

Leader ... Don't Forget to Lead!

I recently had the opportunity to speak at the CMAA Leadership Conference in Boston. I was on a stage looking out at club leaders, chapter leaders, association leaders and industry leaders. My three messages were

1. Leader lead thyself
2. Be Authentic
3. Be an Extraordinary Leader

As coaches for CMAA, Shelley MacDougall and I have learned many things about leaders at all levels of the industry. We have learned that not all club managers are leaders. We have also known that there are some who are better at leading others than they are at leading themselves. But the message that I want to deliver in this article is that no matter how brilliant a leader is, **they sometimes simply forget to lead.**

I think we all do it. I am not saying we don't show up to work. I am not saying we don't work hard. I am not saying we don't do our jobs. We sometimes just forget, to do what we know what we are capable of doing as leaders. We forget to articulate the vision. We forget to teach and model and uphold the values of the organization. We forget to inspire, elevate and energize our people. We forget that what we are leading is more important than we are. We forget to be our best selves.

You may have read the previous paragraph and thought, yes, she, or he, or they, have forgotten to lead. That may be the case but this article has been written for you. Now there are a number of reasons that we forget to lead others or lead ourselves. Here are a few of them.

Distraction

In the animated feature film entitled **Up**, one of the characters was a dog. It didn't matter what the dog was doing, all it took was for someone to say the word **Squirrel** and he was gone. It was sort of funny to see that someone, or in this case some dog could be so easily distracted. We as intelligent human beings would never be so easily distracted. Ridiculous!

Are you kidding me? He only had one distraction. Leaders today have so many distractions that take them away from leadership. Distraction could be an element that not only makes people forget to lead but even if they remember, it can keep them from having time to lead.

What is distracting you from what is important?

Fatigue

There are a lot of tired leaders out there. How can you be the person who will energize your organization and every person in it when you can't find the energy for yourself? If you have resigned yourself to the belief that you just can't have balance in this profession, you are severely limiting yourself as a leader. Without balance and energy you can still be a pretty decent manager or prison guard, but you are not likely to inspire people to greatness. **When you are exhausted it is easy to forget to lead.** You can take care of yourself now with diet and exercise or later with drugs and surgery. In other words you can do your best to be balanced and energized now, or pay the price later with poor health or unemployment. What will you choose?

Playing the Victim

In our lives and in our careers, when we choose to play the role of victim we are delivering a serious blow to our ability to lead. **"It is hard to wear the shoes of a victim and run the plays of an Extraordinary Leader!"** When we settle in to the role of victim we become pathetic, lethargic, vacant and unattractive. If you can actually find people that would want to follow you as leader when you are residing in this place, you should probably be questioning the quality of those people. The victim has forgotten to lead. They have abdicated accountability and given it away to someone else. If you are finding yourself playing the victim, it might be time to stand up! It is time to lead yourself before you will be ready to lead others. We have all done it, but we have to remember who we are. We are leaders.

Do you need to stand up?

Our Own Agenda

Sometimes people in leadership roles lose sight of the organizational goals and become more concerned with their own self-interests than they are about the interests of the people they lead. When we see this trait in politicians we find it abhorrent. How did they lose sight? Do we consider them to be leaders at this point or just politicians? We may find ourselves doing the same things in the political environment of running a club. The agenda may not be about greed or personal gain but it could be about holding on to the need to be right. **We find that all too often people we work with would rather be right than successful.** They may lose their job, lose their marriage, lose their reputation, lose their chance to lead, but no one will convince them that they were not right. Although leaders need to look within to bring out the best in themselves, the Extraordinary Leader's focus is on it and the people they lead versus themselves.

Is your agenda getting in the way?

It is time to **remember!**

Remember to lead! Remember that the people following need to know where to go and they need someone who can model how to get there! Remember the power of your words. Remember the impact of just recognizing, acknowledging and being interested in your people. Remember the power of challenging people to be better than they think they are. Remember to uphold and live the values and the standards. Remember that people are watching you! Remember that young leaders are watching you. **Remember to do all you can to avoid forgetting to lead!**