

## **The Inner Journey...**

I was drawn to the inner journey in part by the experience of a friend. He was fired for not accepting a promotion to VP. He described his boss' behavior as that similar to a jilted lover. The story is too messy (and almost too unreal) to describe in this limited space but my assessment of the "boss" was that he needed about seven years in Tibet to find himself. Maybe by then he would re-earn the right to lead.

I have often felt that the real difference between a manager and a leader is the degree to which an individual has self-knowledge. A leader has "been to the mountain" and seen the "valley of death" in a manner of speaking (if we want to get dramatic about it). In reality, they value the inner journey and are assured by their ability to question their motives based on their values. Leadership development is ultimately about self-knowledge. ( Kouzes, Posner 1995 p.335) This self-knowledge comes from an ability to process situations with the confidence of knowing motives and reactions in given situations, often described as "the calm" by colleagues.

In his book "Man's Search for Meaning", Victor Frankl highlights a quote by Nietzsche, "He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how."

Frankl survived the holocaust in Germany and from that experience developed the theory of Logotherapy. "Logotherapy focuses rather on the future, that is to say, on the assignments and meanings to be fulfilled by the patient in his/her future. At the same time, logotherapy defocuses all the vicious-circle formations and feedback mechanisms that play such a great role in the development of neuroses. Thus the typical self centeredness of the neurotic is broken up instead of being continually fostered and reinforced." (Frankl 1963,p.152.) Simply, this means that people learn to relate their experience in relation to the world around them and the future of that world rather than on their own self-centeredness. This creates the why in life and it is in this meaning that people seek a better future and a more positive worldview.

The inner journey provides the strength to be outward focused and, even more importantly, focused on others. This, coupled with a future orientation, helps to harness vision, a vision that is not of self, but rather captures an "obvious", a consensus of the whole moving toward a common purpose (purposefulness). Purposefulness when expressed with integrity and consistency is essentially leadership.

The leader's journey inward helps them to gain self-knowledge, which produces a confidence, and calm in them. The inner journey, when future focused, creates a magical formula essential for a transformational leader. This projected inner strength is the real charisma.

I spent five weeks last summer, in a time of reflection and inner self-exploration as part of a Masters in Leadership. The pain of self-awareness and self-centeredness was confronted and elevated. This has resulted in me challenging my own hubris (inflated self-concept) (Kouzes, Posner, 1995, p. 338) and learning to be in community.

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Has this made me a better manager? No, but it has made me a better person doing leadership. It has re-ignited self-doubt though it feels like a more organized self-doubt, a more accessible self-doubt, a less dangerous self-doubt.

More importantly, the inner journey has provided me a better view of the world, a more global perspective in which to see situations from angles beyond my self-perception. This is good for me and those who engage in leadership with me..

**Sources:**

Frankl, Victor. *Man's Search for Meaning*. 1963: Pocket Books, New York.

Kouzes, Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*. 1995: Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

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