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Moving up the leadership ladder can often become overwhelming. You may feel you can't relinquish anything but yet you know you can't hold on to everything. You know you will have to trust others but still have to verify for yourself. You are responsible for dealing with and knowing the “reality” of a given situation. So how can you manage this immense comprehension?

There is no exact leadership formula that works for everyone. Each leader in each situation has to figure out a way to uncover their reality for the purposes of decision making, planning, doing, and learning. Uncovering reality isn't as simple as looking out the front window. It isn't as simple as reading the newspaper. It isn't as simple as watching the so-called news on television. It isn't as simple as listening to everyone around the conference table. It isn't as simple as making a phone call.

Every reality is determined by a litany of scans and verifications. You can only uncover the secret to any reality by uncovering the details. You must trust yet verify. You must listen then open up the report for yourself. You must see but then step out into the middle. You must open the hood of the engine and pull out the dipstick.

Understanding the reality in any organization can give it the fuel it needs

Immerse yourself in the details

to turn out great products or services. Advertising and marketing efforts can be tailored to exploit the opportunities or avoid the threats presented by the reality. Plans and execution of plans are more effective if the details are understood and the perceived reality is the real reality. Mastering the details is mastering greatness.

When Leonardo da Vinci wanted to create a whole new style of painting, one that was more lifelike and emotional, he engaged in an obsessive study of details. He spent endless hours experimenting with forms of light hitting various geometrical solids, to test how light could alter the appearance of objects. He devoted hundreds of pages in his notebooks to exploring the various gradations of shadows in every possible combination. He gave the same attention to the folds of a gown, the patterns in hair, and the various minute changes in the expression of a human face. When we look at his work we are not consciously aware of these efforts on his part, but we feel how much more alive and realistic his paintings are, as if he had captured reality. And you, as a leader, have to do the same thing: capture reality.

We all have assumptions. But what happens in between the time we assume and the time the assumption has been declared either to be right or wrong? It's the immersion in details. Without immersing ourselves in details to know,

understand, and act on reality, then our assumptions will derail us. Have you ever heard the saying, “Assumption is the mother of all mess-ups”? (Well, the language is harsher than the word “mess-up.”) If you assume the bad guy won't approach your gate because you have heavy machine guns, you will be sadly mistaken. If you had read the doctrine and knew about his *modus operandi*, you would have understood that he is more than willing to strap C-4 explosives around his waist in order to do glorious work for Allah. Immerse yourself in the details and be ready to use your machine guns in advance of him approaching and harming you!

Quite often, close-minded leaders are the ones who ignore or neglect the details. They see things a certain way and no one can convince them otherwise--mainly because they “know better.” Don't be a close-minded leader. Try approaching a problem or idea with a much more open mind. Let your study of the details guide your thinking and shape your theories. Think of everything in nature, or in the world, as a kind of hologram --the smallest part reflecting something essential about the whole. Immersing yourself in details will combat the generalizing tendencies of the brain and bring you closer to reality.

~ The End ~