

INTRODUCTION

This is not a textbook.

There are plenty of them out there, if that's what you're looking for. Richard Rubin, a mentor and my first library school professor, wrote the classic *Human Resources Management in Libraries: Theory and Practice*. You could read that if you're looking for a classic, traditional textbook. Actually, I credit this disclaimer to Rubin, who is also Kent State University's library school dean, because he once opened a human resources lecture I attended by saying, "I am not a lawyer. I am not a lawyer. I am not a lawyer."

Well, this is not a textbook.

What this *is* is a workbook . . . and you're going to do the work. Within these pages is a compilation of trusted, experienced, and knowledgeable advice in areas you'll need to master in order to be a better boss. If you have people around to help you develop your skills, you're as lucky as I've been. But the more I travel around the country and talk to library leaders who are floundering, the more I've come to realize that not everyone is that lucky.

And here's one more thing that this book is *not*. It's not just one person's (my) opinion of what makes a person a good boss. Over the past twenty-five years I've collected, written, spoken, presented, whispered, conferenced, published, and otherwise handed down advice from some leading experts on libraries, management, leadership, and (now, don't roll your eyes if this sounds corny) life. It's all here.

And what do you have to contribute to attain success? Just one hour a week.

That's it. But, simple as that sounds, it's nonnegotiable. And, hey, I'm really doing you a big favor. If you haven't heard by now, managers, leaders, bosses *never* plan time in their schedules to just stop working and think. And we need to. All of us. So by the time you finish this workbook, you're not only going to be a great (or better) boss, you will have also developed the phenomenally productive habit of setting at least one hour aside every single week to think, reflect, and plan and, as a result, you're going to continue getting better all the time.

How does it work? It's easy. Start by getting out your calendar, whether you write it down, memorize it (oh, those were the days), store it online, or chip it in

stone. The first thing you *have* to do is block off one hour a week to work through this book. Every month's topic, every week's readings, even your homework exercises are going to help you develop the skills you really need in your job. So frame out a schedule to get through this workbook, get it down, get it in writing, get it in place, even if you have to move some sessions around because something comes up. A piece of advice: don't try to read through the whole book at once. It won't be as much fun, you won't really do the thoughtful work you need to do, and, well, it just isn't that easy.

Give yourself time to learn. There's a lot you have to think about. If being a great boss was just pushing papers around, anyone could do it. Give yourself this year and then, when you feel better about yourself, you can start helping someone else.

In the end, we all win as our libraries improve.

In these pages, week by week, you'll be asked to consider just about every aspect of a boss's job. You'll just think about some, you'll read about others, and then you'll apply it all in the exercises that follow each section.

Wait a minute. Don't even *try* to argue that you don't have the time for this process. Most of us, prob-

ably all of us, *waste* at least one hour each week doing something we don't need to do, redoing something someone else already did, or just cutting a day short here or there. If you absolutely, positively can't find this time, then give up a lunch hour or come in early once a week. Or, if you must, work at home, on your own time.

You'll grow. You'll come to feel that all the authors and speakers and teachers within these pages are friends of yours, just like mentors with offices right down the hall. All of their shared wisdom and valuable advice will come back to you right when you need it and, best of all, your staff—and your customers—will see you become a stronger, more effective, and happier boss.

Write in this book as you go. (I know that's not easy for librarians, but really, it's okay.) Tuck copies of articles in the pages. Send excerpts to friends and to new bosses or those who could use a refresher. Share what you're learning with your colleagues. Have fun.

Someone someday will be talking about the time they spent working for you. Maybe they'll be counseling someone who is thinking of applying for your staff. "Don't worry about the drive or the pay or even the job," they'll confide, "just take it! It's worth it just to work for such a great boss!"