

THE LEADERSHIP LENS Newsletter

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A monthly resource providing insight, opinion & practical information on life balance, creativity & personal leadership

Traveling for a Better Mindset Part 1

The front pages of our nation's newspapers are filled with stories about the high prices of gasoline. On the cover of *The Washington Times*, Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert is photographed leaving a press conference in a hydrogen-powered GM vehicle. Near this photograph, there is an article about a proposal to give consumers a \$100 rebate at the pump and at the same time provisions to include drilling for more oil in Alaska. Many of you who live in Washington know that most of these proposals and photo-ops are nothing more than election year 'grandstanding' and filled with irony. However, a serious problem is upon us when we are paying more than double what we paid at the pump 18 months ago. The perception of cheap gas in America isn't working anymore.

Still we have it much better than in many parts of the world. While it may now cost \$40 to fill up your mid-sized automobile, it's the equivalent of \$80 to fill up a smaller compact car in Europe. A recent issue of *National Geographic* magazine was devoted exclusively to energy with a specific emphasis on oil. In the article, most experts predict that we are now on the downward slope of the supply curve. We may have a similar amount of reserves for the next few years, but the problem is demand. The world's fastest-growing economy, China has an ever-increasing thirst for oil. We need to start thinking about the world and ourselves in a different way.

When you hear the name Michael Jackson, it might bring to mind the infamous although not always recognizable rock-star. However, there is another Michael Jackson who is the chairman and chief executive of Auto Nation, Inc. Auto Nation sells 30% of all automobiles in the United States. Michael J. Jackson was quoted in an interview in *The Wall Street Journal*, "We've had five president's in a row tell us that America's dependence on imported oil is an issue of National Security, and we don't have an energy policy that deals with the issue. We've gone from importing one-third of our oil to importing two-thirds. We need a strategy, which must include supply, technology, and a change in consumer behavior. Increasing the gasoline tax by a dollar a gallon, phased in 10 cents a year over 10 years, is a very compelling statement to the American consumer that the party is over, that we're going a new way." Instead of giving us a rebate for paying too much, he's causing us to think differently. We'll pay more in the short term by putting this money directly into alternative energy such as hydrogen, but we'll pay a whole lot less in the longer run.

This is quite a different strategy than the 'typical' E-mail chain letter that I received this week. The title of the E-mail was "Gas War." It talked about how I should pass along this particular chain letter to all of my friends to join the 'resistance' to the high profits of the oil companies, most notably Exxon Mobil. The letter went on to say that if we didn't buy gas at any of Exxon Mobil's stations, they would start to listen. The goal of this letter is to pressure the oil companies to lower prices at the pump. The letter pleads that consumers should control the price of gas and not the producers. This is like acknowledging only two dimensions in our three dimensional world. Albert Einstein said, "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them." We created gasoline out of oil, but now it's become a problem for both global warming and national security. Clearly sending a chain letter encouraging others to take action using the same level of thinking that got us into this situation won't work. If you want to take real action about reducing our dependency on oil, see www.ei2025.org.

To change our beliefs about oil and the high price of gasoline, we need to change our experiences. And when we gain new beliefs, our mindset changes whether it is in the outward expression we wear or in the energy we exude. I was reminded of the importance of mindset in a recent sales course, 'The Quest for Yes II.' This course emphasized the relationship or engagement model by getting us to think about the long-term value of working with an existing or new client. Instead of thinking about the traditional sales person who 'closes' I was encouraged to think about the sales person who acts as a trusted advisor. This slight shift in my mindset has already made a difference in my business. Unfortunately most people don't travel enough or don't expose themselves to new experiences, so their beliefs create their experiences. This is backwards and reflects a lack of interaction with the world and a reduced sense of self-realization. It directly impacts a person's ability to think differently.

The absolute best way to understand the world and our place is to travel. It ranges from exploring your community to a trip to an international destination. I've heard so many excuses about why people don't travel. They don't have the time or they don't know what to do with the kids. One acquaintance said he wouldn't know what to do with a significant amount of time off. His definition of significant is two weeks, but to another person who understands the value of the travel experience, significant might be two months. I look forward to traveling because it challenges my beliefs and allows the opportunity for better photographs. Traveling is implied in the equation versus worrying about having the time in the first place. If more people traveled in this country, we would begin to see that we could accomplish more with less 'stuff' by thinking differently. The rest of the world has a lot to teach us in our materialistic dominated culture. We are facing an opportunity to grow beyond the problems that we have created, but we must be able to change our perceptions. Traveling is the absolute best way.

About Mark Sincevich:

Mark Sincevich is a professional photographer, author and speaker. He works with organizations and individuals that want to tap into their creative power. Through his photography experiences, Mark brings a unique angle to his professional speaking programs on life balance, creativity and photography. He is an active member of the National Speakers Association (NSA) and brings the insight of over 17 years of working for various organizations into his programs. Mark continues to sharpen his over 21 years in photography as an instructor at the Washington School of Photography and as a member of the American Society of Media Photographers (ASMP). Mark is frequently quoted in the media and his articles and photography have appeared in newspapers and magazines around the country. He is the author of three books including "The Real Ideal" and the soon-to-be released, "Snap: the ultimate guide to digital photography for the consumer." After his assignments, Mark can be found spending time with his family or writing in coffee shops with character. For more information on Mark's speaking programs, photography and products call (301) 654-3010 or visit www.staashpress.com.

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