

The Page



Notes and comments for friends and clients of Lisk Associates

November 2011

Thoughts From The Notebook

Do you keep a notebook or some other kind of log? Some people find it helpful. Peter Drucker, legendary management consultant said he kept such a book for 25 years. He wrote his decisions in the book and then went back a year later to see how they worked out.

It is said that 70% of what we adults learn is through experience. As someone gains more responsibility they make decisions that have impacts further in the future and across a wider landscape. Without some process for explicitly going back and checking how these decisions work out, learning from experience is difficult.

I have kept a log, mainly of what I was doing when, as I work with a lot of different clients over the course of a few months. I also write ideas, notes, etc. As I looked back over some of those notes I came up with a few random ideas that may set your mind thinking.

8 Questions For Each Day

If we don't watch out it is easy to get sidetracked into the "thick of thin things" as Stephen Covey says, and forget about what is important. One approach is to start each day by focusing on what is important to you. Try these questions to start each day:

- What can I learn today?
- How can I help someone today?
- What can I give away today?
- What do I want to create today?
- What can I do today to enhance my financial security?
- What relationship can I improve today?
- What can I get excited about?
- What is one great thing in my life?

If you ask yourself good questions and then give your brain time to work on them while you are doing other things, it will often give you the answer you have been looking for. Learn to ask yourself good questions.

5 Rules For Dealing With Others

A research organization polled 500 executives, asking them what traits they thought were most important in dealing with others. Here is their summary:

1. Always give people the credit that is rightfully theirs. To do otherwise is morally and ethically dishonest.
2. Be courteous. Have genuine consideration for other people's feelings, wishes and situations.
3. Never tamper with the truth. Never rationalize. What

you might like to believe is not necessarily the truth.

4. Be concise in your writing and talking, especially when giving instructions to others.

5. Be generous. Remember that it is the productivity of others that makes you effective.

These five statements can all be stated as "be's," or things you can choose to be and do. Maybe these are not the right five for you. In that case use them as conversation starters to decide what you value and what is important to you when dealing with others. This is a big part of your leadership philosophy.

Leading Beyond Borders

A number of years ago I was fortunate to spend some time with and learn from Mark Gerzon, author and facilitator. He has studied the process that leads up to every "ethnic cleansing" and recent major conflict between groups. Mark calls this Leading Behind Borders. Here is the five-step process he found:

1. Create the "other."
2. Project your own weaknesses on the other. Make them less than human.
3. Destroy all bridges or connections with the other.
4. Violate the basic rights of the other.
5. Annihilate the other and

their cultures.

Mark's suggested antidote, Leading Beyond Borders, is as follows:

1. Refuse to participate in the creation of the "other."
2. Own your own weaknesses.
3. Build bridges to and with the other.
4. Defend the rights of the others as your own.
5. Safeguard the others and their families.

While we may be fortunate enough to not be involved in one of the world's many ethnic conflicts, we nevertheless live in communities and work at businesses where a minor version of this process can take hold. Just take a look at the recent political attack ads, and see if they are not attempting to create the "other" and to place their weaknesses on the other.

Be aware of who the "others" are in your life. When you define a boundary you define your battles. Be inclusive. Have very few others in your life. If you need to build some bridges with others, what better time than the holidays to make a start?

Wishing you all the best,

Randy