

Lead with Diligence

LEAD WITH DILIGENCE

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WE ARE ALL CALLED TO LEAD

The question is...

will anyone follow?

Lead with Diligence gives an in-depth view of the 10 traits of Leaders with Diligence.

Whether you are a Mom, Daughter, CEO, Husband, Father, Wife, or Student, we are all leaders at some point in our lives.

Romans 12:8 tells us to lead diligently. Diligent Leaders are those who have determined to lead and not give up in their families, churches, communities, and life. They take their role seriously and have a plan to be effective in every area of their lives.

Lead with Diligence is a must for every person who has decided to Lead with Diligence, Dedication and Discipline!!!



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INTRODUCTION

The leadership concept, “Lead with Diligence” is taken from a phrase in Romans 12:8, “...he who leads, with diligence...” These five words carry a lot of weight and should be noted. The responsibility of leadership was so important it was listed among the gifts of the Spirit of God and a standard was attached to it. If God has placed you in a leadership role, your standard to fulfill that role is diligence.

The call from the spirit of God is to simply be diligent in your leadership. You can be radical, revolutionary, and responsible. But the true call of leadership is focused diligence. Without diligence, leaders cannot stay the course, focus on today, or strategize for tomorrow. True visionary leaders can tend to live in tomorrow or the utopia of what they see. Without applying true diligence in the practice of leadership you will not have the longevity you need to carry out for the long game.

Leadership is a marathon not a sprint. There will be times you will have short bursts of leadership influence and activity within a circumstance or season. Those bursts will only be due to your diligence in establishing the relationship and reputation as a long haul leader. In other words, you must stay the course and prove the day.

Diligent leadership carries a standard of responsibility, integrity, hard work, and excellence. The following pages are devoted to leaders who take their roles seriously. These concepts have been developed over the past thirty years in practice, in the classroom, and by observation.

Leaders are made

You might be born bossy, controlling, selfish, or opinionated, but you are not born leading! We used to think leadership was a trait people were born with. This led to a belief that not everyone could be a leader; only the chosen few were leaders. In recent years our understanding of leadership has shifted. Now we see leadership as a set of skills or principles that can be learned and honed—much like a carpenter, artist, or musician would master their craft.

A person achieves the position of leadership one of two ways: Desire or Fire.

Let's look at each to understand how leaders are made, and placed.

Desire

Desire is a strong motivation for any cause, program, mission or purpose. When you desire to have something or do something there is motivation. Leaders in many cases are

leaders simply because they have the desire to lead. King Solomon, the third king of Israel, had a desire to lead. If you are not familiar with Solomon, he is known as the wisest man in history. He is said to have asked God for wisdom. Yet, a closer look at Solomon's request was for the ability (wisdom) to rule the Israelites, to govern them well (1 Kings 3:9-14). God was so impressed by Solomon's desire to lead diligently He granted him everything.

The desire to lead is, again, held in high regard in the New Testament. It is noted that if you seek a position of leadership, you seek a good thing. (1 Timothy 3:1). One thing you must realize though, leaders are held to a higher standard. In other words, if you are wanting to lead, you must be prepared to live at a level those around you do not live. You must be willing to be expected to conduct yourself in a manner that others do not.

This is not to say those around you should not live at a higher standard. That is what you are there to give example to. Yet, the expectation and requirement of leadership is that you are not simply striving to achieve that standard. You have already arrived.

This is why it is so important not to put a rookie, or as the Bible states, a novice in the role of a leader. The expectation and requirements are too high for those who have not been tested. The outcome of fallen leaders are too great. The Bible goes on to say if you place a novice in leadership they risk a fall, a "Satan's fall". (1 Timothy 3:6) In the story of Lucifer loosing

his place in heaven as an arc angel, God casts him out because of his arrogance and desire for the throne.

The temptation for ultimate power and position in leadership is so great that a novice in leadership can buckle under the pressure and fall or be taken out of leadership the same way Lucifer was. Not a good picture. It is important to understand what a seasoned leader looks like. If you are not aware of the signs, you risk entering into positions you are not equipped for or place individuals in to those positions who ought not be in those positions.

Many years ago, I learned this lesson the hard way. I placed a young couple as the leaders for a special event we were doing in the church I pastored. The event was about to start. Yet there was no sign of the couple who was responsible for the event. They never showed. In fact their entire life fell apart in what seemed to be one evening. The fact is, I saw the signs, they were novices. The event was pretty much a bust. We scrapped together and did the best we could, considering the circumstances. We didn't look like we had our act together. In reality, we didn't. Whose fault was this. Mine! I could blame the irresponsible couple. But in reality, they were not equipped to handle the stress, pressure, or responsibility of leadership. If I had understood Timothy and his admonishment concerning rookies this would have been a completely different outcome.

This is not to say we are not to use rookies or (novices). But we are to understand the level at which we are to raise them

up. This is what we do as diligent leaders. The remainder of this book is a strategy on raising up diligent leaders. Remember, to raise up diligent leaders you first have to be a diligent leader. The function of leadership is to produce more leaders not more followers.

God takes leadership very seriously. He wants tested, proven men and women who desire to influence those around them. In the same way, we should have the same seriousness about leadership. This is what diligent leadership is.

Fire

On September 11, 2001 a major crisis hit the United States. When terrorists attacked New York City and the Pentagon, and attempted to attack Washington D.C., leaders were made immediately through that crisis. There was much debate as to whether President George W. Bush could lead this country. In the days following the attack, not only President Bush, but also men like Rudy Giuliani (New York City Mayor during the attacks) and many other men and women whose names we do not know became leaders simply because they were thrust into leadership positions.

There is an account of the church in acts growing at such a rate it required strong leadership quickly. The day of Pentecost had come and the men and women who had been waiting for the promise of Jesus to come (the Holy Spirit) was now at hand. The move of God was so great it poured out into

the streets and those who God had filled with His Spirit were speaking in languages they had not previously learned. It was a true miracle. Yet, observers were ridiculing those speaking saying they were drunk. Their reputation was being attacked.

At that moment Peter stood up and gave an incredible speech. At that moment he became the leader. He was thrown into the fire and withstood the pressure. He had been with Jesus for over three years. Now he was in the role of leading this band of brothers and the hundred or so who were with them.

By the end of the day the group had grown to over 3,000 followers. Because of Peter's willingness to step up during what could have been a very chaotic time, great results happened that day. Leadership by fire has the potential to raise up leaders that no one would have chosen, but all are glad they arrived.

It is important to understand that everyday you are training for such a moment of leadership. The story of David and Goliath is a perfect example of being ready at a moments notice to be thrust in the leadership fire. David was sent by his father to bring food to his brothers at the battle front. He was the pizza delivery boy.

Have you ever felt like you were capable of so much more than what you are being asked to do. At this point of David's assertion to the throne he had already been anointed to be king. He, his father, and his brothers knew David's destiny.

Yet, he was relegated to delivering food and watching sheep. But he was faithful to his assignment.

