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Apples Are Square

*“We must always change, renew, rejuvenate ourselves;
otherwise we harden.”*

GOETHE

SO, WHY SQUARE FRUIT?

“Value the small voice inside that tells us to do the right thing,” says Christopher Zorich, a former defensive linemen for the Chicago Bears and the Washington Redskins. At the height of his professional football career, when he was making millions of dollars, what did he spend his money on? Lots of bling? Fast cars? Faster women? Mansions? Other kinds of conspicuous consumption? No, he established The Christopher Zorich Foundation in honor of his mother. The purpose of the foundation is to feed and help needy neighborhood children and their families. Then, when his football days ended, he went back to school to earn his law degree to help manage the affairs of the foundation.

Our book title was taken from this inspiring anecdote. Chris reflects on his boyhood years:

“My mom had to go through some rough circumstances, but she always kept a positive attitude. We never had a motto in the house or anything. I learned by watching her and seeing

how she was able to turn a negative into a positive. Sometimes we didn't have food in the house, so we would either not eat that evening, or we would go to the local supermarket. It closed at 9:30 PM. We'd search through the dumpsters for food, and look for rotten apples and stuff like that. We kind of made a joke about it sometimes, but I didn't know apples were round until I was older. I thought all apples were square because my mom would take a knife and cut or square off the bad spots. Then, we would sit and eat our squared apples."

Zorich's life certainly reflects lessons from his mother. No pithy sayings, no clever mottos, no bumper sticker morality. He lives his and his mother's values through his actions.

"Squared apples" symbolically stand for a new way to lead in the workplace and a new way to measure success—both personally and professionally. While Chris Zorich's mother took rotten apples and literally reshaped them into something edible and appealing, we, as a society, need to take bruised work environments and reshape them into dynamic, inclusive, and collaborative organizations.

Likewise, we need to re-examine the central core within our own personal life. Is the core selfish or selfless? Is our primary motivation to achieve material gains for ourselves and control the people around us? Is our orientation geared towards using people or getting the most out of them for themselves as well as for the good of the organization? Serving others, helping others, and inspiring others to bring out their inner core of strengths and talents is what the new definition of success is all about.

THE NEED TO CHANGE

During the next 25 years, organizations will have to undergo revolutionary change. There is a critical need for a fundamental shift in leadership, driven by an equally critical need for imaginative thinking about the meaning of success. In the workplace of the past, leaders tended to be authoritarian, aggrandizing, and arrogant. Future