

*Advance Praise for*

## THE 4TH SECRET OF THE ONE MINUTE MANAGER

“This book will help any leader understand how to effectively increase their own self-worth, while developing a culture of honesty and integrity-based communications.”

—John Assaraf, founder of OneCoach, Inc., author of *Having It All* and coauthor of *The Answer*

“This powerful little story gives us a strong message about true leadership, whether you are the CEO, management, or a sales rep. This message is critical in building a thriving business with people who trust, appreciate each other, and understand that the good of all is, ultimately, the good of the company.”

—Lucinda Bassett, CEO of Midwest Center for Stress and Anxiety, Inc., and author of *From Panic to Power*

“*The 4th Secret of the One Minute Manager* is a great read for those who think they’re perfect AND those who know they’re not.”

—Heather B. Bauer, RD, CDN, founder of nu-train nutrition counseling center and coauthor of *The Wall Street Diet*

“I use the wisdom of *The 4th Secret* in teaching my graduate students who want to manage political

campaigns. If these concepts can work in politics, they will work anywhere!”

—Bob Beckel, political strategist and coauthor of *Common Ground*

“The best time to have learned this secret is many years ago; the second best time is NOW. I’m so, so very glad I read this book!”

—Bob Burg, coauthor of *The Go-Giver*

“I cannot begin to tell you how many times I quote *The 4th Secret of the One Minute Manager* and all I have learned from it. It really has affected my management style and the corporate approach at Colin Cowie Lifestyle. I have watched so many of my employees blossom and grow because of it.”

—Colin Cowie, author, television personality and celebrated designer

“The real value of *The 4th Secret* is what comes next: Without taking responsibility, you can’t fix the problem, and you probably won’t learn anything.”

—Robert Engler, M.D., professor of medicine emeritus, cardiovascular research consultant

“Whether you’re an entrepreneur or corporate executive, *The 4th Secret* is a MUST READ! I’d call this one of the MOST important secrets to succeeding in business.”

—Cameron Johnson, author of *You Call the Shots*

“I will use this sage, practical advice, and hope everyone else will do the same. Teach this method to your loved ones, friends and everyone else whose lives you touch.”

—George Pratt, Ph.D., chairman, psychology,  
Scripps Memorial Hospital, La Jolla, California,  
and coauthor of *Instant Emotional Healing*

“Thank you, Margret McBride and Ken Blanchard, for turning on a lot of lightbulbs!”

—Lynn Schenk, California congresswoman (fmr.)

“There are few things as liberating as the willingness to freely admit a mistake. And what could be simpler? Blanchard and McBride have provided us with how to say those three little words that mean so much: ‘I was wrong.’ Everyone could benefit from *The Fourth Secret!*”

—Susan Polis Schutz, cofounder of Blue Mountain Arts, author of *To My Daughter With Love on the Important Things in Life*

“We are all managers: managers of others, managers of ourselves—professionally and personally. *The 4th Secret of the One Minute Manager* guides the reader through an easily applicable process that results in honesty and integrity for the everyday manager.”

—Gayle Tauber, cofounder of Kashi Cereal Company

“This is a very important and elegant parable. With the realistic admission to ourselves and to others that we have made a mistake, humanity becomes wiser.”

—Marshall Thurber, founder of the Positive Deviant Network

“I have never met anyone who didn’t have moments where an apology wasn’t in order. Not just any apology will do, however. *The 4th Secret* gives clear and compelling insights into the wrong way and correct way to apologize. It is an amazing and simple rebound strategy when our words or actions have brought harm to others.”

—Mick Ukleja, founder of the Ukleja Center for Ethical Leadership, California State University, Long Beach; and coauthor of *Who Are You and What Do You Want?*

“The most compelling thing about this book is the emphasis it puts not only on the importance of honestly confronting a mistake but taking responsibility and changing behavior—not just words but the actions.”

—Mary Lindenstein Walshok, associate vice chancellor, University of California, San Diego

“As a teacher for the San Diego County juvenile court and community schools, I have daily contact with children and parents unable to effectively communicate with each other. Families will benefit from reading this

book together: They will learn a powerful method for maintaining emotionally healthy relationships.”

—Trudy Atchison, M.A. Ed.

“*The 4th Secret* offers timeless lessons on facing reality. This simple advice is priceless.”

—Rosanne Badowski, executive assistant to Jack Welch and author of *Managing Up*

“It’s a must-read. Any person in any type of relationship—marital, filial, or professional—has to read this book. The story of Lincoln’s apology will be an example to me for the rest of my life.”

—Joel Bauer, vice chairman, Department of Surgery, Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York

“*The 4th Secret of the One Minute Manager* is a book that can change your life. It can even change the world. Buy it. Read it. Make it part of your life. You won’t be sorry!”

—Sheldon Bowles, coauthor of *Gung Ho!* and *Raving Fans*

“A quick, enjoyable read that has the power to accomplish a lasting and profound personal transformation. It’s a message that will resonate from the boardroom to the mailroom.”

