



Opening Thoughts on Leadership:

“Hard work is the accumulation of the easy things you didn’t do when you should have. Most people don’t connect their lack of success and current frustrations to their poor decision making and procrastination.”

1&2 Growing You & Others as Leaders:

You Must be Clear in the Face of Uncertainty

I have combined Sections 1&2 into one segment of this newsletter because the topic is as applicable to growing yourself as it is to developing others.

Author Andy Stanley writes, “Uncertainty is a permanent part of the leadership landscape. It never goes away. Uncertainty is not an indication of poor leadership; it underscores the need for leadership. It is

the environment in which good leadership is most easily identified. The nature of leadership demands there always be an element of uncertainty. Where there is no uncertainty, there is no longer the need for leadership. A key aspect of leadership is to be clear in the midst of uncertainty.” Author Jim Kouzes added, “Uncertainty creates the necessary condition for leadership.”

Since making decisions in the midst of uncertainty comes with an effective leader’s territory, there are some guidelines we must understand and embrace as

we execute these potentially treacherous leadership waters.

Eleven opening thoughts on remaining clear in the midst of uncertainty.

1. There will be very few occasions when you are absolutely certain about anything. You will consistently be called upon to make decisions with limited information.

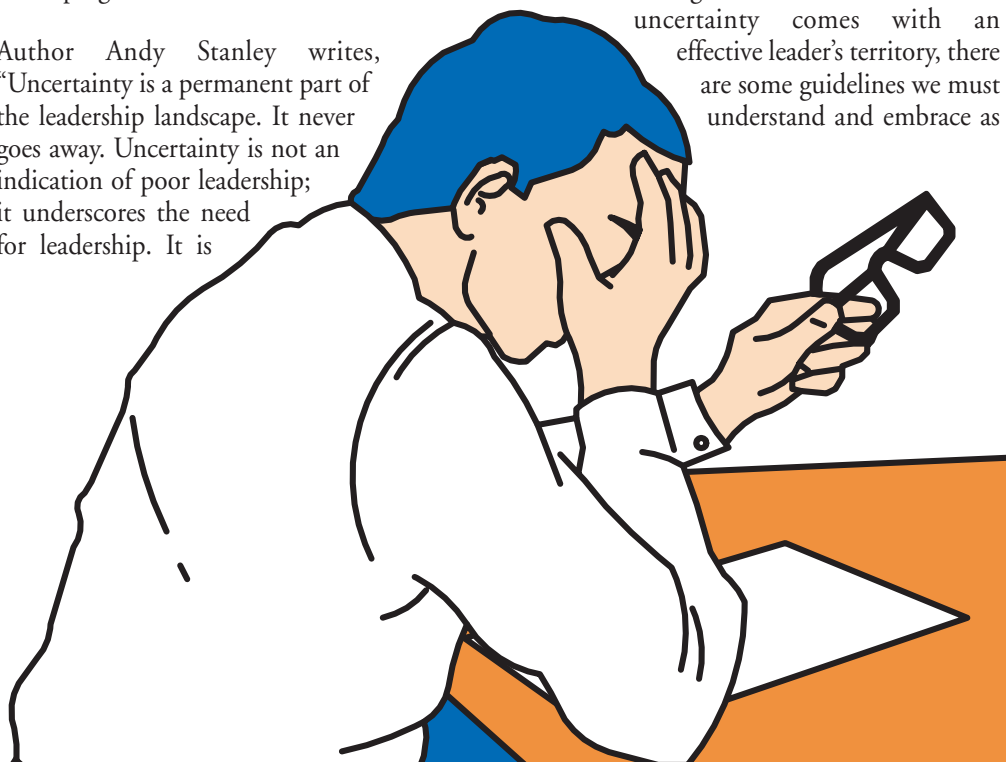
That being the case, your goal should not be to eliminate uncertainty. Instead, you must develop the art of being clear in the face of uncertainty.

2. When you are immobilized by uncertainty, chaos ensues. You hesitate and become less specific and more general in your directives. You yell, “Hike!” and everyone runs in whatever direction he feels is best.

