

THE LEADERSHIP LENS Newsletter

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

Filling the Silence

Before the world wakes up, there is stillness. It is the silence between those people who have gone to bed very late and those that have yet to awake early. Streetlights and the occasional house light beckon my imagination to wander along the lone road in front of my upstairs window. It is in this silence that I find solitude, strength and possibility. I purposely don't read the morning paper as I am focused on capturing the ideas that dance around my head on this early morning. I do this because I make a monthly commitment to share my thoughts.

While attending my Aunt and Uncle's 50th Anniversary party, I learned that my cousin made a commitment to join the U.S. Marines. He was proud to be serving his country and was recanting stories of his basic training, his new leadership role and his upcoming deployment to Iraq. Knowing that a close relative would soon be going into harm's way made me want to make a commitment to help him in some small way. It was Sun Tzu who said, "If you know your enemy and know yourself, you will never fear the result of 100 battles." I felt that the best gift I could give him was an Arabic CD and workbook for beginners. If he could speak the language, even a little, he would be better able to understand the situation on the ground and his opponent. Before I sealed the package, I dropped in Rudyard Kipling's poem "If." It is indispensable as he begins to become aware of himself too.

At this same anniversary party, I also made a commitment to take hundreds of photographs that will be put into one of my professional photography albums. What I didn't realize was the amount of work that this 'gift' entailed. It required me to work outside of my normal schedule, and it made me realize that I need to watch the commitments I make. I like what Stephen Covey says, "the enemy of the best is often the good." It's best to make a few commitments that we can fully honor than to make too many promises that turn out to be just 'good enough' or that don't get fulfilled at all. Knowing that I will always honor my commitments makes it easier for me to say no to those things that I just don't have the time or energy to complete. When we honor our commitments, it allows us to deepen our relationships and to build trust.

At the same time, those that make empty promises puzzle me. I have been trying to work with a large company to help them with their corporate sales presentation. This project would entail focusing their message and polishing the presentation skills of their sales associates. I had to be patient as the sales director rescheduled our meeting twice. During our meeting, he realized how having a solid message and the competent ability to deliver it would increase his sales. He told me that his new number one priority was to have me work with them. The last thing he said was, "welcome on board to working with us." I haven't heard from him since and I followed up diligently.

It's not just this corporate executive who doesn't honor his commitments. It comes in the form of neighbors who say that they will have you over for dinner and then never call to set it up. It takes the shape of the president of an association who claims he needs event photography, but never signs the contract. It happens at networking events or social gatherings too in the form of "let's get together sometime" and then when you call to get together, they never call you back. I think that making false commitments is a way to fill the uncomfortable silence between one thought and another. Perhaps these same people would not be able to enjoy the solitude of the early morning either.

Dealing with those who don't follow through is bound to happen, but I choose to surround myself with people who honor their commitments. It gives my life more certainty, deepens my friendships and I gain strength from this in the form of predictable business. Last week I was out of the country and had the opportunity to meet with a top photographer. We immediately found out that we had a lot in common. I started out by offering as many suggestions as I could while he showed me his digital studio. Out of the blue, he asked if I wanted to speak at his country's annual photography convention. Since he had made a special arrangement to meet me at the time we discussed, I know this speaking possibility exists! As you begin this New Year, make a resolution to honor your commitments. It will give you strength in the silence of your thoughts and open up a new world of possibilities.

About Mark Sincevich:

Mark Sincevich taps into the creative power of the individual to enhance people and organizations. This allows organizations to develop passionate and balanced employees, generate new ideas and increase profitability. He is an engaging speaker whose wide range of experience allows him to easily relate to his audiences. Through his photography expertise, he brings a unique angle to his programs on creativity, balance, leadership and personal development. Mark delivers his programs in the form of keynotes, seminars and breakout sessions. In addition, he works to recharge and strengthen his customer's focus and direction through his facilitation services, offsite teambuilding events and presentations skills programs. Mark is an active member of the National Speaker's Association and brings over 17 years of experience in high technology sales and marketing and public accounting into his programs. Mark has also been practicing photography for over 21 years and is a member of the Professional Photographers of America. He is the author of two books and numerous articles. When he isn't speaking professionally or taking photographs, he can be found writing in some of the finest coffee shops. For more information on Mark's professional speaking programs, photography, books and CDs contact Staash Press at (301) 654-3010, info@staashpress.com or www.staashpress.com.

Make your next meeting productive, educational and enlightening by booking Mark Sincevich as your speaker.

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