**COURAGE - One Person with Courage is a Majority**

***“****Courage is doing what you’re afraid to do*. There can be no courage unless you’re scared.” Eddie Rickenbacker

Eleanor Roosevelt acknowledged, “You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, ‘I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.’ You must do the thing you think you cannot do.”

*Courage deals with principle, not perception*. If you don’t have the ability to see when to stand up and the conviction to do it, you’ll never be an effective leader. Your dedication to potential must remain stronger than your desire to appease others.

What’s ironic is that those who don’t have the courage to take risks and those who do, experience the same amount of fear in life.

To improve your courage, do the following:

* ***Face the music.*** Go out and do something stretching simply for the sake of growing in courage. Skydive. Perform in a play.
* ***Talk to that person.*** Most people are avoiding confrontation with someone in their lives –– an employee, a relative or a co-worker. If that’s true for you, talk to that person this week.
* ***Take a giant step.*** Maybe you’ve been afraid to make a career move. Take the time to really look at it. If it’s the right thing to do, then do it.

**DISCERNMENT** - **Put an End to Unsolved Mysteries**

*“Smart leaders believe only half of what they hear. Discerning leaders know which have to believe.”*

**John. C. Maxwell**

*Discernment can be described as the ability to find the root of the matter, and it relies on intuition as well as rational though*t. Discernment is an indispensable quality for any leader who desires to maximize effectiveness.

People who lack discernment are seldom in the right place at the right time. Although great leaders often appear to be lucky to some observers, it’s more likely that leaders create their own “luck” as the result of discernment, that willingness to use their experience and follow their instincts.

Are you able to see root causes of difficult problems without having to get every bit of information? Do you trust your intuition and rely on it as much as you do your intellect and experience?

**To improve your discernment, do the following:**

***Analyze past successes.*** Look at some problems you solved successfully in the past. *What was the root issue in each problem?* *What enabled you to succeed*? If you can capture the heart of the matter in a few words, you can probably learn to do it with future issues.

***Learn how others think.*** Which great leaders do you admire? By learning how other discerning leaders think, you can become more discerning.

***Listen to your gut.*** Try to recall times when your intuition “spoke” to you and was correct. What do those experiences have in common? Look for a pattern that may give you insight into your intuitive ability.

*One discernment-driven decision can change the entire course of your destiny.*

**FOCUS - The Sharper It Is; The Sharper You Are**

What does it take to have the focus required to be a truly effective leader? The keys are priorities and concentration. A leader who knows his or her priorities but lacks concentration knows what to do but never gets it done. If he or she has concentration but no priorities, he or she has excellence without progress. But when he or she harnesses both, he or she has the potential to achieve great things.

So the important question is: How should you focus your time and energy?

Use these guidelines to help you:

* Focus 70 percent on strengths –– Effective leaders who reach their potential spend more time focusing on what they do well than on what they do wrong.
* Focus 25 percent on new things –– Growth equals change. If you want to get better, you have to keep changing and improving.
* Focus 5 percent on areas of weakness –– Nobody can entirely avoid working in areas of weakness.

How would your rate yourself in the area of focus? Have you been majoring in minor things?

To improve your focus, do the following:

* ***Shift to strengths.*** Make a list of three or four things you do well in your job. Devise a plan to make changes, allowing you to dedicate 70 percent of your time to your strengths.
* ***Staff your weaknesses.*** Identify three or four activities necessary for your job that you don’t do well. Determine how you can delegate the jobs to others.
* ***Create an edge.***What would it take for you to go to the next level in your main area of strength? Rethink how you do things.

**GENEROSITY - Your Candle Loses Nothing When It Lights Another**

*“No person was ever honored for what he received. Honor has been the reward for what he gave.”*

**~ Calvin Coolidge, American President**

Nothing speaks to others more loudly or serves them better than generosity from a leader. True generosity isn’t an occasional event. It comes from the heart and permeates every aspect of a leader’s life, touching his or her time, money, talents and possessions. Cultivate the quality of generosity in your life by being grateful for whatever you have, don’t allow the desire for possessions to control you and develop the habit of giving.

