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The Purpose Centered Leadership Steps To “Achieving More in 2004”

Part 1

By Art Jackson

It's an old story. One you heard as a child. A hare and a tortoise decided to race. The hare had the potential, but the tortoise had the discipline. As the hare stopped for a break, the tortoise went past him and eventually won the race. When I heard this story years ago, it demonstrated the fact that we could work slowly, but if we are disciplined, we will eventually get there. We now know that we need both efficiency and discipline if we expect to make it. But let's look at that story again. Suppose the real message from that story is “when your competition is taking a break, that's the time to put in your best effort.” Let's look at that theory and see how you can make it work for you.

Fight Hardest When Your Competition Is Resting

When I was in college, I had opportunity to fight on the college's karate team. The trainer we had working with the group indicated that most of the time, fighters come out and try to “feel” the other fighter out before they do anything significant. And yet, years of experience indicate that the first part of the fight is the best time to give it your all, while your competition is waiting to get a feeling. It's a fact that the NFL Super Bowl is most often won by the team that scores first. He who draws first blood ... wins.

The beginning, that's the time to really put in your best effort because you can catch them, sleeping. Now I wasn't one of the strongest fighter's on the team and I often made up for that by being incredible slow. So catching my opponent sleeping sounded like a really good idea to me.

Sounds like one of those ‘duh’ statements doesn't it. The best time to get ahead is when everyone else is taking a break. If the competition has decided to take it easy, why not take advantage of the situation by putting in your best effort?

Now there's another benefit to working hard when the competition is taking a break. Your greater effort creates an impression in the minds of others. The football great Walter Payton was known for having a personal pre-season conditioning program that was simply grueling. It was a highly publicized effort that capitalized on the saying “whatever doesn't kill us makes us stronger.” Payton spent hours working hard before everyone else got to camp making sure he was ready for the season. I wonder what affect that had on would-be tacklers during the season? I wonder if they pulled up just a little before the impact with the thought “if he'd do that to himself, what's he willing to do to me”

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rolling around in their heads? So your greater effort during everyone else's rest time will put all kinds of impressions in the minds of superiors, clients and most of all your competition.

That's why I'm writing this article at this time of year. Let's be honest. Most people end their year the last Thursday in November. You know ... Thanksgiving. We have even started to call it the 'holiday season'. Most people turn their jets down to idle and just sort of exist till after the New Year. And after the New Year, these same folks figure it doesn't make sense to work hard right out of the gate, so they don't actually get into it until somewhere around, oh March. Now that's bad for them, but it's great for us. While they throw in the towel, you and I are going to position ourselves so that when they wake up, they can't possibly catch us. Just remember this quote that I saw recently on a T-shirt. "If you're not the lead dog, the scenery never changes." So let's make a decision to be the lead dog. Here we go!

There are seven steps in the Purpose Centered Leadership process. If followed, this process can give you such a substantial lead over your competition that you'll find a significant number of competitors that will simply decide not to contest your lead position.

They are:

1. Assessment
2. The Courage To Commit
3. Be Ye Transformed
4. Discovering Your Determined Purpose
5. Synergy Between Your Calling And Your Vocation
6. Planning
7. Implementation

Let's get started.

STEP ONE - Assessment

Sit down and write a plan to drive to New York City, NY. Make it as specific as you can. Put in all the exits and all the turns you need to take. Now it would probably help if you had some idea where you were starting. You've got to know where you are if you expect to develop any reasonable planning to go anywhere. Before you can decide how to get where you want to go in 2004, you need to know where you are right now at the end of 2003.

Where were you last year at this time? How far have you come since then? How did you go about doing it? What habits do you have that held you back last year? Answer these questions and you'll have a good idea where you are right now.