David protected the sheep from lions, bears, and I'm sure there were other times he had to ward off invaders and find shelter during storms. He honed his craft as a skilled marksman, song writer, and no doubt he practiced his speaking to his "flock". By the time he was "commissioned" by his father to deliver food he was ready to be launched into the forefront of warrior level leadership.

Never despise the place you are. You may feel you are being overlooked and you have so much to offer. David was in the back pasture when the palace called and said we have need of you. There is coming a time when the palace is going to call and say, "we have need of you. You are perfectly equipped and designed to rise to the warrior level leadership to face this Giant.

Common Denominators

Some of the greatest leaders of our time and times past have been those who were thrust into leadership. These were men and women who, being present in times of crisis, victory, disaster, war, or socio-economic shifts, rose to the challenge of leadership. When these people are studied we find that many had the skills and character to lead already resident in them. They were made for such a time. Circumstances of life, education, family, and diligence in learning the skills also

played a part in making them leaders. These leaders had different backgrounds, personalities, philosophies, and religious beliefs, yet there are some common denominators they shared.

What is Diligent Leadership?

Diligent Leadership is a special kind of leadership. It is not a position, but a lifestyle. Not a job description, but a mindset. Anyone who wants to be a good leader can lead with diligence. It simply takes initiative and an understanding of what truly makes up a Diligent Leader.

The common denominator in great leaders is diligence. These leaders are serious about the task at hand. They spend time, energy, and money becoming the best they can be.

Proverbs 12:24 says. "Work hard (Diligence) and become a leader, be lazy and become a slave (poverty)." The key to Diligent Leadership is hard work. There are two outcomes hard work brings or diligence bring according to Proverbs; direction and resources. When you determine in your life to be a diligent leader you will have all the resources and

direction you need to be effective in all you do.

The common denominator in great leaders is diligence. These leaders are serious about the task at hand. They spend time, energy, and money becoming the best they can be. Diligent Leaders do not expect life to just happen like the big bang theory. No, they realize they have to be diligent in their life, family, occupation, and position. In studying these leaders and the Biblical command to lead with diligence, we can identify ten traits Diligent Leaders have in common...

10 Traits of Leading with Diligence

Launch – To launch into the new

Establish – To establish so others can stand

Assist – To assist those who lead and follow

Deliver – To deliver what has been promised

Equalize – To bring balance and a standard

Resilient – To keep showing up

Stand – To know when to move and when to stand still

Honor – To honor and respect those in the

room

Integrity – To hold things together

**Protection – To protect leaders, followers,
and the brand**

LAUNCH

To launch is to:

Go Before

Stand before

Go first

Bring change

Set in motion

Romans 12:8, CEV

“...If we are leaders, we should do our best...”



Diligent Leaders come into the room and you feel the air move. Leaders change the environment. A true leader will have that effect whether they are the leader in the setting or not. Good leaders know how to operate in the setting and accept their position. Leaders make things move.

I pastor The Gate in the Chicagoland area. The major responsibility of the lead pastor is to lead the organization in a new and effective direction. Or at least that's what I thought. When I first became the pastor I was confronted by one of the long-time parishioners in my church. He was rather upset about some of the things I was doing. He told me I was changing things, and he didn't like it. Then he made a statement I will never forget. He said, "All you pastors do is change things!" You see, he had been around a long time and had been witness to many pastoral changes. Every time a new leader came into the church they wanted to make changes or start something new. When the longtime elder made the observation that all we pastors (leaders) do was change things, I was puzzled. I responded, "Isn't that what I'm here for?" I

couldn't imagine being in a position that was defined as the leader only to manage what was already in existence.

All leaders are managers but not all managers are leaders. In other words, there will be times you as a leader will focus and maintain for today but at some point you will have to move your attention to the better tomorrow. The focus of the leader will always be the future. His or her focus is on doing things excellently now in order to get to a better future. The leader who is content with “what is” and not focused on “what could be” isn't a leader, but a manager of today.

The leader who is content with “what is” and not focused on “what could be” isn't a leader, but a manager of today.

Leaders are always critiquing existing programs, structures, administration, and progress. Remember, there is a difference between being critical and critiquing. Being critical is bringing up problems without solutions, while critiquing says “I believe in what we are doing, but I think there might be a better way of doing it.” The Diligent Leader will always look for the best, most efficient, and most relevant way of conducting business.

A Diligent Leader must learn to launch new programs, systems, structures, and people in the right way or the new program or change will not be successful. Over the years, I have developed some strategies for a successful launch.

3 Steps to an Effective Launch

Step One – Communicate the Launch

Before you make any changes as a leader you need to have clear communication. The leader must communicate the need for the change, who the change is going to affect, and the benefits of the change. The leader needs to communicate with five different influencers in the organization.

There are different levels of influencers in any organization. Each level of influencer requires a different level of communication. The leader needs to understand the communication mode for each level as well as who is in each level of influence.

The 5 levels of influencers:

1. Core (Face-to-face communication and consultation)

These are the people who will help make the launch successful. They are the stakeholders in the organization, church, or family. If they don't buy into the vision, the vision is dead. Communication at this level is both informational and advice-seeking. The Core of the organization has insight needed to enact the change.

2. Committed (Leader-to-small group)

communication)

The Committed are those in your organization who lead with you or are committed to the cause. This group might include shareholders, department heads, and paid or volunteer staff. They have said they believe in the vision and commit to advancing the cause.

3. Congregation/Constituents (Large group communication)

The Congregation or Constituents are those who are affected by the changes. They are not the ones who will determine if the changes are made, but still need to be informed beforehand that the launch is coming. They are your “word of mouth” group. How you communicate the change to this group is important because they will promote it or kill it. Marketing the change here will determine if the launch will be successful.

4. Community(Public communication)

This is the public group of the organization. They are your customers, attenders, or moderate participators. They are not necessarily stakeholders or decision makers, but they will be affected by any change. The Community will make decisions to continue to attend or patronize the organization based on these decisions. It is important to clearly communicate the changes to them and ask for their support in making these changes effective.

5. Crowd (Informational communication)

The crowd should be the target of the organization. For example, to a church, the crowd is those who do not attend any church or have a specific faith. If the church is launching a new program or changing a service time, they can communicate this through social media and news releases.

For a business, the crowd would be your target. The crowd is those who do not know about your business or organization. This kind of communication helps promote the organization to those who may not know the organization exists.

Step Two – Consummate the Launch

Enact the change. Many times leaders talk about the change, and dream about the change, but never launch the change. What good is a ship that is built but never launched? The ship is of no use. Many leaders are of no use to the organization because they are the launcher of the ship but they never launch out into the deep. The biggest obstacle to the change, new program, or new business is simply not starting. There may be different reasons why a leader holds back from launching—fear, perfectionism, lack of self-belief, or not wanting to go public. Whatever the reason that is blocking you from starting, you must move past it and launch.

Step Three – Critique the Launch

It is possible the launch will be perfect and everything will go right—but not probable. Once the launch has taken place it is important to establish a system to critique the changes. Do not simply set things in motion and walk away. Just because you have changed things does not mean everyone has accepted or understood the changes. As with a garden, you have to continue to weed, water, and nurture. You must keep bringing about the needed corrections to make the launch and changes effective for the future.

