

THE INSURANCE COACH

Part 5 of 5: Have a Worthwhile Purpose

Use Dynamic Leadership Principles Drive Business Forward!

“Success is not something you pursue. Success is something you attract.” (Jim Rohn)

This month we'll be discussing the fifth key to dynamic leadership: **Worthwhile Purpose**. I believe that a Worthwhile Purpose is the most important of the leadership keys in propelling someone towards success. Purpose is the ultimate motivator and compass. Purpose is what allows us to overcome obstacles, no matter how large. Purpose is what allows us to build and sustain dynamic teams. Purpose is what allows us to attain goals we could only dream of in its absence.

I'm frequently asked to speak to groups about having a purpose and making a difference. My talk discusses the consequences of going through life without purpose. When we have no purpose, we set short-term goals. We hire to fill chairs without regard for a person's values. We market our products or services in a "vanilla" fashion because we're not clear about our vision and the things that set us apart from others. We develop a monotonous routine of going to work, going home, go to work, go home, go to work, go home, etc. In fact, Henry Thoreau wrote, "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation," and I believe his observation is true. All too many people live their lives without a purpose.

When we embrace a purpose, everything changes. I also believe that those people who have a purpose, each have the same purpose; that purpose is to make a difference in other people's lives; to help them succeed; to help them develop. When we as leaders develop, live, and communicate our purpose, we see our actions, attitudes and perspectives change:

- We set goals in support of attaining our purpose. Goals set devoid of purpose only serve to motivate the person that set the goals.
- We hire to surround ourselves with people of like mind.
- We have the determination to persevere through the inevitable obstacles that arise in the pursuit of our dream.
- Our message to our policyholders and our prospects becomes laser sharp. As a purposeful leader, we walk the talk - living the vision we evangelize.

People are attracted to those who have a clear purpose and who are passionate about it. It's not so much what you do that matters as much as why you do it. No one really cares about what you do. They care instead about why you do what you do. Frankly, most people don't understand that. If you look in the Yellow Pages of your phone book, they're filled with ads that boast about what the company does - we've been in business 20 years, we provide auto, home, life, health, blah, blah, blah,... For the most part, no one cares about those things. I've asked agents why someone should consider using them as an agent. The typical answer is, "I have good products at fair prices and I care about my clients." Good answer. Then I'll ask them what would happen if I went down the street to their competitor and asked them the same question. Everyone agrees - I'd get the very same answer. It's a "vanilla" answer. It's a result of not having a clear purpose.

People care about things and people they can "resonate" with. A good example of the difference between someone who sells insurance and someone who truly has the other person's interest at heart is reflected in the answer to this question. If someone calls you and asks you to prepare a quote for \$100,000 of term life insurance, what would you ask them? My contention is that the first question the person simply selling insurance will ask is, "Why do you want term insurance?" but the person who acts in the interest of others will ask as a first

question, "Why do you want \$100,000?" Self-interest would be reflected by up-selling the prospect to a product other than term. Interest in others would be reflected by getting a clear understanding what the other person was trying to accomplish. Being clear about why we do what we do changes everything.

Wanting to have a purpose and living by a purpose are two different things. Wanting a purpose is a logical decision. I believe that most people want to have a purpose. Living a purpose is an emotional decision or choice. I believe that it's only when a person loves what they do, that they can then choose to make a difference with their efforts.

So how do you become clear as to your purpose? Unfortunately sometimes it's easy and sometimes it's difficult. Making good money is a good purpose, but doesn't serve well to be the only purpose. If you feel that you can a difference in someone's life, then find a way to express that. This will become your purpose. Practice expressing your purpose in your marketing messages - ads, brochures, voicemail message, and e-mail signature. Incorporate it into how you go about talking with prospects and policyholders alike. (Why do you think people give referrals? Because they believe in you and what you stand for.) Keep your purpose clearly before you. Wake up with it and go to bed with it. Live it, eat it, and breathe it.

If you feel you can't really make a difference in anyone's life by doing what you're doing, then you may want to consider a new career. I don't know anyone, really, who has succeeded by "selling insurance". Sometimes the kindest thing we can do for ourselves is come to the realization that what we're doing doesn't really make use of our greatest talents.

Once you're clear as to why and how you are going to help people, then set about helping as many of those people as possible. Be diligent in your efforts. Look for new ways to reach those people and help them. Ask yourself at each decision and at each challenge you face, "***Is this furthering my purpose of helping or is it taking me further away?***"

Live your life with purpose.

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