

# One Enchanted Leader



**By Melanie Lockwood Herman**

Executive Director

**Resource Type:** Risk eNews

**Topic:** General

“Not every enchanting person has your best interests at heart. Resisting enchantment, therefore, is a valuable skill that requires avoiding tempting situations, looking far into the future, and finding a devil’s advocate.” — Guy Kawasaki, [Enchantment: The Art of Changing Hearts, Minds, and Actions](#)

I was pleased to learn that some of the readers of this eNews experienced a sense of relief upon learning that they are not alone in their quest for greater patience. The application of patience to the workplace seemed to resonate with readers who wear a variety of hats in their respective nonprofit organizations. This week I’m enjoying an easy-to-read book that is chock full of practical insights. And unlike some authors who save the “ah ha” moments until the concluding chapters, [Enchantment](#), by Guy Kawasaki offers insightful morsels beginning with the book’s Introduction.

According to Kawasaki, “enchantment” is what happens when a leader *inspires* a change of heart as well as specific mission-directed action. As a manager in a nonprofit you arguably have the authority to direct your subordinates to take action. But do you inspire your subordinates and peers to see things differently and act accordingly?

The author explains that “Enchantment transforms situations and relationships. It converts hostility into civility. It reshapes civility into affinity.” As I read Kawasaki’s take on “enchantment,” I realized that enchantment is more than charisma, or the ability to persuade others to do something they are disinclined to do. Enchantment is about gaining trust, broadening a narrow perspective, and inspiring those around you to help shape and advance the mission of your nonprofit. In our increasingly complex and fiercely competitive world, becoming a leader who enchants others may be well worth the focus and reflection required to do so.

Kawasaki describes a number of situations when leaders are likely to find “enchantment” invaluable, including: *when there is a need to overcome entrenched habits*. Whether you’re looking at enterprise risk issues from the CEO’s office or the board table, or operational risks through the lens of a CFO, COO or department manager, you have no doubt encountered a few employees and volunteers with entrenched habits. Common examples from the nonprofit world include:

- **Refusing to generously share information with co-workers, subordinates or stakeholders.** Despite the proliferation of literature on the imperative of transparency and the countless management books touting open communication as the cornerstone of effective work relationships, some

within your nonprofit may continue to treat information as a precious commodity that loses its value when shared.

- **Believing that since something has never happened before, it won't happen in the future.** Maybe... maybe not. The safer, smarter approach (if your nonprofit's mission is relevant) is to imagine what has never happened, but could and plan accordingly.
- **Loyalty to the plans, strategies and approaches of a bygone era.** Memorializing the past in a photographic archive is a nice touch. Refusing to update the nonprofit's approach to board recruitment, orientation and even how board meetings are conducted keeps the nonprofit's mission and prospects for success in a perpetual time warp. It is hard, if not impossible to advance when you're consuming precious human and other resources revisiting the same battles, frustrations and stumbling blocks.

Kawasaki believes that by tapping the principles of "enchantment" one can overcome the most strident resistance to change and become the person others will want to follow, support and collaborate with. His thought-provoking tips (illustrated with examples), include tell stories, use images, harmonize objections, and focus on a wide array of influencers. Many nonprofit sector leaders I encounter in my travels seem increasingly aware that inspiring change requires a diffused, constantly evolving strategy rather than a laser like focus on a single target. Whether we're facing resistance on the board, opposition on the management team, or rebellion in the volunteer ranks, a light touch that can be calibrated to suit the audience is a must when leading a mission-motivated organization through a period of change.

Kawasaki acknowledges in [Enchanted](#) that just as becoming an enchanted leader can serve an organization's mission well, learning to resist enchantment may be required from time to time to protect an important mission. He invites readers to create a simple checklist of factors to consider when "faced with an enchanting proposition." The list of provocative factors to ponder includes:

- If I waited a week, I'd still make the same decision.
- A year from now, this decision will still be a good one.
- I'm fully aware of the total cost of this decision.
- If no one could see that I was doing this, I would still do it.
- If everyone could see that I was doing this, I would still do it.

Whether you're considering how to improve your overall effectiveness as a leader, or evaluating how best to lead during a time of unprecedented change, I invite you to take a few minutes to reflect on whether you lead by changing hearts and inspiring action or lead by wielding your official authority. If your approach as a leader leans towards the latter and your results often fall short of your aspirations, Guy Kawasaki's new book may be a helpful source of inspiration.

*Melanie Lockwood Herman is Executive Director of the Nonprofit Risk Management Center. She welcomes your ideas about any risk management topic, feedback on this article and questions about the Center's resources at [Melanie@nonprofitrisk.org](mailto:Melanie@nonprofitrisk.org) or 703.777.3504. The Center provides risk management tools and resources at [www.https://nonprofitrisk.org/](http://www.https://nonprofitrisk.org/) and offers [consulting assistance](#) to organizations unwilling to leave their missions to chance.*