ESTABLISH

To establish is to:

Put in place

Cause to stand

Lay foundation

Set walls

Promote

Romans 12:8, NLT

“...If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously...”



An essential role of the Diligent Leader is to establish so that others can stand. This is what parenting is all about. I am a Papa (grandfather) now and I must tell you, I am so glad I established my son as a man, husband, and father. I do not have to run to his assistance very often. He leads his family and I get to enjoy my grandchildren and not raise them.

Establishing simply means to put something in place, set the foundation, or promote. Upon writing and signing the Constitution of the United States, the Founding Fathers understood they were establishing a government and country that could stand for centuries. Even our modern-day arguments and debates all refer back to the document written and signed over 220 years ago.

The Diligent Leader's responsibility is not only to look to the future and launch something, but also to launch it in such a way that it will last—to establish what is launched. The idea of establishing something takes time. My son is not a good husband or dad simply because he married and became a father. It took years of preparation in our home, hours of

discussions, and days and weeks and months of consistent example of what a man is and should be.

The Diligent Leader's responsibility is not only to look to the future and launch something, but also to launch it in such a way that it will last—to establish what is launched.

Diligent leaders have the responsibility to launch into new territory, projects, and ventures. However, if all the leader does is launch he or she is not diligent in their leadership. Launching is easy and rather exhilarating. Establishing is hard, tedious, and mundane. I have witnessed many leaders launch a new product, company, church, idea, or concept only to

have it fail within five years. Over 80% of all new business fail within the first five years. Much of that is due to over estimating the power of launching and underestimating the power of establishing.

Establishing is much like foundation setting and about as exciting. Think about your house. How many times do you get complements on the decorations of your house? How many times have you received a complement on the foundation of your house?

I have found that the older a house is the more people will say things like, “wow, your house must have a good

foundation,” or “this house has good bones.” The reason for that is because the older something is the more its foundation is the reason. The better the foundation the stronger and longer lasting the structure.

The story of the wise and foolish builder in Matthew is a great picture of establishing as a leader. The foolish builder built his house on the sand. The wise builder built his house on the rock. The storms came and the house on the sand collapsed. The house built on the rock withstood the winds.

The Diligent Leader understands that difficult times will come and only what is established will remain.

The same is true in leadership and organizations. If you set a good foundation and establish good communication, good systems and procedures, and policies and structures the likelihood of a strong and lasting organization, program, or concept grows exponentially.

The Diligent Leader understands the power of 3 things in establishing what is being launched. The power of time, talk, and talent.

3 Requirements for Establishing:

1. Time

It takes time to establish an organization, church, or community group. It is not simply changing something and

expecting it to last. Diligent Leaders base their decisions on establishing a strong foundation and structure.

There is no such thing as quality over quantity of time. The only way to have quality is to have quantity. I hear parents say they may not have a lot of time with their kids but they have quality time. There is no such thing. Quality time is achieved when there is trust, and trust is achieved when there has been sufficient time spent to know each other (i.e. quantity). In a business, organization, church, or small group, the importance of time in establishing something cannot be underestimated.

Sometimes a leader cannot establish something new simply because he or she has not been the leader long enough. You have to decide if you are willing to invest the time needed for what you want established to be accomplished. Over the last three decades I have contemplated this concept of time and if I am willing to launch something according the amount of time it will take to establish the launch.

There have been things I wanted to do but did not have the time or the longevity of time to establish the endeavor. In other words, I had to wait until I had been around long enough to be trusted. I have also counted the time cost and decided the amount of time it would take to launch was not worth the outcome.

2. Talk

The church I lead is more than one hundred years old and I have been in leadership in this church for over thirty of those

years. Over the decades there have been seasons where new programs, structures, and outreaches have been established. During those times the amount of talking that took place varied. The successful outcomes were often noted by many discussions, conversations, and sometimes debates with key stakeholders. Not everyone got his or her way in every circumstance, but we talked and talked and talked. Sometimes we were able to come to an agreement and other times we had to agree to disagree.

3. Talent

When establishing something that will last, make sure you are talking to the right people. It does not make much sense to talk to a plumber if you need to set the foundation of your new house. In the same way, do not spend a lot of time talking with people about something you want to establish simply because they have been on the team longer than anyone else. True, you need to enlist the support of the influencers and stakeholders. Yet, they may not be the best ones to establish the new structure in order for the structure to last. Get talented people around you who can help you make informed decisions during the establishing process.

Establishing can be a burden and overwhelming. The temptation to quit because it is too hard or there are more questions than answers, will always be there. Do not short cut this process. If you do, you will be part of the 80% that fail instead of the 20% that succeed.

ASSIST

To assist is to:

Give aid

Instruct

Mentor

Attend

Be near

Romans 12:8, Knox Bible

“...exercising authority with anxious care...”



Diligent Leaders assist those around them. This is, in many cases, a missed component of leadership. Diligent Leaders are basically helpers. The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership. Diligent Leaders fix problems, teach, mentor, stand near, and don't let go too quickly.

Part of the leaders responsibility is to raise other leaders. True leaders do not create more followers. True leaders create more leaders. The leader who simply retreats back into the tower is only concerned with those he or she leads following his or her directives.

The Diligent Leader wants those she leads to be able to lead without being in the room. In order for that to happen it takes

great patience and time.

Diligent Leaders have not been called to decree dictates but to model, mentor, and motivate. That can only be done along side, assisting in order to make a leader.

A good leader should never be leading alone. One of the greatest mistakes

leaders make that cost them is doing it alone. Doing what alone, you ask? Anything! Diligent Leaders should always have someone else who wants to be a leader around.

In my role as a pastor, I have learned there are frequent moments of leadership that can be used as teaching moments. For example, I never went on hospital calls alone. I would have a young person go with me, and I would tell them to watch everything I did. Donald CcGannon said, "Leadership is an action not a position." Many occupations have apprentices, or interns. Diligent Leaders take the concept of journeymen and apprentice and apply it to leadership. Paul did that with Timothy, Moses did that with Joshua, Elijah did that with Elisha. Diligent Leaders understand that they will not always be around and someone will carry on.

Afterwards, we would talk about what they witnessed. In business, family, volunteerism, and community, there are

Leadership is about make others better as a result of your presence and making sure that impact lasts in your absence. Sheryl Sanberg-FaceBook

always times to teach. Being an assisting leader forces you to learn continually and connect with the upcoming generation. The next generation looks at things differently. Connecting with them allows you to gain a new perspective.

Diligent Leaders are humble and open enough to be questioned on how he or she does something. They are flexible. If they make a mistake, they get back up on the bike and ride—and they teach their followers to do the same.

Diligent Leaders are willing to tell someone they are training, “You’re not ready yet,” and then continue to walk with them until they are. You change the culture by your example not your opinion. Diligent Leaders must always be willing to be honest and clear in assisting those around them. And vulnerable enough to say as the Apostle Paul said, “Follow my example as I also follow the example of Christ.” 1 Corinthians 11:1 NIV

AAA of Assisting

There are three areas of a leader's responsibility to assist those he or she leads' attention, affirmation, and application.