If you’re not careful, uncertainty will sand the sharp edges off your leadership.

3. Contrary to what you might think, uncertainty actually multiplies with increased leadership responsibility. The more responsibility you take on as a leader the more uncertainty you will be expected to manage.

The cost of leadership success is greater uncertainty, not less.



4. As a leader you must bring clarity into the midst of uncertainty.

Having clear vision, expectations and values will make it easier to decide as uncertainty arises because you have decided up front what you stand for.

5. When creating direction for your organization "what" must come before "how."

Don't wait until you have the entire "how" figured out before you set out to conquer the "what." Much of it you will determine as you go. Your job is to keep everyone clear on the "what" while you deal with an uncertain "how."

6. You can only be effective in creating clarity in the midst of uncertainty if you lead from the trenches of your business; listen to your people and study your profession.

Intuition is an important part of decision making. But the most valuable intuition is built upon a foundation of solid experiences and being in touch with the reality of your people and business.

7. You must learn to fear a lack of clarity more than a lack of accuracy. You can be wrong and people will continue to follow you.

If you are unclear, however, they will eventually go somewhere else. You can survive being wrong. You cannot survive being unclear.

8. Clarity is perceived as leadership.

The individual in your organization who communicates the clearest vision will often be perceived as the leader.

9. If you are at the helm of your organization, the lesson here is vital: You must exhibit clarity to retain your influence. It is not enough to be the boss. You must be clear.

Clarity results in influence.

Note: "If you are not *the* leader in your organization, there is another application of this axiom: as you gain clarity, you gain

influence. At some point your influence may be threatening to those above you who are empowered but not clear. Your clarity may be perceived as disloyal or an attempt to impose your own agenda. **If this dynamic develops, your best move is to take the initiative to assure those in authority that your intention is to further, not compete with their vision for the organization.**" Andy Stanley, *The Next Generation Leader*

10. Generally speaking, you are probably rarely going to be more than about 80 percent certain.

To paraphrase Patton: "A good plan violently executed today is better than a perfect plan next week." While you gather more and more information in search of the "perfect plan" the facts you currently have grow stale and less relevant. Besides, there is always an infinite amount of data to collect. There comes a time when you must pull the trigger.

Note: "Saying 'I don't know' when you don't know is a sign of good leadership. Pretending to know when you don't know is a sign of insecurity. The only person a pretender deceives is himself." Andy Stanley, *The Next Generation Leader*

11. Express your uncertainty with confidence.

A. "I don't know right now, but I am confident we can figure it out."

B. "I don't know right now, but when the time comes to do something about it, I am confident we will know the answer."

C. "I don't know, but with folks like you around, I am confident we will come up with a solution."

D. "I don't know. I have never done this before. But I think we are up for the challenge."

Knowing everything is not a requisite of leadership but confidence is. When you express confidence you instill it in others.

Review to good decision making:

A. You must remain clear in the face of uncertainty.

B. Listen to wise counselors around you but know that you will probably never be 100 percent certain of what to do and waiting until you are will cause you to miss opportunities.

C. Base your decision on informed intuition built on a foundation of knowing and facing reality concerning your people and your business.

D. Clarity is perceived as leadership and influence. People will forgive you for being wrong but will not forgive uncertain, wobbly leadership.

3 Growing Your Organization:

Stop Looking for Lightning Bolts!

In a recent interview with the *Wall Street Journal*, the reporter asked what I thought the difference between good and truly great companies were. I responded that it was the difference between interest and commitment and elaborated that good companies are interested in reaching their potential while the great firms are committed to doing so. When you are merely interested in something you do the right things on the good days, when you feel like it and when it is convenient. But when you're committed you exercise the right disciplines day in and day out without excuse.