Do you continually look for ways to add value to others? And to whom are you giving your time? Writer John Bunyan affirmed, “You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you.” If you aren’t giving in the small areas of your life, you’re probably not as generous a leader as you could be.

**To improve your generosity, do the following:**

* ***Give something away.*** Take something you truly value, think of someone you care about who could benefit from it, and give it to him or her.
* ***Put your money to work.***Put your money to work for something that will outlive you.
* ***Find someone to mentor.*** Once you reach a certain level in your leadership, the most valuable thing you have to give is yourself.

**INITIATIVE - You Won’t Leave Home Without It**

*“Success seems to be connected with action. Successful people keep moving. They make mistakes, but they don’t quit.”* ~**Conrad Hilton, Hotel Executive**

Leaders must show initiative by always looking for opportunities and being ready to take action. What qualities do leaders possess that enable them to make things happen? Here are four:

* They know what they want.
* They push themselves to act.
* They take more risks.
* They make more mistakes.

Are you constantly on the lookout for opportunity, or do you wait for it to come to you? Are you willing to take steps based on your best instincts? Or do you endlessly analyze everything? When was the last time you initiated something significant in your life? If you haven’t pushed yourself lately and gotten out of your comfort zone, you may need to jump-start your initiative.

**To improve your initiative, do the following:**

* ***Change your mind-set.*** If you lack initiative, recognize that the problem comes from inside, not from others. Find the source of your hesitation and address it.
* ***Don’t wait for opportunity to knock.*** Take stock of your assets, talents and resources. Doing that will give you an idea of your potential. Now, spend every day for a week looking for opportunities. Where do you see needs? Who is looking for expertise you have?
* ***Take the next step.*** Pick the best opportunity you see, and take it as far as you can. Don’t stop until you’ve done everything you can to make it happen.

**LISTENING – To Connect With Their Hearts, Use Your Ears**

*“The ear of the leader must ring with the voices of the people.”*~ **Woodrow Wilson, American President**

*“A good leader encourages followers to tell him what he needs to know, not what he wants to hear.”* **~John C. Maxwell**

Peter Drucker, the father of American management, *estimated that 60 percent of all management problems are the result of faulty communications.* And the overwhelming majority of communication problems come from poor listening.

A lot of voices are clamoring out there for your attention. As you think about how to spend your listening time, keep in mind that you have two purposes for listening: to connect with people and to learn.

Are you a good listener? When was the last time you really paid close attention to people and what they have to say? Start listening not only for words, but also for feelings, meanings and undercurrents.

**To improve your listening, do the following:**

* ***Change your schedule.***Do you spend time listening to your followers, customers, competitors and mentors? If you don’t have all four groups on your calendar regularly, you’re probably not giving them enough attention.
* ***Meet people on their turf.*** A key to being a good listener is to find common ground with people. Get to know who they are and seek common ground to build your connection with them.
* ***Listen between the lines.*** As you interact with people, you certainly want to pay attention to the factual content of the conversation, but don’t ignore the emotional content.

**PASSION - Take This Life and Love It**

*“Concentrate on what you do well, and do it better than anybody else.”* **~ John Schnatter, founder of Papa John’s Pizza**

What makes it possible for people who might seem ordinary to achieve great things? The answer is passion. Nothing can take the place of passion in a leader’s life.

Passion is the first step to achievement. Your desire determines your destiny. Think of great leaders and you will be struck by their passion: Gandhi for human rights, Winston Churchill for freedom, Martin Luther King Jr. for equality, Bill Gates for technology. Anyone who lives beyond an ordinary life has great desire.

Passion increases your willpower. It is the fuel for the will. If you want anything badly enough, you can find the willpower to achieve it. If you follow your passion –– instead of others’ perceptions –– you can’t help becoming a more dedicated, productive person.

**To increase your passion, do the following:**

* ***Take your temperature.*** How passionate are you about your life and work? Does it show? You won’t become passionate until you believe passion can be the difference maker in your life.
* ***Return to your first love***. Think back to when you were just starting out in your career –– or even farther back to when you were a child. What could you spend hours and hours doing. Try to recapture your old enthusiasm. Then evaluate your life and career in light of those old loves.
* ***Associate with people of passion.*** Passion is contagious. Schedule some time with people who can infect you with it.