1. Attention – Pay attention to them

Diligent Leaders pay attention to their people and stay near them. They do not revert back to the ivory tower only to send orders down the organizational flow chart. Diligent Leaders

assist in fixing problems, give advice, and know their people enough to know what kind of aid they need.

2. Affirmation – Build them up

Diligent Leaders work at affirming those they lead, building up those around them, and encouraging them to do what they do not feel they can do on their own.

Affirmation means to assert that something exists. When you affirm someone you are acknowledging their existence—they matter, they make a difference. Affirming those you lead tells them you couldn't do it without them.

Affirmation also means to assert that something is true. Affirmation is not flattery or false compliments. Affirmation is a true belief in someone. The affirming leader will look someone in the eye and be honest with them as to their value and ability.

When I was teaching my children to ride a bicycle, I didn't put them on one and expect them to know how to ride. They started with a tricycle and graduated to a bicycle with training wheels. At some point, my kids would want me to take the training wheels off. But I knew if my child wasn't ready. I would say, "Son, soon you will be ready to ride without the training wheels—but not yet."

Leaders let go too quickly sometimes. If a leader lets go too quickly, in all probability those who are following will fail.

Affirmation is not only asserting someone's existence but also the truth of where they are in life.

3. Application – Apply what they learn

Diligent leaders help those they lead apply what they have learned. Application is the secret to any successful mission. Without application, the greatest missions become the poorest wishes, the saddest “would have’s,” and the sorriest “could have’s” instead of the greatest triumphs. Too many times leaders talk about leadership, teach leadership, and raise up leaders, but never let them lead or put into practice what they have observed or learned.

Sometimes leaders can best assist those around them by allowing them to fail. When I was teaching my kids to ride a bike I didn't show them pictures of a bike, have them watch videos of how to pedal a bike, or have them listen to someone who had ridden a bike. No, I bought them a bike—before they knew how to ride it—and put them on it. They stared out with training wheels, but eventually the training wheels came off and they were riding around the neighborhood.

The same is true with assisting those around us. I wasn't afraid of my kids falling off the bike. In fact, I knew they would. I allowed them to ride the bike anyway. When they did fall, I was there to explain why they fell and help them back on the bike.

DELIVER

To Deliver is to:

Earnestly Achieve

Seriously Arrive

Continually Invest

Action

Finish

Romans 12:8, Amplified Bible

“...he who gives aid and superintends,
with zeal and singleness of mind...”



Diligent Leaders are focused and take leadership seriously. They are men and women of action. Diligent Leadership is action not position. Diligent Leaders always show up and deliver on what they commit to. It is important for leaders to be people who produce, because it is difficult to follow someone who doesn't accomplish anything. Delivering on your promise as a leader will garner trust among your followers. To be a leader who delivers you must be dedicated, decisive, and disciplined. It is up to you. No one else will do it for you. President Theodore Roosevelt quipped, "if you could kick the power on in the pants responsible for most of your trouble, you wouldn't be able to sit for a month."

Dedicated

A leader who delivers is one who is dedicated to seeing the job done. He or she does not just start the project but completes the project. He has zeal and singleness of mind to ensure the project is successful. Nothing is impossible if you dedicate

your mind toward a goal every day. You will find a way to make it happen. Diligent Leaders can deliver because they are dedicated to the people they lead and the vision they pursue.

Dedication brings focus to the leader. Starve your distractions and feed your focus. It is like having blinders on to avoid getting distracted. Many times the leader becomes distracted by different demands placed on him or her. Set up times of focus where you are not and cannot be distracted. Some practical things you can do to stay focused; turn off notifications on all your devices, create a focus space where there is no phone, tv, or even windows. Create a system in which people know you are not to be disturbed. It could be a closed door, sign on the door, a place that no one knows. I have a couple of places I go that no one knows about. When I am there I can focus without disruption or distraction.

Dedication can give the leader the ability to say no to certain expectations or demands in order to fulfill the task at hand. If you are not dedicated, you will be pulled in many different directions with nothing accomplished and nothing delivered.

Decisive

Diligent Leaders are willing and able to make decisions. The decisions leaders make affect not only the leader, but also those he leads. The leader affects the future of the company, church, organization, or community he leads. This is why it is important for him to be diligent in his leadership and make

decisions with sound judgment. General Douglas McArthur stated, “A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others. He does not set out to be a leader, but becomes one by the equality of his actions and the integrity of his intent.”

The Diligent Leader must not hesitate or be indecisive. Diligent Leaders are well informed. They research and ask questions of those who have knowledge in the area they are making the decision. There is a story in the Bible where Debra a Judge in Israel and Barak, the general of Israel’s army were going to battle. The tribe of Reuben, part of Israel, did not go with them. The Bible says that there was much indecision on the tribe of Reuben. (Judges 5:15). The account goes on to say that the Tribe of Reuben stayed at home in the sheep pen. Sometimes leaders hesitate to make decisions because the decision will cause them to leave their comfort zone (home) or they do not want to upset their followers or stakeholders (sheep pen). When the leader is indecisive there is much distraction from those around and circumstances. Decisive leaders are able to fight the battles that need to be fought and are ready to take on new ground that needs to be taken.

Remember that every decision you make is an investment in the organization or group you lead. The longer you are the leader, the more invested you become. Your family, time, resources, and life are invested. This is a good thing, but it can

cause you to be cautious because the longer you remain in your position, the more you have to lose.

Hold onto your leadership position loosely. Continue to make the decisions that are best for the organization and not your survival. Many leaders cannot deliver on what they promise simply because they cannot or do not make a decision. Diligent Leaders are decisive leaders.

Disciplined

Leadership is not a game we play. Diligent Leaders are disciplined. The undisciplined are slaves to moods, appetites and passions. Being disciplined means to have boundaries in your behavior and work. You are controlled in how you do your job. Diligent Leaders have boundaries in how they live, lead, and work. As a leader you need to be disciplined in every area of your life: physical, mental, social, and spiritual. You cannot deliver without being disciplined. In his book *Self Discipline*, Zero Dean states, “Your ability to listen to and take action based on your inner voice, regardless of how you feel, other influences, or temptations you face, is the key to self-mastery.”

You have to get to a point where your mood doesn't shift based on the insignificant actions of someone else.

It is said that self-control is strength and calmness is mastery. You have to get to a point where your mood doesn't shift based on the insignificant actions of someone else. Don't allow others to control the direction of your life. Don't allow your emotions to overpower your intelligence.

Athletes who win championships, gold medals, or titles do not win them on the field, in the ring, or on the court. They won those awards every morning they practiced, every afternoon they watched film, every time they sat down and ate the right food. Diligent Leaders are disciplined in the same way. Learn your craft, exercise, work at having healthy relationships—most importantly your marriage—and develop a strong faith (relationship with God).

EQUALIZE

To equalize is to:

Place in balance

Weigh the matter

Alleviate pressure

Bring a standard of measure

Romans 12:8, NCV

"...Anyone who has the gift of being a leader should try hard when he leads..."



