

FROM A COACHING PERSPECTIVE.....

## What Does Leadership Have To Do With It?

*The essence of leadership is not giving things or providing visions. It is offering oneself and one's spirit. - Lee Bolman and Terence Deal-*

How many of us think that when things outside of us are on a downward trend, that perhaps it is the perfect opportunity for us to look at ourselves inside, meaning our beliefs, our attitudes, and how we are "showing up" in this world? It seems as if all of our attention becomes focused on what is happening outside not who or what we are inside. Some great questions to be asking ourselves might be; how authentic am I? How am I expressing myself in the world? Am I creating value to others whether it is in interpersonal relationships or in organizations or in my community? Interesting thoughts wouldn't you say?

Maybe the best place to begin is with the term Leadership. What exactly does that mean? Why does "being a leader" mean different things to different people? How many of us realize that we lead by virtue of who we are and that as we master our own personal growth, we master our ability to lead? Profound. Often our formal training and development in educational systems focuses on learning about "things" and learning WHAT to think and not HOW to think. We learn what to DO and not how to BE and what to achieve not how to achieve. Better yet, we learn about things not the NATURE of things. It is as if we fill up the container of knowledge without understanding it, expanding it or using it more effectively.

As we successfully lead in our careers, we are recognized for external success such as revenue generation, making a profit, inventing new products, or creating cost savings. These are examples of environmental mastery utilizing external competencies. The real questions are about: Where do our external results come from? Is external achievement the sole source of greater accomplishment or does this focus allow us to miss the true dynamics of peak performance? Interesting thoughts to ponder I'd say!

We are aware that the commonly known descriptions of leadership focus on outer manifestations such as vision, judgment, creativity, charisma, and

drive. What if true leadership is: the authentic self expression that creates value? From this perspective, leadership would not be hierarchical since anyone who is authentically self-expressing and creating value would be a leader. How significantly would this change the role of leader in any group of people?

If we chose to explore leadership from the inside out and not from the outside in, we would be on an ongoing journey to unfold and to express our purposeful inner life to make a more positive impact on the world around us. The more we unleash our whole capabilities of our mind, body and spirit, the more value we can create. The greater value we create, the more we are a leader. Makes sense doesn't it?

The journey of self discovery, as described by Kevin Cashman, involves seven areas of mastery: personal mastery, purpose mastery, change mastery, interpersonal mastery, being mastery, balance mastery, and action mastery. These are not sequential developmental stages but more like an on-going integrated growth process. Each pathway of growth illuminates one another and as we arrange them together, we can think of them as an integrated whole. Each path supports the progress toward a fulfilling destination: leading more effectively from within. So next time, let us begin the process with: Personal Mastery: Leading From Authentic Self-Expression.

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