

Providing
insight and
encouragement
to educational
leaders

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THE ENCOURAGING LEADER



What if you were a fly on the wall in the break room? What if you were invisible and followed your subordinates around all day? What if you were in disguise and worked side by side with your employees all day long? Would you learn startling new revelations? Would you like what you heard? Would you be happy...frustrated...or sad? There actually is a television show that sets up these scenarios in "Undercover Boss" on CBS. I have only seen a handful of episodes as it is not one of my regular shows that I watch. Anyway, I saw an episode last week about the C.E.O. of Rally's/Checker's fast food restaurants that went undercover as a new trainee at three different restaurants. He was very adamant about having the best customer service and fastest fast food culture possible. He felt that his company was doing well...until he got a dose of the real

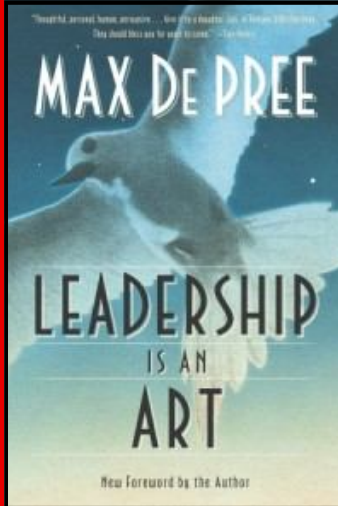
world of his restaurants. Through his undercover work, he discovered that there really was unsatisfactory training procedures—both for managers and regular workers; insufficient incentive plans; outdated equipment; and under-achieving stores. He even shut one restaurant down for a whole day so that they could get trained properly because he didn't want them going through the motions anymore. Because of this overall experience, he saw many things that needed to be changed. He also gave away about \$75,000 to employees. Even though he thought his company was doing the right things, he realized that he was out of touch with what was really going on. I don't eat at these stores and I am a die-hard Chick-Fil-A guy, but I was quite impressed with this C.E.O.'s sincerity and passion to improve his product and service even though it might be painful and costly. Do we have all the answers? Do we know exactly the best way to run our office...our company...our institution...in all situations? Would we be willing to change right away if we saw something that needed to be changed or would we wait until the next fiscal year...the next semester...the next billing cycle? If we truly want to provide the best service possible, isn't constant evaluation and change necessary?

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CLIFF NOTES



- Max, like his dad, believes in the rule of “abandoning oneself to the strengths of others.” Not just “expert” others—that is, not just world-class designers and people with university degrees, but (trusting the strengths of) all Herman Miller employees.

- Leaders have ideas

- James O’Toole (in the book’s foreword)—“I was given carte blanche to go anywhere and talk to anyone, managers and workers. The only problem

was that I couldn’t tell one from the other! People who seemed to be production workers were engaged in solving the “managerial” problems of improving productivity and quality. People who seemed to be managers had their sleeves rolled up and were working, side by side, with everybody else in an all-out effort to produce the best products in the most effective way.

- The signs of outstanding leadership are found among the followers.
- The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between the two, the leader must become a servant and a debtor. That sums up the progress of an artful leader.
- The measure of leadership is not the quality of the head, but the tone of the body. The signs of outstanding leadership appear primarily among

the followers. Are the followers reaching their potential? Are they learning? Serving? Do they achieve the required results? Do they change with grace? Manage conflict?

- Leaders can delegate efficiency, but they must deal personally with effectiveness.
- Most effective contemporary management process is participative management. It begins with a belief in the potential of people. Participative management without a belief in that potential and without convictions about the gifts people bring to organizations is a contradiction in terms.
- Many managers are concerned about their style. They wonder whether they are perceived as open or autocratic or participative. As practice is to policy, so style is to belief. Style is merely a consequence of what we believe, of what is in our hearts.
- To make a commitment, any employee should be able to answer “yes” to the following question: Is this a place where they will let me do my best? How can leaders expect a commitment from the people they lead, if those people thwarted and hindered?
- In some sense, every reader ‘finishes’ every book according to his or her experiences and needs and beliefs and potential. That is the way you can really own a book. Buying books is easy; owning them is not.
- Efficiency is doing the thing right, but effectiveness is doing the right thing.