A leader needs to be an equalizer. Diligent Leaders take us places but they also keep us balanced. In history we see different kinds of leaders. Special men and women who were willing to go out into the wilderness and carve out trading posts, towns, governments, and communities built our country. Some of these men and women were called pathfinders and others were called pioneers. They each led differently. Pathfinders went out alone and made the path for those who would follow. Pioneers led the people to settle along the path found by the pathfinders. Diligent Leaders are both pathfinders and pioneers. The need for the leader to bring a sense of both forward progression and a stable environment is imperative.

Bringing balance to the organization takes time on the leader's part. He or she spends time observing those they lead, studying the different areas of the organization. The leader is able to see areas of imbalance in the individual and the organization—areas that are over spending or have too many people are noted. The Diligent Leader is able to bring about a balance within the organization.

Create a place of balance

A leader's responsibility is to lead people through times of growth, trouble, victory, and defeat. Diligent Leaders have the ability to bring balance in any of these times, whether good or bad. I remember times when fire and floods would come to an area. The reports were dismal and it seemed that homes, businesses, and entire cities were going to be destroyed.

During Hurricane Katrina, pressure on many dikes and dams became unbalanced. If the pressure was not balanced, the dike would break. Those who were monitoring the dikes realized they needed to alleviate the pressure. They would open dams or break dikes in areas that would flood open fields—and sometimes smaller communities. Causing certain areas to flood seems destructive, yet it would balance the pressure on the dyke and save the most people and largest communities.

In order to stop a wild fire from devouring all the land, fire fighters will start a fire ahead of the main destructive to create a boundary the fire cannot cross. Diligent Leaders have the responsibility to look at the whole of the organization they lead and know when it is out of balance. They must be able to equalize and create a place of balance.

Weigh the matter

The tendency for many leaders is to rally behind the area of the organization that is growing and generating profit or growth.

Yet Diligent Leaders will observe the entire organization and give support in all areas. If one area of the organization is out of balance with the other areas, it can create a fire that will consume the entire vision. This is how God deals with His leaders, both in the church and in the community.

There is a story in the Bible of a king who violated the things of God. When he did, a hand came down and wrote on the wall. The meaning of what was written on the wall was. “You have been weighed and you have come up short.”

Diligent Leaders are in good company when they weigh the matter. Sometimes Diligent Leaders have to weigh those they lead to see if those in the organization are leading according to the principles of the organization whether it is a church, community group, family, company, or school.

Before coins of certain denominations were used for money, gold and silver were used. The gold and silver was weighed to determine the value. In order to determine the weight of the gold, and in turn its value, the gold or silver was placed in a balance. On one side of the balance was the measure weight; on the other side of the balance, the gold. The gold would be weighed in the balance and when each side of the balance was equal, the value would be known.

It is important for leaders to have a standard of measurement to know when an area is out of balance. If you are the leader you need to be a person of balance and standard. As the leader you need to be willing to oversee the entire organization, not just the area or areas you are passionate

about or the areas that are causing the greatest growth and enthusiasm.

When I first started leading an organization I was not interested in maintenance and upkeep. I would put all resources—energy, finances, people into growth and outreach endeavors. As we continued in our leadership the facilities, equipment, and tools to carry out the projects and visions we had were wearing out and breaking down. There was not any margin or resource to upgrade or maintain the facilities and equipment. We were out of balance.

Diligent leaders realize it is much more attractive and desirable to buy a new couch, but fixing or purchasing a new furnace is just as, if not more important. Everyone sees the new couch, sits on the new couch, compliments you on your ability and capacity for couch selecting. Yet once they realize they have to keep their coat on, they leave.

King Solomon gave us the insight of Diligent leaders who equalize and bring balance to the organization.

**“For everything there is a season, a time for every
activity**

A time to be born and a time to die

A time to plant and a time to harvest

A time to kill and a time to heal

A time to tear down and a time to build up

A time to cry and a time to laugh

A time to grieve and a time to dance

A time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones

**A time to embrace and a time to turn away
A time to search and a time to quit searching
A time to tear and a time to mend
A time to be quiet and a time to speak
A time to love and time to hate
A time to war and a time for peace”**

-Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 NLT

Diligent leaders know what time it is and what resources to use, and where to use them.

RESILIENT

Resilient is to:

Say, "I'll Be back"

Step back

Fight another day

Keep Going

Reinvent or Retool

Romans 12:8, CEB

"...The leader should lead with passion..."



In order to be more effective in changing times, the Diligent Leader must be resilient. A resilient leader is a leader who can fail and get back up, who will realize when what he or she is doing is no longer affective and make the necessary changes, who has the Timex watch mentality. Many years ago the Timex Watch Company had a promotion campaign. The promotional advertisements would show different situations of a Timex watch being dropped, put through water, smashed and in each scenario the watch would keep ticking. At the end of the add the words and voice would proclaim “Timex—it takes a licking and keeps on ticking. The Diligent Leader takes a licking and keeps on ticking. Being resilient is the ability to withstand or recover quickly form difficult decisions. It is hard to be resilient. The basic idea of resilience is that the leader keeps coming back, doesn’t quit, stays in the same place, and continues to move forward in the face of opposition. “Life does not get easier or more forgiving, we get stronger and more resilient.” Steve Maraboli

Sometimes resiliency is the ability to shift in focus. In other words, what was effective in the past may be ineffective today.

Your good idea in one season is a bad idea in the next. I have been in my current position for over thirty years. I will never forget a meeting I was in with my leaders. They were talking about some of the things we were doing and how out of date and ineffective these programs were. I started getting a little ticked off, because all the ideas they were saying were out of date and ineffective were my ideas. They were my ideas fifteen years ago. I realized if I am going to be a resilient I had to change. What was a good idea fifteen years ago was a bad idea today.

3 Keys to Being Resilient:

1. Reinvent or Retool

Culture has changed in so many ways. In just the past five years technology and communication have dramatically influenced how the world relates to one another. Leaders who are unwilling to adjust in the face of culture and paradigm shifts will not be able to reinvent or retool themselves or their organizations. I heard a new “beatitude”(not really but the principle is good)—“Blessed are the flexible for they shall not be broken.” Diligent leaders are willing to shift focus, change direction, move in a new way.

During the covid pandemic of 2020 leaders were faced with insurmountable obstacles. The difficulty for companies, churches, families, schools, and municipalities became almost

debilitating. For many, the decisions and pivots have become so overwhelming they have elected to simply close their doors.. Yet there were some leaders who thrived during the shutdown and continued social distancing mandates. Elizabeth Edwards said, “Resilience is accepting your new reality, even if it’s less good than the one you had before. You can fight it, you can do nothing but scream about what you’ve lost, or you can accept that and try to put together something that is good.” Diligent Leaders have mastered the ability to pivot and move in the direction that is most affective and profitable.

