



FOR MORE INFO OR RESOURCES, VISIT MCMNETWORK.ORG

Resources

SEVEN KEY FACTORS IN EXCELLENT SELF-LEADERSHIP

BY JEFF LEAKE

The following 7 disciplines have become key factors in my own self- leadership. These are disciplines that are becoming the basis for the management of the Allison Park Church Staff.

1. The Discipline Of Advanced Decision Making – Everything in self- leadership is based on this principle. Decide in advance what your values are, and how your schedule will align with your values. Then discipline yourself to stick to the plan that you have established.

- What are my main things? (summarize into no more than 5)
- What things are currently part of my weekly schedule that are not the main things?
- If I were to concentrate on my main things every week, when and how can I build that into my schedule?
- How and who do I delegate the non-main things to?

2. The Discipline Of Daily Context – As a leader of others, it is critical to define the context (big picture) every day. Why is what you do so important? What is the vision you are pursuing? What are your main things? What is your organizations (which you direct) main things?

- Form a Main Things/Vision Sheet
- Post It/Look at It/Review it Constantly
- Plan based on it

It is critical for your team/groups to know what are the most important things that we are doing together every month.

It is important that you set a 12 month calendar for yourself and your area of leadership that fits with the 2007-08 Monthly Focuses of the overall church. You should be casting vision for yourself and for your team. Your vision casting should mesh with my vision casting for the overall organization.

3. The Discipline Of Working From The Top – First, it is important to form a daily task list and to prioritize it. (A = Main Thing/Now; B = Main Thing/Soon; C = Necessary/unimportant Task). Often what happens then is that we work from the bottom of the list. We do the little and the somewhat unimportant first because it is easy, and we get a buzz from crossing things of the list. What has to become a purposeful and constant choice it to address the A priorities first and to leave the C priorities until the end of the day or put them off until a later time.

4. The Discipline Of Triage – Triage is the process by which decisions must be quickly as to which Tasks live or die, and which get immediate attention, and which do not. There will be inevitable shifts, changes, challenges to your advanced priority decisions.

It is important--when it is clear that not everything is not going to get done—that you make a value-based, quick decision, to kill something so that something more important can live. Often, during the busy moments, we simply amp up and try to do it all. Our followers need us to give them a quick value-based decision so that they can proceed in health.

If you fail to do triage on your schedule, you may fall into one or more of the following temptations:

- Temptation #1** – Let the fog overtake you. A flurry of activity follows. Less clarity and less productivity is the result.
- Temptation #2** – Stop communicating with your team. You are too busy to give them direction. So they wait for you and they do their C priorities while you get your stuff done.
- Temptation #3** – Get frustrated. Become the victim. Life is hard. This is unrealistic. Someone is expecting too much of me.
- Temptation #4** – Become a work-aholic. Just determine that you and your team will stay however long it takes to do it all.

*Eventually, you will become ineffective somewhere and something will die. Even if it is you.

If you struggle with Triage...let your supervisor help you. Ask them what should die and what should live.

5. The Discipline Of Managing Interruptions/Communications – I realize that sometimes interruptions are divine moments. The parable of the Good Samaritan is proof that we need to be emotionally available enough to meet a need as it arises. But there is a difference between having such strong self-leadership skills that you can be free enough to deal with an appropriate interruption, and having a pattern of a scattered life where every interruption becomes an excuse to get off task.

- Develop managed inaccessibility** – develop a way that you can track requests for your involvement without having to respond immediately to every inquiry. This means not answering every text, call, or email right away. In fact, if you delay response to non-priority requests...you will automatically reduce your interruptions.
- Answer Email/Voicemail daily** – but put it off to the last thing rather than the first thing. This is most often a C priority. But if you do not do it daily, it will pile up on you. So do it every day, but not all throughout the day. Schedule a 30 minutes to do all responding toward the end of the day. Leave your desk having responded to all you need to respond to. It may be necessary to start your day with 15 minutes of email and call returning. But you should limit it to that. Then shut the email down while you work on your priorities.

6. The Discipline of an Early Start and an Early Departure – I have noticed that when I am working at my best, I am in early. I have spent an hour with God before 8am. I hit the ground running at 8 and work solid through until about 2:30. At 2:30 I begin to spend my 30 minutes in answering email and returning calls. I leave at 3pm and go work out or go home. My most productive moments are prior to 9am. My least productive moments are after 3pm. In fact, often after three...if I stay, I may work for 3 more hours and get very little done.

Now, I am not proposing less than an eight hour day. If you come in at 8:45 for corporate prayer. Then you spend 30 min talking and joking with the staff. Then you pray for an hour. Then you start your day of work at 10:15.

You work until noon answering email. Spend 45 min at lunch, eating and hanging out. Then work from 12:45 to 3pm and then leave for the day...You will NEVER reach your goals.

If you come in late, then you should stay late. If you aren't in until 9am, you should work past 5pm...because you have really not maximized your day.

But if you get up early and come in at 7am. I have no problem with you departing at 3pm. I actually think you may be more productive with an early start than by working more hours later in the day.

7. The Discipline of A Stated Schedule and Planned Accountability – Many of us live in the world of good intentions. We mean to keep our priorities. We intend on coming in earlier. We do desire a more effective life. In fact, our good intentions are so strong that they become like a sedative. They are used to deceive us into thinking our right desires have translated into true change.

Good intentions take the first step into real actions when they are put onto paper and shared with those around us. Then and only then are we committed. Then we have something to measure ourselves against. Failures and success become obvious.

Putting things on paper and sharing them also reduces the self- deception process. You have something to measure yourself by. You can see your failures sooner. That helps motivate real change and to see genuine success.