The trouble with many good companies endeavoring to become great is that they're looking for lightning bolts; quick fixes and shortcuts that put them on top fast. They trek from seminar to seminar and fad to fad looking for the potion that moves their enterprise to the next level. In the process they exhaust resources, demoralize their people and lose their focus. Here are five thoughts on developing the discipline and commitment

necessary to consistently move your organization forward. They do not embody glitz or glamour – just plain old common sense that delivers results:

1. The longest distance between two points is a shortcut. Neither life nor business is easy and the sooner you accept that they are both hard the easier it will be for you to develop the discipline necessary to build a foundation that enables you to excel. One reason people hop from one fad to the next is that they're looking for the quick kill and when they don't hit the lottery overnight they wring their hands and move on to the next "new" thing. Nothing about business or life was intended to be easy. This doesn't mean they're complicated – just plenty of hard work. Grasp this and setbacks and frustrations are easier to accept as you work through them on your journey to greatness.

2. It takes decisions and discipline to move to the next level. Decisions get you started and discipline gets you finished. Think of this as goal setting and goal getting. Frankly, decisions are the easier of the two. It's simpler to decide what you're going to do than to actually roll up your sleeves and do it. Need convincing? Recall your last five failed New Year's resolutions.

3. The best recipe in the world doesn't make you a chef. You still need to execute. Books, tapes and seminars are filled with the necessary ingredients to elevate you personally and as an organization. But consistent, tenacious execution is where the rubber meets the road. The biggest gap in the world is between knowing and doing. It's like losing weight. There are no secrets for how to do it. Everyone knows what they must do to become successful. It's the "doing" that causes so many to fail. Which diet works? The one you stick with and the same goes for the disciplines necessary to move you forward in business.

4. Success depends less on the brilliance of your plan than the consistency of your actions. When you put your plan together to hike to

higher heights, here's some good news: you won't have to do anything extraordinary. You'll just need to do the ordinary things extraordinarily well. The best strategy is simple because if you can't articulate it you sure can't execute it. But you will have to become brilliant in the basics of the "ordinary" aspects of daily execution: ordinary tasks like giving feedback to your people, holding them accountable, continuing to grow personally and engaging yourself in the trenches of your business rather than retreating and roosting in the ivory tower.

5. Most people don't connect their lack of success to their poor decision making. As pointed out in the Opening Thoughts of this issue, it is your inside decisions more than outside conditions that determine your forward motion. Wherever you are at in your organization today is the result of choices you've made in the past: personnel, strategic and the like. And the catalyst to improving your position is to improve your

"One today is worth two tomorrows. What I am to be I am now becoming."

~ Ben Franklin

choices. As Einstein said, "The significant problems we face today cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them."

Leaders that move their organization from good to great are disciplined, focused, and determined. They keep slugging away at a handful of daily and weekly non-negotiable disciplines they know will take them where they want to go. And they realize that their journey is a marathon and not a sprint. You don't become great overnight but you can become great over time. But you must stop looking for lightning bolts and devote yourself to the disciplines necessary to steadily accelerate your growth. Identify the critical issues you know are required to move your organization. Settle these critical issues right now and begin to manage them daily. Because while there are no lightning bolts, when you stick with your program and do the right things long enough, the day will come when you do find yourself on an elevator.

4 Just a Thought: Learning Leadership from the Gipper

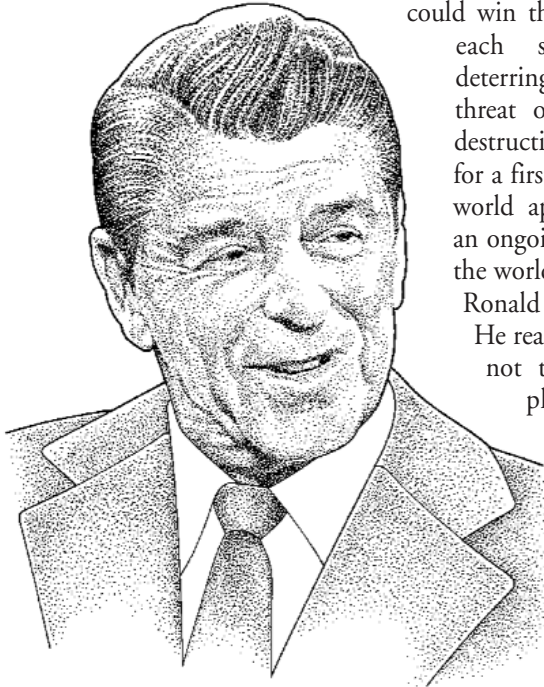
I have long asserted that one of the best ways to learn leadership is to study the lives of real life leaders and emulate their productive practices while you avoid their mistakes. While there are countless leadership lessons one can glean from the life of Ronald Reagan, I'd like to focus on an aspect that is relevant

DAVE ANDERSON'S LEADING AT THE NEXT LEVEL®

and will resonate with many readers – the importance of playing to win rather than playing not to lose.