2. Step back

Being willing to put aside what used to work, even if it was your idea, is the mark of a Diligent Leader. The ability to bounce back speaks to the leader’s humility and tenacity. Humility means that the leader realizes that what was working is no longer working and is willing to change. “It’s your reaction to adversity not adversity itself that determines how your life’s story will develop.” Dieter Uchtdorf.

You may have to retool, reinvent, restore visions and ideas you have, but do it. Don't settle on, "I tried and it didn't work", find a way.

On December 9, 1914, Thomas Edison suffered an incredible loss when his warehouse and laboratory burned to the ground. Much of his records, experiments, and inventions were lost. Because of all the different elements and chemicals in the laboratory, the fire was brilliant with

many different colors. He was quoted as saying to his son, "Go get your mother, we will never see something this beautiful again." Within three weeks Edison was back at the laboratory working. He knew how to step back and not allow the loss to discourage him.

3. Fight another day

Realize that not every fight has to be fought, not every wall has to be conquered, and not every river has to be crossed all in the same day. Winston Churchill once said, "You will never reach your destination if you stop and through stones at every dog that barks." Sometimes what stands in your way doesn't even need to be acknowledged. Simply go around the obstacle and move on. Marcus Aurelius said, "The impediment to action advances action. What stands in the way becomes the way." In other words, sometimes the opposition or obstacle is there in

order to move you in a direction you wouldn't normally go. God has a way of using things that seem bad or destructive to move you to where He want you to go. Paul said this this way, "He works all things together for our good."

Resilient leaders know how to call it a day and come back to the fight tomorrow. They also know what fight to simply walk away from in order to get closer to the destination. Diligent Leaders do not set out to be leaders, they set out to make a difference. It's never about the role but always about the goal. Remember the outcome, goal, or destination is the focus not the obstacles, opposition, or distractions along the way. Determine no matter what happens today you will continue to progress, get back up, take another route. You will never quit, stop, give up, or throw in the towel. That is just not in your DNA, personality, or ability. You are a diligent Leader that is resilient and cannot be stopped.

The Diligent Leader always ends his or her day with... "I'll be back..."

STAND

To stand is to:

Stop

Be immovable

Be still

Be prepared

Be ready

Romans 12:8, GNT

“...whoever has authority should work hard...”



To stand means you are not going forward or backward. You are simply standing still. We are taught as leaders we need to be going somewhere, doing something, or saying something. However, sometimes a leader is called to stand and be present. That's all. This is among the most difficult of times for leaders, but if they can master these moments, they can lead with excellence.

In most cases, leadership is moving people from point A to point B and so on. Yet there are those times when an organization is standing still or at a plateau. This can happen for a number of reasons. The leader who can guide an organization through these times with success will be not only valued, but also trusted.

The risk of losing momentum is greater in the standing times. People begin to feel the vision that has been cast is not really going to happen because they cannot see anything happening. If a standing time lasts for a long period of time, the leader risks losing focus and can become highly discouraged. This is where Diligent Leaders rely on the vision

they have been given. They are determined not to quit, not to be distracted, and not to become discouraged.

A key to leading through the standing times is to consistently keep sharing the vision and to be present. Make sure you are in the halls, rooms, emails, social media, and meetings. It is important that those in the organization see you still believing the vision.

3 Steps to Standing:

1. Stand Still

Know when to move and when not to move. In standing times the leader's position is more important than in movement times. In the Bible, Moses had to lead and guide much more when the Israelites were camped in one place for a long period of time than when they were moving toward a new area. Movement is within its self an occupation yet when the organization, family, church, community or people group are at a "stand still" there must be a focused effort on occupation. This is why God said "occupy until I come." Luke 19:13.

My daughter had been have some difficulty in a relationship when she was young. She so desperately wanted to take the initiative and deal with the issue. Yet every time she tried to take care of the situation it seemed to backfire. Finally she looked at me with exasperation and asked what she should do. I asked her one simple question, "Have you done all you can do

to stand?” She said, “yes.” Then I replied, “Then Stand.” The Diligent leader know when all has been done and instead of continuing to act, move, or deal, you must simply stand. The Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 6:13, “After you have done all to sand then, stand.”

2. Be Ready and Prepared

Do not waste the time spent standing. This is not the time to take a break, a nap, or a vacation. Take this time to study, seek God, and prepare for the next movement. This is a time that allows you to become very confident in your leadership. Pay attention to the plan and don't lose focus. Arnold Glasow said, “One of the tests of leadership is the ability to recognize a problem before it becomes an emergency.” During these days you will receive revelation on how to anticipate problems, questions, and opposition. These are strategy days. Allow God to give you divine strategy for the next move. Interview, research, visit, other who are doing what your are moving into.

Prepare for every feasible question and problem. When you are able to have an answer for every question and a solution for each problem *before* those in your who are affected come, your leadership and influence will increase. Those that follow you will feel safe and secure, because you have prepared, even if they do not necessarily agree.

Some may come and try to distract you as the leader. The tendency will be to trash the plan or the vision because nothing is happening. Don't worry if you are not where you want to

be. Great things take time. Some might even question your leadership because what you said was going to happen has not yet happened. Stay the course and keep focused even in the event there is opposition to the plan. Just because it took longer than others does not mean you failed—Remember that.

3. Stay Steadfast of Mind

Remember, timing is in God's hands, not yours. You can try to build, but it will be in vain. This can apply to any area of your life and leadership from family, community, church, and career. When you are willing to stay steadfast in your mind and not waver your leadership begins to increase in influence.

**Psalm 127:1 says,
"Unless the Lord
build the house,
they build in
vein..."**

If you establish something, live by it. Apostle James indicates that if you remain steadfast in the face of opposition and testing you will see life and be rewarded, James 1:12. It takes an incredible amount of time to get from the brain to the behavior. During the standing or steadfast times the leader is guiding people from one behavior to another. Once the new behavior is fully grasped, reality sets in. People begin to understand what the launch has changed.

There may be some who do not like the change or long for how it used to be. It can feel like the vision or change is

under attack. “Your voice is strongest when you remain firm, when you are not moved by your circumstance. For we must not permit others to define who we are or what we stand for.”—Lorna Jacki Wilson. Understand that most people do not like change and it simply feels like an attack. Be sensitive and patient. It is important to remember the decision has already been made. Don’t rethink it but stay steadfast in your mind.

HONOR

To honor is to:

Acknowledge the person

Understand authority

Stand on purity

Build on truth

Give

Romans 12:8, Phillips

“...let the man who wields authority think of his responsibility...”



Many leaders strive to receive honor, but Diligent Leaders are more concerned with giving honor. In this culture which is more and more anti-authority, it is important for the leader to give honor where honor is due—and even when it is not due.

Bruce Lee stated, “Humility forms the basis of honor, just as the low ground forms the foundation of a high elevation.” The Diligent Leader is humble enough to not demand honor and respect but to give it and let his life of service be enough honor.

The biggest enemy to honor is personal right. The minute you become concerned about your rights and position you will stop giving honor and start demanding it. Your position and the rights you have in that position become more important. John Greenfield Wittier, the great American poet of the 1800’s wrote, “When faith is lost, when honor dies, the man is dead.”

