



The MOMBA

Thoughts on leadership
by Karl Pister



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As you read this title, you will probably think that I misspelled 'mamba' which is a deadly snake, and also the name that the late basketball great Kobe Bryant adopted to describe his deadly accurate intense game.

So why MOMBA? It is an acronym that one of my coaching clients and I formulated. It stands for **My Own MBA.**

Now many that are reading this material have the highest of advanced degrees. DNP. MD. DO. MBA. MPH. PH.D. MSN... and so forth.

Why would I bother you with another degree?!?



First, a story.

A few years back I was working with an ED charge nurse team. We started our meetings at 0600. I was speaking with one of the nurses who was complaining, albeit lightheartedly, about the assignments that I had provided, one of which was reading a book.

Her comment was "I am just not into reading".

To which I responded "When is the last time you read a book"? Her response "I haven't read a book since I left nursing school". After I staggered back at that response, I choked out the next question, which was "...and how long ago was that?"

Her response: "Twelve years".

Suddenly it was clear why she was struggling. She was on empty. Just reacting, but not leading. Her people could sense it. She could sense it. She had lost the edge that learning brings.



John Maxwell, the prolific author on leadership once stated, **"leaders are learners"**. He went on to say that if you are not actively learning, then you cannot effectively lead. You can manage, but you can't lead.

Why is that? Because leaders inspire and inspiration comes, usually, from ideas that are outside of our normal sphere of interaction. I believe that it is practically impossible for a person who is actively and enthusiastically pursuing a path of education, whether formal or informal, not to share the enthusiasm and insights that come from learning.

"Now Karl", you might say "are you even marginally aware of my 7 to 7 work schedule? Do you have any concept of the role of CEO (or COO, or CFO, or CMO, or nursing director, or....?!?! When is it that you propose that I undertake this project?"

Point taken. And, what you prioritize, you do. You will always make time for what you feel is important. Sounds harsh, I know. But hear me out.



Stephen Covey, author of the legendary work, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, talked about Quadrant Two actions. Quadrant two refers to important, but not urgent items. It is those actions that produce long term exponential gains, but put out few short-term fires. And, in times of crisis, most of you are putting out fires. However, you can't keep leading if that is all you are doing. Again, you can manage, but you can't lead.

So what is the MOMBA? Here is the process:

1. Choose some topics you are interested in. For example, strategic thinking, leading through conflict, and effective critical thinking, for starters.

2. Give each topic sixteen weeks:

- For the first two weeks gather curriculum materials.
- For 12 weeks study 15-30 minutes a day.
- For the remaining two weeks, write a synopsis of the salient points of your study. Writing locks in learning.
- In the magnificent compounding effect of small numbers, the above study time results in anywhere from 17 to 35 hours of focused study and review of a new material.



Over the course of a year, that results in 51 to 105 hours of study. That is, on the high end, nearly three business weeks of learning!

I can assure you that you are spending that time somewhere right now, that is not bringing you the results this will. It will not take away from your workday. It will be similar to an exercise program. Burdensome at first, then marvelously high payoff.

If any of you want some more guidance on this, just shoot me an email and I will be right back with you.

This is a game changer. Again, leaders are learners. No exceptions.





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