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**The Leadership Lens**

Mark Sincevich

Being successful in photography requires passion, self-reflection, risk taking and respect among other traits. What makes a photographer successful will also make a leader successful. An example of an extremely successful photographer was Henri Cartier-Bresson. He captured some of the most memorable street scenes of Paris. He used his patience and creativity to allow for that decisive moment to occur. One of his most famous blackand- white photographs shows a man leaping over a large puddle of water in mid-air with the man's reflection caught in the puddle below. His passion for photography has attracted students, aficionados and collectors alike and has made him an industry leader.

**Leaders are Made, Not Born**

Henri Cartier-Bresson wasn't born with these traits; he developed them as his expertise grew. Warren Bennis, the author of "On Becoming a Leader," argues that leaders are made, not born. "They possess real convictions—strong feelings that have built up within them over time. If those convictions match the requirements of a group of followers, then great leadership emerges."

Great leaders aren't watching television every night nor do they confine themselves to their own backyards. While forging new paths through uncharted territory, leaders must assuage the hearts and minds of their followers. Leaders must also have personal congruity by living a life that is in concert with their vision. Companies that have leaders who are spending time with individual employees consistently show higher returns to shareholders than those who don't. If a leader doesn't make time for his or her employees, then the employees will begin to lose confidence in the leader's vision and in the organization.

**Finding Your Passion**

Before leadership skills can develop, passion needs to be present. It's a passion for one's work that can make or break an individual or a company. The more passionate you are, the better you can process setbacks. There is both a negative and a positive energy quotient in any given situation. Sometimes you can just feel it, but before you walk into or are confronted with a situation, you need to be committed to having a positive learning experience.

When I visited Istanbul, Turkey, I didn't have a map of the city. I thought that the cruise ship handed them out to passengers, but I later learned that they wanted the passengers to contribute to their number-one profit center, the shore excursions, instead. There were no maps of the city available. I wanted a unique experience where I could meet the Turkish people outside of the large crowds of the tourist bus.

I filled my backpack with extra water, snacks, my camera and extra lenses and headed toward the historic section of the city. I walked over the Gallatin Bridge separating Asia from Europe. I made sure to see the ancient Roman cistern of Emperor Justinian and St. Sofia's Cathedral. I didn't get discouraged, because I was passionate about bringing home photographs—stories, if you will—of the people I visited. I brought back some unique experiences and memorable images.

**Take Time Out to Reflect**



Self-reflection helps us clarify our vision. What is it about the work you do that gives you hope and excites you? Can you imagine if each employee took two of their days of time off and spent that time on personal development? What if they took the time to step away from their responsibilities and thought about what they really wanted to do?

According to a recent study, the average American watches seven hours of television per day! And with \$19.5 billion in unused vacation time that accrues annually, many of these people probably swap their extra time off for the cash equivalent to finance the purchase of a bigger television set.

Amazing things could happen if we spent some of our free time on personal development and self-reflection. By focusing on our own development, we will experience an increased awareness of our vision.

**Don't Be Afraid to Take Risks**

Leaders wouldn't be able to fully articulate their vision if they didn't learn from their mistakes along the way. Leaders must operate on the "edge of known space" otherwise known as "the bleeding edge." Operating on the bleeding edge means taking chances and forging a path where others fear to tread. Taking chances requires an unshakable vision and the ability to create new things (or reinvent old things).

One way to get a solid degree in life experience is to take risks along the way. When we have seen enough sunrises, we will start to have a greater measure of confidence and be better able to understand the meaning of things and how to make the best of them.

**R-E-S-P-E-C-T**

Along the way, you must treat people with respect, whether that person cleans your bathrooms or sits in the executive chair. The purpose of leadership is far beyond oneself. If you act like the supreme purpose is yourself you'll lose focus and followers.

When you treat others with respect, have passion for what you do, take time for self-reflection and take risks, your leadership potential grows. You'll also gain perspective, see the bigger picture and express yourself more fully through a leadership lens.

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