The foundation of honor is purity and truth. Honor is something we give and demand of ourselves and never of others. Once it is demanded of others, honor is lost and becomes the very thing we are waring against,

our rights. The greatest of all willingly laid down his rights, his position, his voice and as a sheep to the slaughter is dumb, He did not open His mouth. (John 1:36)

King David understood the principle of honoring even when it seemed honor was not due. While King Saul was chasing and trying to kill him, David had the opportunity to harm Saul on two separate occasions. One of those occasions David was close enough to King Saul while King Saul slept that he cut of a piece of the Kings garment.

David's men encouraged David to kill King Saul at that moment. David could have reasoned that he had the right. After all he had already been anointed by God to become the next King. David could have claimed self defense, in that Saul had, on many occasions tried to kill him or have David killed. On two different occasions David was playing and singing for King Saul and Saul was so tormented by David's success and potential rivalry that King Saul hurled his spear at David. Yet David refused to lay a hand on King Saul, even though he had a "right" to kill him.

If you demand your rights above honor, your purpose and place at the table of life is no longer.

David's response to his men who counseled David to kill Saul was insightful. The account is found in 1 Samuel 24:8-13. David simply said that King Saul was God's anointed king, and he would not lift a hand against King Saul for that reason. John Bevere said it this way, "True honor is an outflow from a heart that fears God." In other words David was a man after God's own heart and if God had anointed Saul who was David to violate that anointing.

Honor is simply to acknowledge someone's position and place in the organization, community, family, church, team, or company and regard him or her within that position. Honor has nothing to do with how others honor or respect you. Dave Willis said, "Show respect even to people who don't deserve it; not as a reflection of their character but as a reflection of yours". I would add honor to that as well.

You cannot control people's response to you, and how you honor someone is not determined by how they honor you. It is your responsibility as a leader to give honor, not to demand it. Aristotle said, "You will never do anything in this world without courage. It is the greatest quality of the mind next to honor." Honor gives room for a person to be who they are. When honor is given, it is a credit to who they are and the position they hold.

Understand your position

Remember that even though you are the leader, you still need

to honor and respect those in the room. Many times parents feel they do not have to give honor or respect to their children simply because they are the parents—even when their children are grown and parents themselves. Executives may dishonor subordinates in the work place who are not in a leadership role within the organization. Leaders who truly understand the position of leadership understand that honor must be given to those who we follow as leaders and those who follow us.

Understand their position

Leaders are put in positions to stand before those who have more authority than they currently have. The Diligent Leader understands his position within the organization, but also the position of others within the organization. It is easy to assume that since you are the leader everyone honors you. As a leader you have a responsibility to honor those who have authority in other areas. President Calvin Coolidge stated, “No person was ever honored for what he received. Honor has been the reward for what he gave.” The Diligent Leader is responsible to not only give honor but to also place those who are honorable in positions of leadership and authority.

A Diligent Leader will understand the positions of those within the organization. For example, a department head may have a certain procedure or protocol to follow. The leader of the organization honors the department head by abiding by his or her policy. Mary Kay Ash once said, “We treat people

like royalty. If you honor and serve the people who work for you, they will honor and serve you.” I am the lead minister the church I pastor, yet on Sunday when I pull into the parking lot I abide by the parking lot attendant’s direction. I understand that even though I lead the whole, I dishonor those who lead in part when I do not follow their lead.

INTEGRITY

Integrity is to:

Hold together

Keep together

Maintain the foundation

Focus

Romans 12:8, NIV

"...if it is to lead, do it diligently..."



The Diligent Leader has the ability to hold things together. The word integrity is used here not in the sense of being truthful or the private world matching the public world, but in the foundational sense. When speaking of a ship's hull one might say, "The integrity of the hull has been compromised." It is the idea of keeping something together. The group or organization which has integrity is held together and has a strong foundation. And the leader is essential to keeping the integrity of the group intact.

The ability to keep the integrity of the group strong is crucial in team building. The leader must know the team members. A Diligent Leader spends time with each of his key team members in order to know them and see how they fit into the team, what place they have at the table, and what they offer to make the team better.

Focus on Unity

It is important for the leader to work toward unity. Without unity, the organization will not be effective or progress toward

the stated goal. Unity does not mean unanimous agreement from everyone. The idea that everyone will always agree is not probable or possible. Each group of people is made up of different personalities, interests, skill sets, and motives.

Unity simply means bringing all the differences together in order to accomplish something that could not be accomplished without each other. Diligent leaders can not overestimate trust or underestimate its value.

Trust among the team is the key component of integrity.

When those that follow truly trust that you have their best interest at heart they are willing to be led, corrected, taught, and mentored. When those on the team are not sure they

are valued, protected, or supported, they will begin to, see and have ulterior motives, compete with teammates, view correction as attacks.

A team is not a group of people who work together. A team is a group of people who trust each other. Simon Sinek

Focus on Team

Keeping the team going in the same direction is a difficult task that must be accomplished if the organization is going to have a future. Leading for integrity is much like heading cats. It is

almost impossible. Yet, Diligent Leaders excel at keeping the crew together.

In Ephesians chapter four we are told that the leaders are to *equip* those they lead to carry out the work of service. When Diligent Leaders are focused on equipping those they lead the character of the team is maturity, full measure, and unity.

The word equip has a three fold meaning. Equipping is used as a medical, technical and social or political term.

First, set broken bones.

Diligent Leaders take note of those on the team that may be dealing with internal issues. There may be trust issues, wounds from the past, relationship issues. The Diligent Leader does not discount the person on the team but rather leads them through to freedom from the brokenness. Just as a doctor will set a broken bone, sometimes the diligent Leader will have to take the time to set the broken areas back into place. If the area of brokenness is not set properly the area will heal out of alignment, just as a bone not set will heal out of alignment. The Diligent Leader realizes his or her role in adding value and building up those on the team individually as well as corporately.

Second, mend broken nets.

This is an area of team, system, and process relevance. Broken nets happen. The longer a fisherman uses the nets, the

likelihood the nets will break or wear out simply by continual use. In the same way a team is like a fishermen net. Strong and tied together the net will not allow anything to slip through. When the team is strong nothing slips through the cracks. As times change, the systems, processes, and possibly team members, become worn out, irrelevant, or not effective. It is the responsibility of the Diligent Leader to know when the team, systems, and processes needs to be mended or restructured

Third, bring political factions together.

Diligent Leaders understand that his or her team is a social network. The team are not inanimate objects, static concepts, or arbitrary systems and processes. There are times of relational contention, political aligning, and personal desire, that threaten the unity, maturity, and full measure of the team. Diligent Leaders realize that bringing team members together during these times is one of the most important roles he or she has.

The Diligent Leader has the responsibility to focus on the whole of the team. His or her position is for the good of the team. The Diligent Leader will put the good of the team above his or her own personal wishes, interests, or expectations.

Focus on Foundation

Always remind those you lead *why* you do what you do. The foundation of the organization, be it a church, business, family, school, or nation, sets the course of action. In order to give your company, church, school, community organization, or family a solid foundation, you must develop a clear mission, a well-articulated vision and values that resonate with the customers or constituents you are trying to reach.