COMMUNICATION & STRUCTURE:



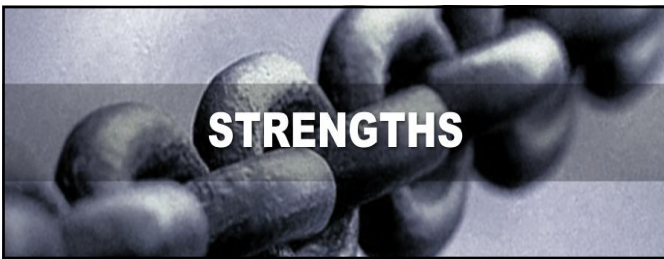
Having been involved in organizational leadership for more than 20 years, I am always intrigued by those things that either hinder growth or support it. It’s true – every organization is moving ahead or its falling behind.

The primary focus of my work has been organizational development. In fact, the companies and institutions where I served each experienced significant growth while I was there. Several experienced record growth. And more importantly, some have continued to grow since I transitioned to a new place of work.

There are **two things that have the most profound influence on whether an organization grows or declines...**

...**communication** and **structure**. And problems within companies are generally the byproduct of inadequate communication or structure (or both).

Communication problems often include mission, vision, or core values that are not clearly understood by ALL constituents. Inconsistent communication, conflicting messages, distrust, and lack of respect also rank among the top communication challenges. There are many more – many that you deal with on a daily basis.



Are You Playing to Your Strengths?

The man without a purpose is like a ship without a rudder—a wait, a nothing, a no man. – Thomas Carlyle

One of golf's immortal moments came when a Scotsman demonstrated the game to President Ulysses S. Grant. Carefully placing the ball on the tee, he took a mighty swing. The club

hit the turf and scattered dirt all over the president's beard and surrounding vicinity, while the ball peacefully waited on the tee.

Again the Scotsman swung, and again he missed. President Grant waited patiently through six tries and then quietly stated, "There seems to be a fair amount of exercise in the game, but I fail to see the purpose of the ball."

That humorous story serves to remind us that while many people are swinging; they are not connected to their purpose. It reminds me of the Peanuts cartoon in which Lucy is seen peering out the window with a sad face looking at the rain. Linus says to her, "Are you complaining again? Do you realize that you spend all your time complaining?" Lucy looks at Linus and replies, "Why shouldn't I complain? It's the only thing I am good at!"

What are you good at? Are you playing to your strengths? A leader's frustration exists when you are playing the roles others have designed or placed upon you rather than fulfilling the role for which you were designed to live. It's when you understand and embrace your strengths that you live your destiny and add value to others. There are many benefits to playing to your strengths. Here are four.

Playing to your strengths gives clarity. When playing to your strengths you are focused on what you do best. Instead of tinkering around the margins doing things half-heartedly or with little passion, you are free to excel at the one thing you were born to do.

My friend Jack Hickey writes, "Do not look at what you cannot do; look at what you do well. Once you find that, you build on it. Don't under-estimate yourself or your abilities." The value of playing to your strengths is that you are being true to yourself and that is very liberating.

Playing to your strengths builds confidence. The greatest hindrance to a confident team player is one who is not playing to their strengths. Confidence is found in the mastery of doing a few things exceptionally well as opposed to do many things in mediocre fashion.

When you play to your strengths and gain more confidence the tide begins to turn in your favor for greater success. Joseph Storey said, "Have confidence that if you have done a little thing well, you can do a bigger thing well, too." Playing to your strengths breeds confidence and unleashes a whole new degree of potential for success on all levels.

Playing to your strength gives courage. Napoleon Hill said, "Everyone enjoys doing the kind of work for which he is best suited." He is right. And when you enjoy the work for which you are best suited for you will face your challenges and adversities with a determination that you are going to succeed regardless of what you face.

Clarity and confidence will give rise to the courage you need to take risks, step out of your comfort zone and to eventually live out your purpose and destiny. Without courage you will never take the first steps of playing to your strengths.

Playing to your strengths brings contentment. There is great satisfaction when you play to your strengths. When asked in a Gallup survey a few years ago, only 20 percent of those surveyed said that they are working in the area of their strengths at work. Think of how much more productive those employees and companies would be if they did.

John Maxwell said, "The number one reason people don't like their jobs is that they are not working in the area of their strengths." And this is why it is so important to discover it. It will make a world of difference for you in every area of your life.

Are you playing to your strengths?

