



Walking

Thoughts on leadership
by Karl Pister



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Over the past five years I have had the superb opportunity to associate with the John Maxwell Team, a leadership development organization, led by the one of the world's leading authorities on leadership. His works are prolific. If my numbers are correct he has published over one hundred books and sold over 30 million copies. I have also attended various of the annual meetings of the organization that attract some of the best leadership thought leaders in the world. It has been a profound growth curve.





One of Maxwell's points on leadership is "moving slowly through the crowd". And I have seen him do this. Why is this important? It is his time to connect with his people. To let them know that they are important. A touch...a word...a short conversation...a connection.

If you haven't read his book *Many Communicate, Few Connect*, I would highly recommend it.

Where am I going with all this? I have made some observations that I think are worth mentioning....

I had the opportunity last weekend to participate in a physician leadership seminar sponsored by the Bryan Leadership Institute, which is part of Western Health Sciences University in Lebanon, Oregon. Over forty physicians participated from all over the Pacific Northwest.

What I noticed fortified what has been my experience over the years. That humility can get in the way of influence...

Now let me explain, lest you think I am completely crazy. These physicians, like many of you that I work with, personify selflessness.



Long hours, consummate professionalism, self-denial in many aspects over years of career.

You show up every day. You perform at the highest levels. You have profound impacts on people's lives. And most of you don't take yourselves seriously. You are just you. You acknowledge that you are elitely trained. You admit to some pretty advanced intelligence, but only when I press the topic. Many times, in fact, most of the time, you do not recognize the leadership impact you have due to who you are and what you do.

And that is all well and good. Humility is something that I don't want you to lose, since it is such a powerful leadership trait.

Where it trips you is when you overlook the fact that due to being a surgeon, physician, nursing leader, or C suite executive, other people don't see you like that. They have inherent, unconcious assumptions of what leaders should do.

They NEED YOU TO NOTICE THEM AND CONNECT WITH THEM!!!!



I don't exactly know where this comes from. But there seems to be, in most people, the desire to be noticed and recognized....to hear a complement...especially from those who they look to for direction and support. Now many would deny this. However, in all honesty, when a person is in a group setting, having completely busted her/his neck to accomplish something, and the thanks is being given and the person's name is not mentioned.....?!?!?!?

Dale Carnegie stated the following: *"each person (and I would insert 'leader' here) has the power to increase the sum total of [the] world's happiness (and I would add 'productivity' here) ... by giving a few words of sincere appreciation to someone who is lonely or discouraged...(or overworked, or stressed, or a myriad of other challenges) Perhaps you will forget tomorrow the kind words you say today, but the recipient may cherish them over a lifetime."*

I once worked with a powerful leader. Truly a marvel at what he did. He was one of the most hard working, show-up-and-do-your-job type of people you could imagine. Not a person to hand out many complements or give any indication that he would need praise himself.



On one occasion he completely pulled me out of a very difficult situation. I wrote him a thank-you note. No big deal.

About a month later I was in his office. He was still on a call. As I sat and looked around, I saw a familiar card sitting in a prominent place on his bookshelf.... my thank-you card was front and center.

I was shocked....him!?!?! Yep. Taught me a great lesson. Never ignore a prompting thought to reach out to someone...even when you think they might not even need or want such attention. IT MATTERS!

Consider Maxwell's example of walking slowly through the crowd...and here are some questions to ponder as you prepare for your walk:

How do I best make connection?

Why am I awkward with complements?

What have I done today to follow Carnegie's counsel?

Why is this hard for me?

What can I do to be more intentional about this topic?

How do I overcome the "I don't need this...why should they" line of thinking?

Thoughts to consider....



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