

THE IMPACT OF BLS 200 ON THE LIFE OF

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This paper aims to show the impact of BLS on my perspective and relationships, as well as practical shifts in my business and daily life.

Two years ago, sitting around a board room table, we realised that we were faced with a massive mountain to climb. As the third generation, the handover to the next would be make or break time. There was clearly a tough decision to be made in the very near future. Would the firm survive a generational handover, or should we rather close down on terms we get to choose?

Leaving a legacy of values and how (and why) we do what we do, has always been more important to us, than just making profit. But how to transfer this to the next generation? And so, the plan that all directors should complete BLS. If for no other reason, than too at least share the same vocabulary and hopefully somewhere along the line, start to hear each other's hearts, or better yet His plan for the firm.

Looking at the people around the boardroom table, we realised that the team's success was to hinge on the presence of a shared value system, and that was only visible in some. No one's fault, just the mere fact of life, that we are all on a different stage of the journey, and to be honest, some has not even realised that there is a journey to travel. How do you transfer to someone who is not "there" yet. At that stage I simply did not have the vocabulary to realise that what was bothering me, was how to transfer to someone who is not a son/daughter, and why is it that some

people become sons and others not? When would they be ready? Will they ever be ready?

So, off we went to a strategic planning session to die for, and o boy, did we get more than we bargained for. The differences in opinion about our values, vision and where we were as a firm, was astounding. I left the venue wondering if we were directors in the same firm, or if I was completely missing the plot.

Enter Cecile Theron, and a full-blown evaluation of everyone's personalities, values and the team dynamics. Having open honest conversations, and not always just being nice, is not really that nice.... pun intended. Along the line, I was positive, negative and even decided to give up on everyone, including myself. I honestly sat in my car one morning and decided, this is it. I am done, you can not force people to "get it". And as I sat down with someone 30 minutes later, she opened up and instead of me giving her guidance on a difficult situation, she gave me some hope for the future of the firm. Without her having a clue!

Add BLS 100 and 200 to the mix, and we were off to some serious mind and heart changes. Don't get me wrong, I knew most of the BLS principles. But putting it into practice was tougher than I thought in some instances. I made a conscious choice to use every week of BLS to address what was on the agenda. Sometimes I failed miserably, but mostly I learned a lot about myself and the people around me.

I had so many A-Ha! Moments during the past 2 years, that I stopped counting them. I think the most important/biggest lessons for me was:

1. That God builds relationally. The 3-fold cord.

2. That His people are everything to Him. That He wants me to pour myself out in them and not in the firm. That the people are the firm, and not all the other nitty gritty stuffies. The firm wont go to heaven, but the people in it, should.
3. That we need to keep on gardening and getting rid of the weeds... constantly. It's normal to have weeds, just keep on identifying and fighting them.
4. The job is never done. You will work after going to heaven! Who knew?
5. That you are sending "treasure" ahead. Where your heart is, so there your heart will be also – Matthew 6:21
6. Business principles works wonders in your household with teenagers!

Now herein lies the trick for me. Remember, I was the first female partner in a mostly male firm 20 odd years ago. The firm looks a lot different now, but in my head, I still thought that I had to be "one of the boys" to fit in. Not true at all, but I still catch myself thinking that. So, along the way you change yourself to fit in better, and be more like a "boss" should be. Only to wake up one morning and realise, this is not who I am, who I want to be nor should be. More importantly, not who He made me to be. If you are, (like I am) a better manager than strategic leader... so what! He placed you in this firm exactly for that exact reason! To be the manager, be the hand-holding-mentor. Show up and be that part of His plan that you were designed for. This was a tough one for me. I had a specific picture in my head of what a director should be, and how he/she should act. And I did not fit that picture. Luckily for me, He had a completely different picture in mind.

While doing BLS you have to change your mind about a few things. I had some very clear worldview ideas imprinted in me, as how a business / business-woman should

look. Some I could easily amend, and some I had to spend some time on. Some highlights on mind-changes for me was:

1. God has a “business”, known as “Almighty & Sons”. We are currently employed in it and He is using this opportunity to test us on the responsibilities we will have hereafter. How many cities will you govern? It took me 2 weeks to process this one. I read the mina parable very wrong for 45 years! (Luke 19)

2. God plays you at the level you are ready for. What a lesson this was for me! It's my job to pass the tests and get to the next level. If you fail the test, get ready... you will write it again shortly.