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Keeping Good People

(adapted from *The 7 Hidden Reasons Employees Leave* by Leigh Branham)

If I've learned one thing in recent years, it's this: keep an eye on the demographics. For example, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that by the year 2012 there will be 3 million more jobs in the U.S. than people to fill them. Message to company owners and managers: work hard to keep your people. There will soon be a "seller's market" for jobs.

The author of "The 7 Hidden Reasons Employees Leave" analyzed a database of 19,700 exit and current employee surveys that had been conducted from 1999 thru 2003. His analysis uncovered four fundamental human needs that, if not met, cause employees to begin to disengage and think about leaving an organization.

- The need for TRUST: Expecting the company and management to deliver on its promises, to be honest and open in all communications with you, to invest in you, to treat you fairly, and to compensate you fairly and on time.
- The need to have HOPE: Believing that you will be able to grow, develop your skills on the job and through training, and have the opportunity for advancement or career progress leading to higher earnings.
- The need to feel a sense of WORTH: Feeling confident that if you work hard, do your best, demonstrate commitment, and

make meaningful contributions, you will be recognized and rewarded accordingly. Feeling worthy also means that you will be shown respect and regarded as a valued asset, not a cost, to the organization.

- The need to feel COMPETENT: Expecting that you will be matched to a job that makes good use of your talents and is challenging, receive the necessary training to perform the job capably, see the end results of your work, and obtain regular feedback on your performance.

Take a moment and rate your organization as to how well you are doing in meeting each of the four "needs." Where do you see the need for improvement? Schedule some time to think about next steps in making positive changes.

The Psychological Contract

This is the implicit contract between an individual and the organization which specifies what each expects to give and receive from each other in the relationship. As you can imagine, mismatches here lead to job dissatisfaction.

Write It Down

I like what Allstate has done. This company has written down its psychological contract. I've provided a segment of Allstate's psychological contract below.

You should expect Allstate to:

- Offer work that is meaningful and challenging.

- Promote an environment that encourages open and constructive dialogue.
- Recognize you for your accomplishments.
- Provide competitive pay and rewards based on your performance.
- Advise you on your performance through regular feedback.
- Create learning opportunities through education and job assignments.

Allstate expects you to:

- Perform at levels that significantly increase the company's ability to outperform the competition.
- Take on assignments critical to meeting business objectives.
- Willingly listen and act upon feedback.
- Exhibit no bias in interactions with colleagues and customers.
- Behave consistently with Allstate's ethical standards.
- Continually improve processes to address customers' needs.

Someone in your organization needs to be thinking through the psychological contract you have with your employees, looking for and fixing any "mismatches."

One of your competitors has, is, or will be looking to lure an employee of yours away. What will you do this week to ensure that you "Keep Your Employees?"

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1. Pride in the organization. People want to work for well-managed companies.
2. Compatible supervisor. People may stay just to work for a particular individual who is supportive of them.
3. Compensation. People want to work for companies that offer fair compensation, including competitive wages and benefits as well as opportunities to learn and achieve.
4. Affiliation. People want to continue working with colleagues they respect and like.
5. Meaningful work. People want to work for companies that let them do work that appeals to their deepest, most passionate interests.

WHY EMPLOYEES STAY

Workplacepsychology.net
May 3, 2010

MAXWELL MOMENT

Making the Most of Life's Significant Moments

By themselves, significant moments do not alter a person's behavior. Events certainly can make powerful impressions on us: they stir our emotions, capture our imagination, provoke our conscience, or bring revelation. However, events do not automatically transform us, and the feelings they evoke usually are short-lived.

Leadership breakthroughs happen when we seize the opportunity presented by a significant event to adjust our thinking and to change our patterns of action. For example, having a heart attack could have brought me nothing more than pain. However, I used the experience as a springboard to change my thinking about my physical health. Prior to the heart attack, I considered exercise to be a nuisance and dietary restrictions to be a drag. After suffering the heart attack, I reevaluated the importance of a healthy lifestyle. I contemplated the implications of ignoring my health, and I thought about how poor fitness would shorten my life and would limit my influence. I modified my mental attitude toward nutrition and physical fitness, and I took practical steps to build exercise into my weekly routine.

The tragedy for many leaders is that they let major life experiences slip by without learning from them. Once a pivotal moment alerts you to the possibility for a better future, I suggest embarking on the following four steps to bring about positive change.

1) Embrace Bottom-Line Thinking

When touched by a significant life event, project yourself into the future by asking yourself the following questions: How will my life improve by making a change? What is at stake if everything remains the same?

