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to educational
leaders

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THE ENCOURAGING LEADER

Two Things Leaders Do with Freedom



If you're a leader, more than likely you have a ton of freedom. And I've noticed that, when it comes to freedom, effective leaders do two things: Leaders focus on areas where they have freedom. Leaders don't waste time on roadblocks, challenges, and naysayers. They don't focus on restrictions. They know that these areas suck valuable time, energy, passion, and momentum out of their life and work. Instead, they invest time and energy where they will achieve the maximum return on their investment.

Leaders give their freedom away. As a leader, you have the freedom to decide the people and projects that get your time and attention and the time and attention of your team. You have the freedom to craft and communicate vision. To set and manage priorities. To determine the strategies that will best position your team and organization. To make sound decisions for your life, career, and team. Yet, if you are making progress, you have chosen to give that free-

dom away - to family, to your organization, to your team, to friends, to charity or ministry. Leaders are unselfish. They profoundly believe that it's better to give away their freedom than it is to seek more freedom

When my daughter, Madison, was 4, her and I began to engage in relatively substantive conversations. One Saturday morning we were spending time together and stopped by one of our rental homes. Although she's pretty quick, it took her several visits to the home to figure out that we actually own more than one home. And that we own a home that we don't live in. So she asked, Are we going to your other house? I told her that we were. She was quiet for a few seconds, then she asked, Is this house mine, too? Sure it is, I said. Everything that's mine is yours. She grinned from ear to ear as we stopped in front of the house.

Effective leaders communicate this to those that follow - Everything that's mine is yours! My time is yours. My mental energy is yours. My very freedom is yours. They selflessly invest - over and over, month after month, year after year. What would you add to the list?

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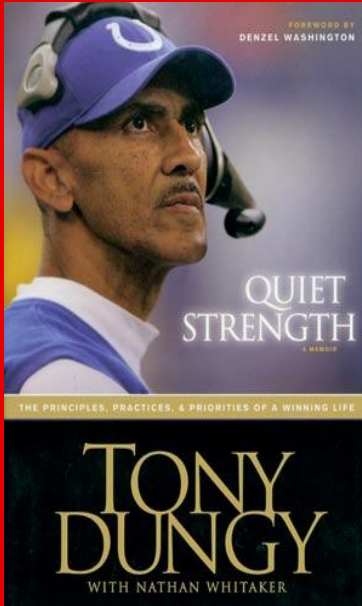
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CLIFF NOTES



"Do not go where the path may lead; go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

- "Champions are champions not because they do anything extraordinary but because they do the ordinary things better than anyone else." (Chuck Noll)
- The first step toward creating an improved future is developing the ability to envision it. Vision will ignite the fire of passion that fuels our commitment to do whatever it takes to achieve excellence. Only Vision allows us to transform dreams of greatness into the reality of achievement through human action. Vision has no boundaries and knows no limits. Our Vision is what we become in life.
- Excellence that feels it has to be proclaimed, by the mere fact of its proclamation admits the doubt of its existence.
- It's always easier to do things the wrong way, but it's always better to do things the right way.
- If you're going to be a good teacher, you can't just teach the A students. A good teacher helps everyone earn an A.
- Put people in positions to lead even if they don't need to do it today
- Be patient - opportunities don't always come on your time or when you are looking for them
- Prepare diligently so that when the opportunity arises you are ready
- "I don't think that God ever wants us to retire from relevance or significance."
- That's what this is all about. Touching lives. Building a legacy-not necessarily on the field but in those place that most people never see. Trying to be faithful in the position God had given me. I love coaching football, and winning a Super Bowl was a goal I've had for a long time. But it has never been my purpose in life."
- God's plans don't always follow human logic. I was finally a head coach, but it had happened in a setting and through a process that had made me believe I had not chance. We often can't see what God is doing in our lives, but God sees the whole picture and His plan for us clearly.
- There are possible options to correct this and get where we need to be. One solution is for me to change, to decide I'm wrong, and to change my vision for this team. That one is not going to happen. Another option is for you to change—put in more time, go harder, pay more attention to details. As a final option, we'll simply have to go find other guys. Your choice.
- How would your business do if you spent the amount of time on it that you spend on your wife and family?
- God's definition of success is really one of significance—the significant difference our lives can make in the lives of others. This significance doesn't show up in win-loss records, long resumes or the trophies gathering dust on our mantles. It's found in the heart and lives of those we've come across who are in some way better because of the way we lived.
- A Super Bowl win with Bucs would have been wonderful. I could have used that platform in a tremendous way. But I think my getting fired had an even greater impact. It's easy to be gracious when you're getting carried off the field in celebration. It's more difficult when you're asked to pack up your desk and your pass code doesn't work anymore. I think people look more closely at our actions in the rough times, when the emotions are raw and our guard is down. That's when our true character shows and we find out if our faith is real. If I'm going to call myself a Christian, I have to honor Jesus in the disappointments, too.

