. These boxes provide definitions of these concepts.



Want to know how others have done it? Look for these boxes.



Here you'll find specific procedures you can follow when trying to establish an empowering environment.



How can you make sure you won't make a mistake when managing? You can't, but these boxes will give you practical advice on how to minimize the possibility.