

## Are you chasing two rabbits?

By Jeff “Chief” Urbaniak  
COLUMNIST ([www.AdviceChief.com](http://www.AdviceChief.com))

If you are chasing two rabbits, stop. You’re wasting your time. Focus on one of them.

What does it take to have the focus required to be a truly effective leader? The keys are priorities and concentration. Leaders who know their priorities but lack concentration know what to do but never get it done. If leaders have concentration but no priorities, they have excellence without progress. But when leaders harness both, they have the potential to achieve great things.

I’ve known a lot of leaders over the years who seemed to major in minor things. They’d spend too much time and energy on little things. Not that little things or details aren’t important, but a leader must know how to divvy out the responsibilities associated with them.

I’ve also seen leaders focus on things they weren’t good at. They’d try to harness a personal weakness but in the end, it was still a weakness. It would be like a home run hitter focusing on stealing bases. What sense would that make? It’s okay to get some practice stealing bases, but the focus should be on putting the ball over the fence!

So the important question is: How should you focus your time and energy? Use these guidelines to help you:

*Focus 70 percent on strengths.* Effective leaders who reach their potential spend more time focusing on what they do well than on what they do wrong. Leadership expert Peter Drucker noted, “The great mystery isn’t that people do things badly but that they occasionally do a few things well. The only thing that is universal is incompetence. Strength is always specific! Nobody ever commented, for example, that the great violinist Jascha Heifetz probably couldn’t play the trumpet very well.” To be successful, focus on your strengths and develop them. That’s where you should pour your time, energy, and resources.

*Focus 25 percent on new things.* Growth equals change. If you want to get better, you have to keep changing and improving. That means stepping out into new areas. If you are a good communicator but have little experience speaking, then take lessons on giving speeches. Giving inspirational or effective speeches can bring money and/or people to your cause. When you dedicate time to new things related to areas of strengths, you’ll grow as a person and leader. As leadership mentor John Maxwell says: “In leadership, if you’re through growing, you’re through.”

*Focus 5 percent on areas of weakness.* Nobody can entirely avoid

working in areas of weakness. The key is to minimize it as much as possible, and you can do it by delegating. You can also spend a little bit of time practicing should a scenario require you to perform. Imagine the home run hitter I referenced earlier being walked in a critical moment of a baseball game. If the opposing pitcher throws a slightly wild pitch that gets away from the catcher, a successful steal to second base is more likely if the home run hitter occasionally practiced stealing. Otherwise the rare and probably awkward attempt at sliding into second base after a slow take-off probably results in a toss out.

I noted in the very first column I wrote four years ago that experienced animal trainers take a stool with them when they step into the cage with a lion. Why a stool? Because it tames a lion better than anything--except maybe a tranquilizer gun. When the trainer holds the stool with the legs extended toward the lion’s face, the animal tries to focus on all four legs at once. And that divided focus paralyzes him.

Divided focus always work against you. If you chase two rabbits, they both will escape. In leadership, true steps toward progress require focus at critical points and times. The sharper your focus is, the sharper you are.

~ The End ~