"When you can do the common things of life in an uncommon way, you will command the attention of the world."

George Washington Carver

FEATURED LEADER: **Andy Carter**

Director of Athletics—Northwestern Oklahoma State University

Andy Carter has previously served as athletic director at Missouri Baptist, Newberry College, and Armstrong Atlantic State. At each of his stops, he oversaw increased athletic success and fund-raising efforts. He is currently tasked with leading the NWOSU athletic program in their move to NCAA-Division II (from NAIA). He can be reached at avcarter@nwosu.edu.

Best advice you've ever received

To love God with all your heart, and love your neighbor as yourself

Phrase or quote you tend to use the most often

"I would rather fail miserably trying to be great, than to settle with being good"

Strategies to balance professional & personal life

I enjoy working and I enjoy doing my job well. The industry of intercollegiate athletics is based on relationships and relationship-building is a time-intensive endeavor. I feel like I failed at my attempt to balance this as a young professional. For me it clicked as I matured in my faith. Placing a priority on leading my family changed everything. You must be present to lead. When at work, I try to be 100% engaged in what is happening at work. When at home, I try to be 100% engaged in what is happening at home. I try to be present in the moment.

Biggest challenges your job presents

The biggest challenge I have faced is in changing a culture. Not from a bad or toxic culture with bad people, but from a stagnant culture with people who believe they are doing the right things. Overcoming the "good enough is best" mentality is difficult. Change is hard on everyone, but it is the only constant.

Leaders you've modeled yourself after

I am, like most, a product of several very unselfish people who graciously gave me their time and attention. I would not say that I have modeled my leadership after any one person. I have only tried to emulate the leader I desire to have leading me. I am fortunate to have had many mentors; my dad, numerous coaches, a few bosses, a couple of pastors, and a politician. I owe these people a debt of gratitude.

Books that have had a tangible and direct influence on your success

There have been several: 1. The Bible; daily reading keeps me grounded and prepares me for the daily fight. 2. "Heaven" by Randy Alcorn; reading this book not only taught me more about the temporary nature of life, but it renewed my hope in those things that are eternal. It changed me. 3. On the professional front, "The 5 Dysfunctions of a Team" by Patrick Lencioni; as we are constantly building teams in college athletics, this book easily identified those things that throw our teams off track. It has taught me to be able to see the root causes of the dysfunctions early on and to work on eradicating those root causes before they negatively affect our growth.

Proudest professional accomplishment

I have accomplished nothing on my own. However, I am most proud of partnering with outstanding coaches to invest in the lives of young people. We have a tremendous blessing of being able to use sport to educate young people.

How do you make sure that you keep your employees motivated, as well as on your payroll and not leaving for "greener pastures"?

I do not feel as though I need to motivate my staff or coaches. If they cannot keep themselves motivated, they are likely in the wrong industry. If people have to be motivated before they produce, they may not last very long. I do believe that everyone needs to be bolstered by encouragement. I believe the best way to encourage someone is to be there for them. When you invest yourself in other people's success, they are encouraged to perform at a high level. Any success I have had is because of others being able to produce.

