



What I Learned From My Coach

Thoughts on leadership
by Karl Pister



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Why would I have a coach? Precisely for the reason that I have done coaching or consulting. Especially in the current challenging environment in which we live. I think more clearly when I have someone asking me probing questions and helping me see perspectives more accurately.





One time, I spoke with my coach for two hours. Making sure that I was approaching challenges and concerns in the best way possible. Just two of the points that we discussed I thought I would pass along, since they apply to you as well as me:

1. **Step out of the whirlwind**

Whatever your whirlwind mind be, the human brain stays in the weeds out of survival mode. Leaders don't lead well in survival mode. People look to you for vision and encouragement. That never happens when you are in the whirlwind. So how to do that? Some thoughts:

- The basic three: **diet, sleep, exercise**. I know, some of you are saying "REALLY?@?!?! Do you think I have time to do that?" However, the phrase "biology beats psychology" rings true. I didn't say it would be easy. However, when the physical plant starts to suffer, it goes downhill fast from there.
- Take daily time to reflect. Not a long time is needed. 15-20 minutes is plenty. Write down the concerns. Organize for the next day.
- Connect with another human about something not even related to this current situation. That allows the brain to take a different perspective and reduces 'whirlwind' thinking.
- Don't think the above three items are trite, simplistic, or useless. Their simplicity might make them appear that way. I assure you that they are foundational.



2. **Lead for the moment and lead for next year**

- Those are two different data bases to be working with, but think about it for a second. You are going to come out of this. If you have spent all of your leadership capital on the moment and just surviving, you will not be positioned to take advantage of what opportunities arise when things return to normal. A key question: think as a futurist for a moment and ask
 - What will this summer bring?
 - What key people need to be at their best for us to return to our highest performance?
 - How am I nurturing those people so they want to stay when this has passed?
 - One of the first behaviors that seem to disappear during high stress times are the small actions of leadership appreciation for those in the trenches.





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