Pay special attention to those habits. We often revert to old habits because they form a part of our comfort zone. Not long ago, I watched the movie 'The Shawshank Redemption'. A profound incident occurred after the death of a character named Books. He committed suicide because he couldn't deal with living outside the prison. Contemplating the suicide, another character stated, "These walls are funny things. When you first get here, you hate them. Then after awhile, you get used to them and then you come to depend on them."

It's the same with our comfort zone. When we were children, we hated the idea of routine, doing the same things over and over again. Then after awhile, we got used to and ultimately came to depend upon our comfort zone. It's the place where we feel safe and less vulnerable.

You can break the cycle of stagnation and come out of your comfort zone through assessment. Use this assessment to discover the old habits, unhealthy relationships and unproductive attitudes that sabotage your efforts to achieve greatness.

There are four areas to examine when it comes to this kind of assessment.

First, what's your level of spiritual development? You know on a scale of one to ten? Are you one of those people who rely upon those things found in the spirit? Or do you normally think about spiritual things at funerals and weddings? Have you ever thought about taking a spiritual course?

Second, where are you in terms of personal development? Look at both formal and informal education. Look at your level of experience. Do you have everything you need in order to move forward? Is there a need to get into some new programs? Would distance learning be an option? We often believe that we don't have enough time to do any additional personal development work. But quite often, if we take a good hard look at how we spend our time, we'll discover that there is time in there to do the things that are necessary to make a real change in our lives.

Third, assess your level of activity in service achievement. Service achievements are your charitable efforts. Those things you do to give back to the universe. One of my favorite speakers, Zig Ziglar, says "you can have everything in life you want if you're willing to help enough other people get what they want." A very true statement. I can't tell you the number of times that I've gotten some great opportunities that can be traced back to some service that I provided to someone else. You see the universe always pays off its debts. So if the universe owes you, you will eventually get paid.

Finally, look at your personal achievement. Personal achievement is most often the achievements that you've had in your present vocation. What have you achieved over the last year in your professional work? Are you one of the principle players in your organization? I've heard it said that "you're either at the table or you're on the table." If your employer won't feel any pain in letting you go, then quite simply, sooner or later they will let you go. You always want to be in a position where if your name comes up, management will move heaven and earth to keep you. Letting you go

Check also to evaluate your time management techniques. Every moment you spend is either a productive moment or a wasted moment. And if you allow too many wasted moments in your life, you will find a pattern that holds you back from tremendous accomplishments.

What about low self-esteem? Have false self-opinions been holding you back? Suppose you spend some time now asking others what they think is good about you. We often get surprised to find out that others see tremendous possibilities in us. This might be just the year to start lifting your self-esteem to a productive level.

One last area to look at. Fear. What are you afraid of? It is often our fears that make cowards of us. Fears cause us to shrink from the great mission that was given us at birth. Here's a thought. Refuse to be afraid. Of anything! Pick out something small to use as an experiment. Make it something that holds a little fear for you. Develop a list of what might happen. Your worst fears. And then simply step out

on faith. Now notice what really happens. Are any of the results anywhere near as bad as what you thought might happen? Most of the time they aren't. Now do it again.

Here's a good report card so you can rate yourself. It will eventually become your plan for future greatness.

| Item | Rating (1 – Low 5 – High) | Notes |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-------|
| Absence of Unproductive Habits | | |
| Spiritual Development | | |
| Personal Development | | |
| Service Achievement | | |
| Personal Achievement | | |
| Time Management | | |
| Self-Esteem | | |
| Absence of Fear | | |
| Other () | | |
| Other () | | |

I hope this helps you start to get ready for 2004. I'll be back soon with Step Two, The Courage To Commit. If you'd like some additional help getting ready for the coming year, please feel free to visit our web site:

www.eaglesnestpm.com



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Art is the author of the diversity and inclusion book "Lions and Tigers and Bears – Oh My." Art is also completing his second book dealing with Purpose Centered Leadership entitled "Mounting Up On Wings Of Greatness."

Thanks for your time and remember ... your wings are waiting!

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