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LS 617 Leading Through Times of Crisis (Midterm Exam)

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As I assess the questions from this particular midterm exam, I was led to incorporate meditation and reflection. I began to think about the market is becoming over-flooded with leadership books, conferences, and seminars until it made me wonder, “is leadership the new trend that many are adhering to?” My answer that I received was yes and no. Yes, the aspects of leadership have advanced greatly within the market-place, which keeps the trend of leadership attractive, marketable and lucrative. No, because the search for a significant leader is still within hot pursuit. A significant leader is a leader who will not compromise, devalue others, live a double-life of questionable character, engage within dishonest behavior(s), maintain morals, ethics (personal and Christian), values, along with modeling consistency as well as competency.

The reflective thought about the search for the significant leader led me to consider Bill George’s book, *7 Lessons for Leading in Crisis*, as he discussed “Lesson #3: Dig Deep.” According to this lesson, George suggest several components that will ensure for the “digging” to take place such as: trust, but verify, getting to the bottom of the problem, discovering the root cause, etc.

“In the early stages of a crisis, it is easy to mistake the first symptoms that appear for the real problems. It is human nature to attempt to fix the symptoms before the root cause is determined. Like the weeds in your backyard, crises have roots with long tentacles that are buried deep underground. If you cut down the weeds without removing the whole root, they will surely grow back. As a leader, your natural instinct is to challenge bearers of bad news about whether things can really be that bad, or whether they are just doom-and-gloom people. You’re inclined to jump in and get the problems fixed to make them go away. And therein lies the danger. If you move too fast to devise solutions, you

may underestimate the depth of the problem or misjudge its root cause” (George, 2009, p. 74).

Due toward my mindset, evaluation of the self, along knowing the level of my skill assets, I am undergoing a very stressful moment within my career life. Currently, I am working within a field that is less than what I had envisioned or desired. The friction arises personally within me because, I am working within a profession that is not lining up with my passion, nor degree. My willingness to “dig deep,” in order to discover the root cause of the issue has greatly overwhelmed me as an individual, primary caregiver and leader. As primary caregiver and single parent, I know that I need an income. As a leader, I struggle because there’s a tendency to project to those that we serve, not to settle for anything less than God’s best. To be in a process of being re-innovated by my passions and dreams, I do not feel at this stage within my life that settling is an option. If it does not feed where I am mentally, spiritually or emotionally, then all else, in conclusion is a distraction. As an individual, the reality of knowing that there are moments that you have to endure dissatisfaction with a less preferable type of employment can be dreadful, in which it is.

“Leaders themselves long for clarity, and in most cases, they’re not going to get it. This isn’t just because they have too much information to process—the standard definition of complexity. Rather, it’s because various other elements distort the view of complex matters...It’s also tough to focus on complex matters when anxiety and fear distort your view. Because of the challenging times, anxiety and fear are rampant. The answers to most problems are not obvious...Leaders themselves complain they can’t figure things out, and it’s often because their own fear and resistance cloud their vision. Leaders can’t see patterns that would help them determine what to do because the atmosphere is thick with anxiety” (Cairo, Dotlich & Rhinesmith, 2009, p. 16-17).

The company that I am currently employed with has a high volume of turn-overs, mainly because of inflexibility, non-competitive salary/wages, and a lack of advancement within the company for employees. Since, I have been employed with this company, I have noticed that the level as to how certain individuals who are operating from leadership capacities are not as

connected to the employees as they could be. Lately, I have been experiencing issues with the hours and destination routes because it seems odd including not being feasible. Of course, I communicated my noted observations and dissatisfaction with the placement recruiter. Her response was very passive, non-feeling almost. I became frustrated due toward her lack of concern. Her attitude caused me to consider that this why employees leave the placement agency. As a result of her response, in lieu of my attempts to have some manner of resolve, I felt even more compelled to resign. This compelling moment of decisions has led me to consider one of John Maxwell's Laws as he explains in his book, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*. The particular law that I am referencing is described as the *Law of the Lid*.

“Leadership ability is the lid that determines a person’s level of effectiveness. The lower an individual’s ability to lead, the lower the lid on his potential. The higher the leadership, the greater effectiveness. A person’s leadership ability always determines their effectiveness and potential impact...To reach the highest level of effectiveness, you have to raise the lid – one way or another” (Maxwell, 1998, p. 5-8).

Within the face of disagreement and conflict, I had to confront my inner ambitions, only to discover that I would like for my life-contributions to not be taken for granted by my employer/company. Also, at this stage within my life, I am undergoing an epiphany which is causing me to probe inwardly as I consider my next venture. My passions of becoming a professor, scholar and author seems to be robbed because I am not within the proper position of fully bonding with my aspirations. The more that I ponder, the more that I want to take a leap of faith. Also, the more apparent resolution must begin within my processing, assessment and reasoning.

I viewed the conflict with the placement recruiter as the necessary push that I need to in this instance, not continuing to exert my energy or efforts towards a company that is not appreciative of its employees, or tries to foster communication. As a leader, I remained calm in

hopes of the recruiter realizing that she had the opportunity to maximize the moment, but failed to do so. The ability to remain calm, and still communicate with her respectfully was a choice. Leaders should commit to maintaining a proactive stance because we determine how we are to respond within a crisis, difficulty, etc. Stephen Covey deems this proactive stance as taking “respond-ability.” In conclusion, the “digging deep” that Bill George discussed was meant for me to dig deep, in order to discover my authentic needs. My authentic needs will become the catalyst that will propel for me to progress forward. However, nothing can occur if I do not incorporate the “Law of the Lid.” I believe that this law can foster a partnership between the employer and the employee if they are willing to commit to organizational change.

Reference

Cairo, Dotlich & Rhinesmith. (2009). *Leading In Times Of Crisis: Navigating Through Complexity, Diversity, and Uncertainty to Save Your Business*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

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