—Roger Gittines, coauthor of *Managing Up* and *Don’t Fire Them, Fire Them Up!*

“The book you need to help repair business or personal relationships that otherwise might be lost.”

—Paula Hauer, former vice president, Dow Theory Letters, Inc.

“In *The 4th Secret* Ken Blanchard and Margret McBride give you not just the whys and the hows, but the actual words to use.”

—Marjorie Hansen Shaevitz, M.A., M.F.C.C.,  
author of *The Superwoman Syndrome* and *The Confident Woman*

“The beauty of *The 4th Secret* is its simplicity. It’s the golden rule expanded to fit every situation, and anyone can use it in their workplace or just to make their lives better.”

—Jeanne Jones, author of the syndicated column  
“Cook It Light”

“*The 4th Secret of the One Minute Manager* is an ode to humility. In concise, simple language it carries a profound message: that leaders must not be afraid to admit their mistakes and correct them instantly.”

—Laurence Kirshbaum, founder and president,  
LJK Literary Management

“Ken Blanchard and Margret McBride have created a simple yet powerful little book that helps us all bridge the gap between the ‘shoulda dones’ and the ‘dids’ of

day-to-day life. A quantum leap into compassion. You'll feel better for it."

—Kenny Loggins, singer, composer and author

"One of the most important success factors is the willingness to admit you were wrong. *The 4th Secret of the One Minute Manager* is a must-read."

—Paul J. Meyer, founder of Success Motivation, Inc., coauthor of *Chicken Soup for the Golden Soul* and author of *Unlocking Your Legacy*

"A business parable for our time that reminds us all of the values of integrity, honesty and self-respect. An invaluable resource for anyone who needs to say they're sorry."

—Robert J. Nugent, former chairman and CEO, Jack in the Box, Inc.

"McBride and Blanchard offer readers a simple yet effective way to understand and implement emotional healing in the aftermath of life's missteps."

—Stephen M. Pfeiffer, Ph.D., executive director of the Association for the Advancement of Psychology

"This marvelous book makes a compelling case for having one of the fiercest conversations known to man. This book shows us how."

—Susan Scott, author of *Fierce Conversations*

“Every businessperson needs to read this book. I am ordering copies for everyone I work and do business with. Most businesspeople do not realize how empowering a One Minute Apology can be in their professional and personal interactions.”

—Ivor Royston, M.D., managing member of  
Forward Ventures, San Diego, California

“*The 4th Secret of the One Minute Manager* is an instant classic and worthy companion to *The One Minute Manager*. It’s must-reading and especially timely in the post-Enron business world.”

—Sheldon Siegel, San Francisco attorney and  
bestselling author

“Our work and our world cannot do without the messages in *The 4th Secret*. Read this remarkable, beautiful and essential book. Get back to where you once belonged.”


—Stan Slap, international management consultant



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**Secret**  
of the  
 **One Minute**  
**Manager**

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The **4th**  
**Secret**  
of the  
 **One Minute**  
**Manager**<sup>®</sup>

A Powerful Way to Make  
Things Better

Previously published under the title *The One Minute Apology*

**Ken Blanchard**  
**and Margret McBride**



WILLIAM MORROW

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*To all of us who could have made life better at work  
and at home with a few well-timed and sincerely  
delivered apologies.*

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## *Foreword*

Spencer Johnson, M.D.

*The 4th Secret of the One Minute Manager* is the story of a corporate leader who, in the middle of these changing times, has made the kind of mistake we see all too often in the headlines of our newspapers.

It is easy to wonder how such smart and apparently successful people can get so far off track and lose sight of what's really important. Then, all too often, we see them compound their mistake by not acknowledging that they are wrong and not apologizing for what they have done in a way that makes good sense—by changing their behavior.

And of course if we watch the real-life drama unfold, the situation, uncorrected, usually gets worse. Yet how many of us can see ourselves in these stories—even though we may not have similar positions or have made similar mistakes? We have all invariably made mistakes of our own.

In the story that follows, you can discover what you can do in business or life to recognize when you have been wrong and to apologize to the people you harmed in a way that can make a bad situation into a better one.

Few things are more powerful than having the common sense, wisdom, and strength to admit when you've made a mistake and to set things right.

Ken Blanchard and Margret McBride show us a great way to deal with our mistakes successfully through the eyes of a young man who learns the secrets of a meaningful apology.

In the opening chapter, we see the company president's dilemma. Then the young man goes to The One Minute Manager's summer lake home, where he gains important insights into how he can help.

The young man's journey brings us to our own discoveries about what we can do to make things better, at work or at home, with our own one minute apologies.

If our leaders used this book to make needed changes, our world would be a better place to live in. But why wait? We can use *The 4th Secret of the One Minute Manager* ourselves to improve our *own* world and enjoy the tremendous results.