Many times families lose their way because they do not know why they exist. Churches, nations, businesses, or schools stop being effective or profitable because they lose sight of their founding. Ask yourself, “What is the foundation of the group I lead? Why do we exist? Why are we here?” If you do not know, you will not keep the integrity of the group together. Simon Sinek in his book, “Start with Why” States, “All organizations start with WHY, but only the great ones keep their WHY clear year after year. Those who forget WHY they were founded show up to the race every day to outdo someone else instead of to outdo themselves. The pursuit, for those who lose sight of WHY they are running the race, is for the medal or to beat someone else.”

The vision of why we exist must be stated in different forms ever 30 to 45 days. Our vision statement for the church I lead is, “To lead a person from the Crowd of the world into the Core of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.” We have shortened the vision statement down to simply “Crowd to Core”. We put

this on T-shirts, cards, posters, on the walls, on social media. It is constantly in front of the team and the community at large. We do not let those who are part of our tribe forget our “WHY”.

PROTECT

To protect is to:

Stand guard

Be a gatekeeper

Defend the Beliefs

Promote the Brand

Romans 12:8, MSG

“...if you're put in charge, don't
manipulate...”



The Diligent Leader is responsible for protecting those he leads, the organization he is responsible for, and the position he or she has been given. Leaders are gatekeepers that do not allow outside negative forces to penetrate and deteriorate. Diligent Leaders have a “father” or “mother” quality to them.

There is strength within the leader that gives the impression no one messes with those in their organization. This is not to say that she or the team is unapproachable, simply that certain things will not be allowed within the organization, or to come into the team.

When I became the leader of my first team, I established a set of character qualities that were expected in the members of the team. Some of the qualities were required in order to be selected to be on the team, such as loyalty, no racism, and honesty.

I was not interested in having to teach these character qualities. This is protecting the team. A leader has a responsibility to set the standard and keep it.

Protect 3 things

1 – Protect the leaders

Diligent Leaders protect their leaders. If you put people in leadership positions, trust them to do the job. If someone comes and complains, undermines, or gossips about one of your leaders, be loyal to your leader. Ask if they have brought the concern to the leader in question.

When I was training my children to take responsibility, I would put the oldest in charge when my wife and I would not be home. I would sit all three children down and tell them Nathan (my oldest) was in charge while we were gone. If he said to do something they were to do it. I expected my daughters to do exactly what he said. When my daughters were older I would set them in charge the same way.

2 – Protect the followers

It is important for the leader to understand he is to protect those following in the organization. People will not stay in a family, church, school, nation, or company if they do not feel safe. Much of the disintegration of the family today is due to the lack of leadership or the leader protecting his wife and children.

In the above example of me leaving my son in charge, I would continue after telling my kids that Nathan was in charge. I would look at Nathan and say, “If you abuse this

and have them do things they shouldn't do, you will answer to me.” It is important for leaders to protect the leaders, but it is also equally important for leaders to protect the followers. We see such abuse of this in our communities when those who are in authority use their position to take advantage of people. Whether it is a policeman, judge, pastor, elder, lawyer, teacher, father or mother, if any of these leaders act selfishly the Diligent Leader will protect the followers and deal with the abusive leaders.

3 – Protect Brands, Banners, & Beliefs

Diligent Leaders are the standard bearers, and in many ways become the “brand” of the organization. The longer a leader is the leader, the more he or she becomes the face, personality, or image of the organization. In the United States, where our leaders are elected, certain people became the picture of the nation because of their decisions, standards, or leadership style.

George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Martin Luther King Jr., and Ronald Reagan are examples of leaders who were willing to protect. In many cases it cost them their lives, families, finances, and reputation. Yet today the world looks at these leaders and owes them a debt of gratitude for their willingness to protect as they lead.

What is your brand. It could be your family name, the church you lead in, the community you serve in, the nation you were born in, the corporation or company you work for. The brand is the set of beliefs that you represent. Every time

a nation sees the Red White and Blue of the American flag flying they know exactly what that means. That is why we see pictures of people burning the flag, raising the flag, standing or sitting during the national anthem.

A few years ago it became popular to sit, kneel, or otherwise protest during the national anthem opening many events in the United States. There is nothing inherently wrong with protesting. That is how we became a nation. Protection of a belief and protesting for a personal desire is something entirely different.

Remember, diligent leaders don't protest they protect. Even if it means you have to go to battle to protect the brand. There are times as a leader you will have to protect someone or something you may not entirely agree with.

This is the tension of freedom. When the president of the United States takes the oath of office he or she pledges to protect the Constitution. He may have personal desires that conflict with certain things or people in that constitution or those who live within the bounds of the constitution but as the leader and protector he must rise above personal desire.

In Psalm 84:10, King David wrote, he would rather be a gatekeeper in the house of God than live the good life anywhere else. A gatekeeper was one who made sure anyone who was coming in was who they said they were. They checked their credentials, motives, and purpose for entering. Gatekeepers were always listed with the prominent leaders.

**I would rather be a
gatekeeper in the
house of God than
live the good life
anywhere else.
King David**

Diligent Leaders are gatekeepers. They know the standard and beliefs of the organization. Diligent Leaders are willing to stand in the way and keep the gates of their home, community, church, school, and company.

If you cannot accept the brand and what the brand stands for, you cannot lead within the brand. Too many people who feel they are protecting are simply protesting. The Diligent Leader knows the difference between protecting Beliefs and protesting for personal desire.

THAT'S IT!!!

Diligent leaders are everywhere. They are the ones that rise to the occasion. Continue to work behind the scenes or when called upon to stand in front and launch what needs to be launched. They are moms and dads, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, grandmas and grandpas. They work in factories, law offices, corporations and schools. They are not concerned with credit or fame. They simply want to make today count because they are better than yesterday but not near as good as tomorrow.

Diligent leaders are not at first sight recognized because they are not consumed with being noticed. But you can feel their presence. Diligent leaders launch, establish, assist, deliver, equalize, never quit, stand, honor, hold it together, and protect.

My question to you today is simply. Are you a diligent leader? Are you someone who people want to follow? It does not take talent, knowledge, or special gifting. It is not something someone is born with or have special abilities. It simply takes someone who is willing to get up every day and show up.

I believe that is you. I believe you can be and should be a Diligent Leader.

So get up start today and make it count, Because you are better then yesterday but not near as good as tomorrow!

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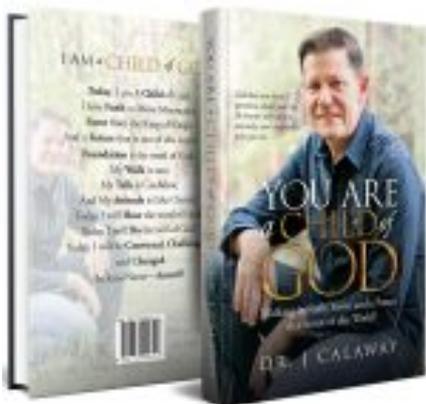
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