2) Generate Reminders

I agree with Samuel Johnson: "People need to be reminded more often than they need to be instruct-

ed." For instance, physical fitness isn't rocket science. Indeed, the formula is amazingly simple: eat healthier and exercise more often. Yet, breaking a bad habit involves reminding ourselves of the action we need to take and what's ultimately at stake. Generating reminders may include creating visual mementos, setting calendar prompts, asking friends to provide accountability and encouragement, or celebrating progress made.

3) Find a Model

I started off as a lousy public speaker, but I was committed to improving. For that reason, I began to study, in detail, the great communicators within my circle of friends and colleagues. I listened intently whenever they spoke, and I observed their strengths. Then, I incorporated the lessons learned into my own style and delivery. Progress came slowly. In fact, I'd estimate that it took me eight years to become a polished public speaker. However, by modeling myself after other skilled communicators, I eventually gained competence myself.

4) Adjust Your Surroundings

To translate the momentary inspiration of an event into life transformation, we must limit our exposure to negative environments. The people closest to us have tremendous influence over our lives. To make the most of pivotal moments in our lives, we often need to reevaluate our relationships and to cut ties with unhealthy acquaintances.

CONCLUSION

Pivotal moments in life stir our emotions, but they don't necessarily affect our day-to-day motions. In fact, if you wait until you feel like making a change, then you'll never experience personal growth as a leader. The next time you're touched by a significant life event, look for ways to adjust your thinking and behavior so that instead of temporary enlightenment, you experience lasting breakthrough. Remember: leaders develop daily, not in a day.

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CONGRATULATIONS to Martin Methodist College 5'10" All-American, James Justice, for being selected to compete in the college slam dunk contest during NCAA Final Four Weekend. He will be the only small college player competing.

Continued from page 2....

Structural problems frequently involve unclear processes, policies, and procedures, improperly positioned personnel, an outdated leadership or management paradigm, a stagnant organizational structure, and many more.

I've observed that those leaders who adequately address communication and structural challenges successfully eliminate the majority of problems within their organizations and lead their teams and companies to grow.

The same is true for growing individuals. Growing people develop a disciplined structure for life, and they communicate clearly and consistently. It really seems too simple – which is probably why these two areas are commonly neglected for “bigger problems” or “more pressing issues”.

So why do we wait? It's not like there is ever going to be a

better time to get back on track. The communication problems will only get worse. The stale, outdated structure will only drag us down further.

So, it's time! It's time to address inadequate communication. Michael Hyatt (www.MichaelHyatt.com) has written a great post that outlines a highly practical plan for improving communication in any organization. And it's time to address faulty structure – in our personal lives, in our teams, and within our organizations.

So, why do you think we wait? What steps should we be taking to adequately assess and address organizational structure?

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Should he stay or Should he go?

Now that the NBA All Star weekend has concluded, the Dwight Howard saga and his future in Orlando will be the NBA's top headline. Will he stay or will he go?

Let me just say from the beginning that I'm a huge Orlando Magic fan. I was in attendance for their first game in 1989; lived through the misery of Nick Anderson's missed free throws in the 95 Finals, and of course the heartbreak of Shaq leaving for the Lakers. Now 16 years post-Shaq, Dwight might become the next dominant big man to leave Orlando. So if Dwight leaves, should his loyalty to the Magic or the city of Orlando be questioned?

Loyalty is an interesting word in today's sport culture. As Jerry Seinfeld famously said in one of his routines, "Loyalty to any one sports team is pretty hard to justify, because the players are always changing; the team could move to another city. You're actually rooting for the clothes when you get right down to it."

I've resolved that Dwight's decision of what uniform he'll wear next year is his own decision, just because a team drafts an athlete, doesn't mean it's a lifetime a contract. It's more important how you transition that defines your loyalty to an organization than whether or not you leave.

In our profession, consider a student-athlete asking for a transfer release. As an Athletic Director, I'll sign any release request however one exception that causes us to reconsider is if we find out an athlete's been talking to another institution. Usually it's the lack of communication, maturity, or even integrity that allows one's loyalty to be questioned, just ask LeBron James.

Dwight Howard's loyalty shouldn't be measured in which home jersey he'll be wearing next year, it should be measured by the commitment he gave to the Orlando Magic organization throughout the past eight years.

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"Leadership begins with U"

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