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Have you ever seen an effective leader who lacked commitment? I have not. Have you known anyone to follow an uncommitted leader for very long? Me neither. I don't know anyone willing to waste their time and effort for very long on a cause if the leader isn't putting forth a decent effort on the same cause. If you want to achieve astounding results or effectively lead others, you better be committed. Commitment can give you new power. No matter what comes to you--sickness, poverty, or disaster--commitment keeps you from turning your eye from the goal.

What is real commitment? To each person, it means something different:

- To the boxer, it's getting off the mat one time more than you've been knocked down.

- To the marathoner, it's running another five miles when your strength is gone.

- To the soldier, it's going over the hill, not knowing what's waiting on the other side.

- To the missionary, it's saying good-bye to your own comfort to make life better for others.

- To the leader, it's all that and more because everyone you lead is depending on you.

If you want to be an effective leader, you have to be committed. True commitment inspires and attracts people. It shows them that you have conviction. They will believe in you

only if you believe in your cause. And, people won't "buy into" your vision until they've "bought into" you!

When it comes to commitment, there are three observations that can be made:

1) Commitment starts in the heart. Some people want everything to be perfect before they're willing to commit, but everything will never be perfect. Commitment almost always precedes achievement. It has been said that in the Kentucky Derby, the winning horse effectively runs out of oxygen after the first half mile, and then goes the rest of the way on heart. Many great athletes recognize the importance of heart. NBA legend Michael Jordan explains that "heart is what separates the good from the great." If you want to make a difference in other people's lives as a leader, look into your heart to see if you're really committed.

2) Commitment is tested by action. It's one thing to talk about commitment. It's another to do something about it. The only real measure of commitment is action. A newly elected judge in a small town once gave this acceptance speech: "I wish to thank the 424 people who promised to vote for me. I wish to thank the 316 people who said that they did vote for me. I wish to thank the 47 people who came out last Thursday to vote, and I wish to thank the 26 folks who actually did vote for me."

3) Commitment opens the door to achievement. As a leader, you will face plenty of obstacles and opposition--if you don't already. And there will be times

when commitment is the only thing that carries you forward. Commitment is the enemy of resistance, for it is the serious promise to press on, to get up, no matter how many times you've been knocked down. If you want to get anywhere worthwhile, you must be committed.

A little girl in Florida, after all of her teammates failed to show up for a cheer-leading competition because they didn't want to get up at 6 a.m., decided to still compete by herself. Her commitment to the cause and lone performance of her teams' moves in front of the judges won her the coveted 1st place "team" trophy. I bet this girl will make a great team captain some day!

When it comes to commitment, there are really only four types of people:

1) Cop-outs. People who have no goals and do not commit.

2) Holdouts. People who don't know if they can reach their goals, so they're afraid to commit.

3) Dropouts. People who start toward a goal but quit when the going gets tough.

4) All-outs. People who set goals, commit to them, and pay the price to reach them.

What kind of person are you? Have you been reaching your goals? Are you achieving all that you believe you can? Do people believe in you and follow you readily? If your answer to any of these questions is no, the problem may be your lack of commitment. Be committed and let your commitments drive you to succeed!

~ The End ~