



# The Mental Game

Thoughts on leadership  
by Karl Pister



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*You have been inundated recently with pressures that no one even remotely conceived. You are in the moment, yet those moments are bathed in the concern over constantly moving variables. As a leader you are charged with seeing beyond the moment and making decisions on those variables...all at seemingly nano-second speed. And thus it is so easy to forget the mental game.*





I just finished an amazing book, *It Takes What it Takes*, by Trevor Moawad. He has an elite reputation coaching some of the best athletes and teams in the nation. Consider his words:

*Your brain is a perpetual motion machine. It's used to being in drive or reverse. Downshifting your brain into neutral takes practice. But once you get the hang of it, once you develop the skill to shift your thoughts into neutral, you can go to the truth on a dime.*

You can deal with the facts at hand by asking the following questions:

1. Where are we?
2. What can we do next?
3. How can we best do it?

You will feel more calm, and be more aware of the situation as it unfolds moment to moment. The athlete, employee, spouse, or parent who's more calm and more aware generally succeeds.



Your people are looking to you for calm and awareness. You can't get away from that. However, you can get away from panic thinking. Consider the somewhat humorous, but accurate, words of Sir Winston Churchill:

*Nothing is more dangerous in wartime than to live in the temperamental atmosphere of a Gallup poll, always feelings one's pulse and taking one's temperature. I see it said that leaders should keep their ears to the ground. All I can say is that the British nation will find it very hard to look up to the leaders who are detected in that somewhat ungainly posture (speech to the House of Commons, September 30, 1941)*

Not to say be uninformed. Know the landscape, but look beyond it to where you know you need to lead your people. Consider your position as you lead. Be in the front, tending to your people, and considering the horizon.



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