*The 4th Secret of the One Minute Manager* is more than a technique. And it is certainly more than just words. It is a useful way to think and live more successfully.

I hope you enjoy reading the story and benefiting from it as much as I have.

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**Secret**  
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## *The Journey*

**O**nce there was a bright young man named Matt who set out on a life-changing journey. A major crisis at the company where he worked troubled him greatly and sent him on his quest. Little did he know that he would soon learn about a secret power that was known to only a few, but would soon be valued by many people throughout the world.

It was a Friday before a three-day Fourth of July holiday weekend. An emergency meeting of the board of directors was in progress in the company's boardroom. Matt's boss, the photogenic and dynamic president and CEO, David J. Roberts, was speaking from the head of a long table.

At first, Roberts spoke confidently as he described the nature of the company's problem. However, his demeanor changed when members of the board responded with specific questions:

*How long has this been going on? When was the first time you learned of this? Why didn't you take action before now? Couldn't you have seen what the consequences of such actions might be?*

Refusing to take responsibility, Roberts became angry and defensive, which only made things worse. His voice became louder, his tone harsher, and his attitude more stubborn.

The board members had never heard Roberts talk like this before. When he stopped, everyone in the room was silent, stunned by what had just happened.

As Roberts's chief assistant, Matt Hawkins had been in many other board meetings at the president's request, but he'd never seen one like this. The president's behavior came as a shock, because Matt so admired him. As a matter of fact, right after Matt graduated from business school, Roberts had recognized his potential and gave him his first big opportunity.

What would happen now?

*Is this the beginning of the end?* Matt thought, feeling his heart sink. *How will our company survive?*

He knew that David Roberts needed to take a new course of action, or everybody's position would be in jeopardy. Indeed, even the future of the company was at stake now.

Matt listened as the chairman of the board addressed the president.

"Well, we've heard all of your excuses and rationalizations," the chairman began. "Frankly, I am unimpressed. If we don't resolve this quickly, our company's reputation will be ruined, along with our stock value.

“On Tuesday morning after the holiday weekend,” the chairman continued, “we will meet here again. Because of your history with us, you deserve an opportunity to set the record straight. Between now and then think carefully about what you plan to do and what you will say to us. If you haven’t come up with an effective way to restore our confidence, we may have to look for new leadership.”

The chairman abruptly called for adjournment. Visibly shaken, Roberts stood up to leave the room.

Matt rose from his chair and opened the boardroom door for his boss. As the president strode past, he signaled for Matt to follow him to his waiting car.

“Please leave word on my voice mail where you are going to be this weekend in case I need to reach you,” Roberts said. “If possible, I would like you to join me in my office at 7:00 A.M. Monday to prepare for Tuesday’s meeting.”

As the car sped away, a sense of dread came over Matt. He knew his boss was making a huge mistake. Everyone on the board seemed to see it except the president himself. Matt thought, *What can I do to help?*

Back in his office, Matt pondered the situation. What could his president possibly say to the board of directors Tuesday morning to avoid his downfall? *Where can I find the answers that will help him see things differently and set things right?* Matt wondered.

Then he remembered his late father's advice: "If you ever need help, call my good friend, Jack Peterson. There's a good reason everyone refers to him as The One Minute Manager. He's the only person I've met who can simplify complicated issues in a way you will know exactly what to do—and then be able to do it in a minute. He's my most trusted friend and he'll always be there for you."

Matt called Jack Peterson's office and learned that Jack was vacationing at his lake house with his wife, Carol, and their kids, Annie and Brad. Hearing that brought back many happy memories of when he and his family visited them every summer. Brad and Annie were almost like a brother and a sister to him. Yet it had been five years since his last visit and now he regretted not staying in touch.

Matt left a message on Jack's voice mail summarizing the problem and saying that he needed expert advice by Monday at the latest, but certainly understood if Jack didn't want to interrupt his vacation with his family.

Later at his apartment, Matt got the call he was waiting for.

“Of course, I’d love to help you!” Jack said enthusiastically. “There’s a powerful new secret I’ve been teaching people. It sounds like it’s exactly what your president needs right now. Once people put this secret into practice, they solve problems and improve relationships in ways they never believed possible.”

“I can’t wait to hear all about it,” said Matt.

“It’s more than we can cover in this phone call. Join us for the weekend! You’ll see your problem from a new perspective up here at the lake. Bring your golf clubs and we’ll have fun as we solve your problem. Carol just booked you on the 7:30 P.M. commuter flight and Brad is picking you up at the airport. Annie arrives tomorrow morning. We’re all excited about seeing you! Everyone here is an expert on the new secret—including Nana!”

Matt’s spirits soared and he immediately accepted.

“Regarding my new secret,” said Jack, “on your way here you might give this some thought:





*The Toughest Part  
Of Turning Around  
A Bad Situation  
Is Realizing  
And  
Admitting  
That  
You Were Wrong*