CLARITY IN THE NEW YEAR

“There is nothing new under the sun,” Solomon wrote, and perhaps he is correct in stating that. But what I’m writing about today is ‘new’ to me and both alarming and calming at the same time. It all started as I read the book, *Masters of Management*. In one of the chapters the author presents a critique of the shareholder-value model of capitalism. Stakeholder capitalism, so the argument goes, is better for shareholders as well as for everybody else. “Contented workers deliver better services; contented customers make for a profitable company; put the two things together and you have a recipe for happy shareholders.”

As I read this, I found my head nodding in approval. And then the author warned, “The problem with this argument is that it risks dispensing with one of the great virtues of capitalism, which is clarity.” For days after reading that sentence the word “clarity” (clearness of thought) kept tumbling about in my mind.

Then, on December 23rd, I learned via Facebook that one of my good friends and a mentor to me had died suddenly of a heart attack. I mourned this loss and felt great sadness for his family. And then I realized. He was only a few years older than me.

My thoughts over the next few days ricocheted off both the joy of the season and the sadness of my friend’s home going. I realized, once again, the clarity that death brings. I started to think about my life more deeply than perhaps I ever have. At one point, my gratitude for being near family and

friends during Christmas 2011 grew so strong that I wept. As Melody Beattie, has written: *“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.”*

Gratitude turns confusion to clarity. And that clarity has led me, now age 60, to resolve the following, not just for 2012, but for the days remaining.

- As Scrooge proclaimed to the Ghost of Christmas Future, “I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year.” Thus, I will always strive in my behavior to demonstrate that:
- Giving is better than receiving. I have been given so much. I don’t need things as I used to need them. I will “use things and love people” not the other way around.
- Kindness towards others is always the right thing to do—even when others are not kind in return.
- I will listen more and say less. If I can’t say something nice about someone, I will remain silent. In conversations, I will “honor those who are absent.” Praise will be my new dialect replacing the dead language of criticism (constructive or otherwise).
- I will only offer advice to my adult children and to my grandchildren when asked. Each of them has his or her own life to live. Instead, I will

love them unconditionally, and make sure I hug each one of them each time I see them. “I love you!” will not just be a parting sentiment.

- I will make plans for my last days so that the burdens of making difficult decisions (financial and otherwise) will be removed from my wife and children.
- I will make each interaction with family members both positive and loving. I will work so that I might live—not live to work. My family members deserve both quantity and quality of my time. And when I am with each one of them physically, I will be with them emotionally and mentally as well. I will help my church and my community, but my family will come first.
- I will cherish each moment with my wife, being grateful for each day that we can spend together. I will put her needs above my own.

I will spend more time alone with God on a daily basis, asking Him to further clarify His plan for my life and for His help in keeping these resolutions.

Years ago, an old revivalist preacher who visited our congregation each summer would remark, “Well, so far I’ve noticed that if I live through Spring, I make it the rest of the year as well.” His comment always caused us to laugh. And yet, he knew that there were only so many “Springs” left for him. And so it is for all of us. I

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MAXWELL MOMENT

Persuasive or Manipulative?

All leaders are salespersons. Though they may not be peddling a product, leaders are selling a picture of what the future could be and should be. They seek to persuade others to buy-in to a particular vision.

Unfortunately, skepticism toward leadership abounds throughout society. Every year since 2004, Harvard's Center for Public Leadership, in conjunction with Merriam River Group, has compiled the National Leadership Index (NLI) to gauge the public's confidence in its leaders. In 2011 Americans' confidence in their leaders hit its lowest point since the NLI's inception. As a matter of fact, Americans have a lower opinion of their leaders now than they did immediately following the corporate scandals and financial meltdown of 2008.

All Leaders Are (Used Car) Salesmen?

Given how jaded people have become toward those in positions of authority, leaders face a stiff challenge in persuading others to link up with their vision. In today's climate people distrust the motives of leaders, disbelieve their promises, and are inclined to second-guess their decision-making. Increasingly, people perceive leaders as having the same detestable qualities as the stereotypical used car salesman: self-interestedness, underhandedness, and manipulation.

Leaders inevitably must convince others to support their vision and/or decisions, but how can they gain influence with followers who hold them in suspicion? In short, how can leaders be persuasive without being manipulative? Let's examine three primary ways in which leaders behave manipulatively, and then look at three alternative means of persuasion.

