



Intention

Thoughts on leadership
by Karl Pister



THE
COACHING GROUP INC.

INSPIRING EXCELLENCE



Think back a bit about many of the projects you have started. Either personally or professionally. Projects that were high potential. Projects that were fun. Projects that captured your interest, almost to the point of hyper-focus.

Put that same level of questioning toward those that you lead. What has captivated them? What caused that level of focus? Why did it last, when it did?

I heard a statement over the weekend that hit me hard:

Remember why you started.





Wow! Did that ever resonate!

Because, how many times have you started that super project only to look back several months later to see it buried under a pile of former habits, never to surface again?

The intentions were great. The ideas, solid. And, knowing most of you well, discipline was certainly not the issue.

So what happened?

Why did you forget why you started?

Why did those you lead forget why they started?

Let me give an example. Bear with me.

Ever been camping and tried to start a fire? As you know, I live in the northwest and have lost track of the times I have, on cold and rainy mornings, tried to start a fire while camping with the family. It is a careful, delicate, and tedious process. First, the matches have to be kept very dry. And the starter paper just as dry. And the kindling needs to be protected also.



The match is struck and flames grab the paper. This is NOT the time to walk away, assuming everything will catch fire in sequence.

NO! This is where you keep kneeling by the fire, blowing on the flame as necessary, to make sure that it spreads and grows. Only once the bigger kindling's flames start spreading to the smaller logs can you leave that kneeling position.

And you don't forget why you started it because it is an ongoing and focused need.

Now very few people start a fire and give up. There is a need, a basic need, and generally very little distraction, and, most of the time, there are people who are very interested in a positive outcome!

They remember why they started!

See the parallels, especially with those you lead? They come out of the 'tent' focused and ready to start their fires. But then, they get distracted.



Another task comes up. Someone or something causes the project to lose importance and, not usually with mal-intent, the focus of 'building the fire' gets lost. Not that it wasn't important, but they forgot why they started.

This applies, importantly, to short-term projects.

However, the impact it carries on the strategic, long-term, contributions of key people is immeasurable.

As a leader, you cannot afford to have your key players forgetting the 'what or the why' of why they started. You need to constantly take them back to the core purpose and attach it to the present day. Again and again and again, in a myriad of different approaches.

However you approach it, inspiring them to remember why they started will be one of the most valuable leadership actions you do.





THE
COACHING GROUP INC.

INSPIRING EXCELLENCE



Karl Pister, PCC

Leadership Coach

karl@coachinggroupinc.com

(503) 381-8705