Beginning in the 50s, conventional wisdom espoused that neither the United States nor the Soviet Union could win the Cold War. Thus,

each side focused on deterring the other with the threat of mutually assured destruction should they opt for a first nuclear strike. The world appeared resigned to an ongoing struggle between the world's two superpowers. Ronald Reagan disagreed. He realized that by playing not to lose rather than playing to win the United States was actually losing. The Russians had slowly crept past the Americans in total ICBM missile count and in the years 1974-1980,



ten additional countries had fallen under the tyranny of communism: Angola, Nicaragua, South Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Afghanistan, Mozambique, Grenada, South Yemen and Ethiopia. The free world was losing ground and the United States was losing influence and prestige.

Reagan took the offensive and began rebuilding our military at a rate the Soviets could not afford to match. By challenging his foe, raising the stakes and playing to win he planted the seeds for the breakup of the Soviet Union and left the United States alone as a world superpower.

Too many leaders today are in a similar “play not to lose” mode. They settle for their fair share of the market rather than having the courage to dominate it. They talk about a level playing field instead of going to work to build an unlevel field stacked to their advantage. The problem with living in this maintenance mode is that one bad move or two down months causes them to quickly surrender the ground they've held and regress. There is simply no margin for error.

Playing to win is a mental discipline. It requires a tenacity and toughness missing in timid, common leaders. Playing to win makes the squeamish nervous. After all, why make waves? Why mess with success? Why not just live and let live? Answer: you get stale, plateau and plunge because the status quo doesn't hold its own. It's one step before sliding backward.

Recommended Reading For The Month:

The book of Proverbs. That's right, the Proverbs in the Old Testament. It has 31 chapters; one for each day of the month and has more great advice on becoming a leader, controlling your emotions and dealing with undesirables than you'll find on any business shelf at the bookstore.

Up Your Business on CD Coming Shortly!

I recently recorded *Up Your Business: 7 Steps to Fix, Build or Stretch Your Organization* onto CDs and they will be available within the next few weeks. Watch our website, www.LearnToLead.com for notification!

Strategy Summit!

If you missed this sold-out event last October, don't make the same mistake this year. Our Las Vegas Strategy Summit is scheduled for October 18-20. It provides unmatched energy and focus to finish this year strong and lay a foundation for your best year ever in 2005. Don't procrastinate! Last year's workshop sold out and had the distinction of being the highest rated class I've ever held. Check out the agenda at the Public Workshop icon at www.LearnToLead.com and then call to register your team.

Grow your team with a one year subscription to Dave Anderson's monthly newsletter.

(Includes 3 copies, additional copies \$12 per year)

\$199.00 U.S.

(for international rates, please see our Web site)

1-800-519-8224

818-735-9979

(Outside the U.S.)

or visit

www.LearnToLead.com

Please inform all employees that all cassettes, videos, CDs, newsletters, books and workbooks are protected under U.S. & International Copyright laws and that **REPRODUCTION IN ANY FORM IS A FEDERAL OFFENSE**. Dave Anderson maintains a zero-tolerance stance on copyright issues. Incidents of abuse are solicited in trade journals and are litigated vigorously. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

For Reports Of Abuse contact:

Reynolds, Price, Casas & Riley, Attorneys at Law:
rsiley@legalteam.com. Damage awards are shared 50/50 with those who report incidents.

The Dave Anderson Corporation
P.O. Box 2338, Agoura Hills, CA 91376
dave@learntolead.com • learntolead.com
Fax 818-735-0299 • Phone 800-519-8224