3. Power is guarded by problems. Obviously, you grow with the problems you get to handle. The stuff I had to handle 20 years ago, now seems so insignificant and if something similar arise I can easily navigate the challenge. You just fall back on the wisdom you got then. But then again, new level, new problem. The problems I get now seem overwhelming, but in 10 years I will look back at them fondly.(Doing business God's Way – Dennis Peacocke – Page 25)

My biggest mind shift, however came in BLS 200. I was blessed with 100, but 200 - was life changing. BLS 200 was a guideline for 2023. If I struggled with something in the office or home, up popped the lesson for the week. Relating to exactly what I needed! The personal input from Jan, and referrals to certain books to read, made the world of difference. Think this is what I will miss most next year.

In our office I was given the privilege to be the accountability partner and start a coaching/accountability role with the young ones. The frustrations were(are) many, but the joy of seeing them grow, so much more. Building on His patterns, working

with His children, and stewarding His property. What a privilege to know that He did not change, but how I look at these opportunities did.

Reading Good to Great by Jim Collins, was not a first for me. The way that the book was split with the relevant BLS chapters, made a huge difference. Especially the 5 levels of leadership and as always, the First Who, Then What chapters. O, the people on the bus and where they should sit, always seem to be my challenge.

(Good to great Jim Collins 2001 – Chapter 2 and 3)

The Stockdale paradox made sense for the first time. Facing realities and accepting it for what it is, and not putting all your energy into fighting it. I can be as stubborn as they come, and I easily get lost into wanting to change things to how I want them, and forgetting that He might be busy with His work. I should stick to mine. He is in control of it all, and I have just my role to play in His plan. (Good to great Jim Collins 2001 – page 83)

What did I change as a result of BLS? Colossians 3:23 says: “Whatever you do , do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men” I was great at compartmentalizing work, home, people. Home don’t come to work and work don’t go home, but somewhere along the line I threw the people into the same mix. BLS helped me to know that it is all the same. The problems, the people, and even the tissue-issues. This is my calling and all part of what He wants me to handle to “level-up”. People are my calling. I am not a strategist, nor evangelist. People is what makes me tick and BLS helped me to understand my role in His plan better. I should not do His work, and He will not do mine, as per my wise business partner.

I would recommend BLS not only to businessmen and women, but everyone working/ interacting with people. Whether staff, clients, or family members.

Where do I still need to work on something? O, the tests they keep on coming. For me it seems to remain people, and relationships. Keeping the boundaries where they should be and remembering the mentorship principles when working with them.

Teach, test, release.

So back to our firm and the people around the table and the difference after the 18 months spent. Remember there are still 2 that has not even started the BLS journey, but they are starting to ask about the language we use, and it seems to be having an effect none the less. There are some open discussions between the professional team members. They seem to know each other better and is starting to rely on each other's integrity and consistency, leading to increased trustworthiness. I enjoy seeing the relationships starting to form slowly but surely between them, and love to see them searching each other out for discussions and not running to us first. I have to hide a smile when they come to me in a pact to discuss something, that they have been discussing already between 2 or 3 of them.

The individuals are starting to align on values and they can empathize with one another's perspectives and challenges. This strengthens their relationships, builds morale, and encourages team members to offer assistance and encouragement to their colleagues. Are we there yet? No, and I truly think it is a long way to go, but BLS 200 was necessary for me, so that I could see and appreciate that they too have a journey to take and it will not be in my time, but in His. This handover will not be forced, and He will decide whether this will be a success or not.

Having an honest look at how the team works and where and when who takes responsibility still has its challenges, but at least the principles is starting to guide their actions.

The impact that BLS had, on my business life has been wonderful. I wish I could write here that I have made a thousand changes and they have all been successful, but that would not be true. A bunch of small changes, more slip ups than I care to admit, getting back up and sticking to the basics again, seem to work best for me.

Not thinking that a Business Leadership school would have an impact on my home and family life, was really a bit dense on my side. Never realising that jurisdictions is what He use to prepare us, and that just as I am preparing my children for life, so I have been given business “children” to raise. Dauting thought, but it has changed my approach and heart towards the young ones.

Spending time in prayer for the people in the office and not only the firm has brought me closer to Him and His people. Amazing how sensitive He can make you for His people. A notebook around every corner with the verses that has changed my perspective and going back to it, when the going gets tough. Just some practical things that worked for me in the past 6 months.

Somewhere during these past 2 years, Mathew 9:37 became alive for me. ” Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field”. Doing Gods work was something for pastors and priests. How wrong could I be. That God wants to use me to reach people in my daily business life, that I could make a difference in

His Kingdom, with the 40 staff members He entrusted to us, and every single client He sends through our doors.

Bibliography:

Doing business God's Way – Dennis Peacocke – Page 25

Good to great Jim Collins 2001 – Chapter 2 and 3

Business by the Book – Larry Burkett

Coaching real Leaders – Muriel Wilkens

The coaching habit (saying Less, ask more and change the way you lead forever) –

Michael Bungay Stanier

BLS100/200 notes – Dennis Peacocke