TACTICS OF A MANIPULATIVE LEADER

1) They misuse or abuse power

Leaders generally enjoy a positional advantage over their followers. That is, they have the authority to issue rewards or mete out punishments. Leaders abuse their power when they tilt the structure of incentives to secure personal advantages or to enhance their own prestige. For example, they may reward unethical behavior if it brings them financial gain, or they may leverage their power to sully the reputation of a subordinate who frequently disagrees with them.

2) They fabricate or withhold information

Leaders manipulate people through misinformation. The past decade has witnessed corporate scandals in which executives have fudged numbers or completely "cooked the books." Yet, most manipulation happens far more

subtly than financial fraud. Leaders may simply mislead their constituents by accentuating the positives of an arrangement while hiding its drawbacks.

For example, a used car salesman may not tell outright lies about the mileage or features of an automobile. However, he may cover up aspects of the vehicle's history such as accidents or flood damage. Hence, the resonance of the advertising slogan "Show me the Carfax!"

3) They prey on the emotions of others

Manipulative leaders generally are not blind to the needs of others. In fact, the most deceptive leaders are keenly aware of the wants and aspirations of their people, and they use this knowledge to control others. To increase their influence, they appeal to hopes and fears while downplaying reasoning and logic.

TACTICS OF A PERSUASIVE LEADER

1) They leverage power to serve and empower others.

All too often organizations treat their employees as if they should be thankful just to have a job. However, great leaders earn support by developing their people. Such leaders proactively serve as mentors, networkers, equippers, and coaches; they are always on the lookout for ways to empower employees to grow toward their potential.


2) They speak truthfully, even when the truth hurts.

In the long run, people trust leaders who help them discover the truth, even if it is uncomfortable initially. Often, the shortest path to a trusting relationship crosses through some feelings of discomfort. The truth isn't always pleasant. Leaders help people to get past temporary discomfort and to move toward decisions that will benefit them long-term.

3) They underpromise and overdeliver.

Eager to close a sale or secure a commitment, leaders have a bad habit of promising more than they can deliver. By overpromising, they create unrealistic expectations, set up others for disappointment, and ultimately lose respect. The best leaders have self-awareness of what they can offer, and they refuse to enter into agreements based solely on optimism or best-case scenarios. Leaders not only are dealers in hope; they also have the wherewithal to ensure that the hopes they engender are not disappointed.

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This month's "Featured Leader" is one of my former bosses when I was coaching at Newberry College. I enjoyed working for Andy Carter. Just as importantly, as someone that has a passion for leadership, I really watched him on a daily basis. I saw how he led, how he made decisions and how he conducted himself. No one is perfect, however, I saw first hand many leadership principles put into practice. One day when I am in an athletic administration position, it is my desire to be as good of a leader as Andy was to me. 
I hope that you enjoy **THE ENCOURAGING LEADER**.



FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ATHLETES MOMENT

When is the last time you felt an urgency to know if someone knows Jesus? A few years ago I was speaking at a week-long Fellowship of Christian Athletes Camp. Each night I would speak to the group of high school athletes about what it meant to be a Christian who happened to be an athlete. One night I finished with the question "are you ready to die today"? Later that night we took the boys from the camp to a water park and had a great time. At the end of the evening, everyone got out of the pool and each huddle leader counted his guys. Two groups were missing someone. After looking all over the park, they decided to check the pool. Two boys were found to have drowned in the deep end. I had a URGENT need to find out from their huddle leaders if the boys knew Christ. The next day I spoke to the group that now included many people from the town, including the lifeguards who were working at the pool. The boys were refugees from the earthquake in Haiti. One huddle leader said the boy in his group knew the Lord when he came. The other huddle leader was convinced that his boy gave his life to Christ the day before the accident. Do you have friends who still don't know Jesus as their Lord and Savior? How would you feel if a friend or loved one passed away and you never told them about Jesus? Don't take for granted that they'll be here tomorrow. The great commission is not a suggestion Christian coaches, it's a command. The Gospel is an URGENT message – don't assume it can be done another time. Coaches, who will your athletes most likely listen to when it comes to hearing the Gospel? Look in the mirror for the answer.

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