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If you’re someone aspiring to be an outstanding performer, you will have to, at some point in time, become a master of your craft--or at least be engaged in some sort of mastery that allows you to put forth astounding results. Quite often people sputter in their efforts, or quite frankly, settle for doing things in a half-blank manner (you know what the “blank” is).

Sure there are people who can do many things, and they are somewhat reliable, but when you need a true specialist, a master, you don’t want the guy deemed jack-of-all-trades, master of none, especially if he sit downs in the pilot seat of the plane you’re flying in.

Mastery is getting to the inside. I, for one, am always trying to get to the inside of things. When you see the outside, you see the shell. When you get to the inside, you feel the soul. On the outside, things look a certain way --kind of dead, because you’re just seeing the appearances. When you get to the inside, you see the heart beating, you understand it, you get the reality. When you start learning to play chess or the piano, for instance, you’re on

the outside. You just see the exterior, visual, surfaces of things. And you’re learning the rules or the basics. And it’s very slow and tedious. You don’t really have an understanding. It’s all kind of confusing, a blur. Eventually, though, if you stick with it, you worm your way to the inside of it. And you’re feeling the thing come alive. The chessboard or piano is no longer a physical object, it’s in you. You’ve internalized it. You no longer have to think of the keys; the keys are in your head. That is mastery.

Sports are another great example of mastery. Great basketball and soccer players have been described as having eyes in the back of their heads. Their passes are timely and accurate despite the player traffic around them. They can dribble through clumps of defenders and precisely put the ball where it needs to be, almost as if everyone else is in slow motion and they are not. No, they don’t have eyes in the back of their heads, they are on the inside of the game itself. You could say the same thing about doctors, scientists, mechanics, writers, actors, et cetera--the masters know the thing from the inside out, not the outside in.

If you work hard, you will make your way to the inner circle of knowledge.

That is the goal of mastery: an inside-out understanding. And when you obtain mastery of a given craft, you are in a great position to lead others in that craft, if you’re willing to learn how to be an effective leader. Leadership in and of itself is a craft overseeing those in a craft. An aspiring leader has to read and study leadership, observe other leaders in action, and learn an array of leadership tactics to be truly capable of influencing others in their actions or thoughts toward an objective or goal. An aspiring leader has to get to the inside.

Quite often getting to the inside can be as simple as reading the instructions, pamphlets, or bylaws. I’ve seen many people speak out like they’re John Wayne without reading the policies, governing documents, or reports, but they end up looking and sounding like fools to those who have gotten to the inside. If you consider yourself to be a professional, read what you’re supposed to read, know what you’re supposed to know, and do what you’re supposed to do. Then, and only then, will you be truly impressive and respected accordingly.

If you want to impress me, get to the inside and prove that you are there.

~ The End ~