

YOUR LEADERSHIP

EDGE

LEAD ANYTIME, ANYWHERE.

ED O'MALLEY
AMANDA CEBULA

Copyright © 2015 by KLC Press.

All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this publication
or portions thereof in any form.

KLC Press

Kansas Leadership Center

325 East Douglas, Wichita, KS, USA, 67202

Visit our website at www.kansasleadershipcenter.org.

This edition published in 2015.

Library of Congress Control Number:

ISBN: 978-0-9889777-5-4

Cover and layout designed by Clare McClaren, Novella Brandhouse

Cartoons by Pat Byrnes

Printed in the United States of America



CHAPTER 24

INTERVENE SKILLFULLY

Hold to Purpose

There's a scene in the movie "42" when Jackie Robinson is about to become the first African-American to join a major league baseball team. He and Brooklyn Dodgers' general manager Branch Rickey are talking about what life will be like for Robinson. Rickey is being harsh and straightforward, using tough language and making sure Robinson understands just how brutal people will be toward him and his family. Rickey is stressing that under no circumstances can Robinson retaliate, that the public would accuse him of losing his cool and say HE was the cause of trouble. Triggered and emotional, Robinson blurts out, "What? You want a player that doesn't have the courage to fight back?" Rickey looks Robinson in the eye and says, "No! I want a player that has the courage NOT to fight back!"

Rickey was clear about purpose and wanted to make sure Robinson was too. He knew getting knocked off purpose would ruin the effort. You run the same risk with your leadership effort. It's always challenging to stay focused on what you are trying to accomplish.



Holding to purpose is about maintaining focus on what you value and want to accomplish.

Distractions are everywhere. We have needs (to be liked, save the day, stay employed, etc.) that can knock us off purpose. Opponents will try to knock us off track. They'll do it by attacking our vulnerabilities. Holding to purpose is to leadership what keeping your gloves up is to boxing. When a boxer's gloves go down and can no longer protect his head, a knockout isn't long off. When we get knocked off purpose, our efforts fizzle.

PURPOSE EXISTS ON MANY LEVELS AND INCLUDES:

- Life purpose
- Family purpose
- Career purpose
- Organization purpose
- Project purpose
- Committee purpose
- Meeting purpose
- Discussion purpose

Holding to purpose is critical in all of those dimensions.

HERE ARE A COUPLE EXAMPLES.

- ▶ Amanda and others at her church wanted to create more opportunity for young adults to socialize together. Their purpose was social interaction. Knowing their purpose became increasingly helpful. Occasionally, members would try to take the group in a different direction, turning it into a study group or theology discussion. Because there was a strong sense of purpose, though, people could speak up and remind everyone of the group's purpose. While some conversations felt difficult, the purpose provided direction.

- ▶ Ed's friend was elected to the Legislature on a pro-education platform. Her purpose was to use her new authority to increase funding for education. Three months into her first session Ed asked what she had accomplished on the education front. She went on and on about all the committee meetings she had to attend on all sorts of matters having nothing to do with education. She had been so busy she hadn't found time to work on education. Somewhere early in those three months she quit holding to purpose.



WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOLDING TO PURPOSE?

Read "Insanely Simple: The Obsession that Drives Apple's Success" by Ken Segall. The book makes the case that simplicity is a key to holding to purpose.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP YOURSELF AND OTHERS “HOLD TO PURPOSE”?

- ▶ **Get clear about the difference between purpose and strategies.** Your purpose should stay the same, but strategies can and will change. Be loyal to your purpose. Be flexible with your strategies.
- ▶ **Keep a “not-to-do” list.** Put things on there that you feel tempted to do but don’t align with your purpose.
- ▶ **Figure out what you need to do each day to fulfill your life purpose.** For example, Ed has eight things he tries to do every day: pray, read, eat well, exercise, review finances, spend time with family, plan his day, and send a friend or family member a note. Doing those things day in and day out helps Ed stay centered and holding to purpose.
- ▶ **Don’t just float in and out of meetings and discussions with others.** Be intentional. Write down notes to yourself about your purpose for any given meeting or discussion. Spend a minute or two before meetings reflecting on what your purpose is in that meeting.
- ▶ **Debrief and reflect.** After engaging with others, ask yourself if you accomplished your purpose. Where did you nail it? Where did you go wrong?

“When going through hell, keep going.”

—WINSTON CHURCHILL



Last year my church decided to start viewing church as more than just showing up on Sundays. Our purpose was and is to cultivate a more faithful way of being for all members. We decided “church” could take place anytime, anywhere. I was on the committee that supported this shift in thinking, and since starting to share it, we have received a lot of backlash. I truly believe in this stance, but the criticism is high. How do I not waver?

- WAVERING WANDA

Dear Wanda,

Backlash and criticism are par for the course when exercising leadership. Get used to it. You won't waver if (1) you truly value this new direction and (2) you protect yourself from getting knocked off track.

However, remember the difference between purpose and the current strategy. Your purpose is to cultivate a more faithful way of being for all members. Your current strategy is the decision regarding church anytime, anywhere. There could be multiple strategies to accomplish your purpose. Don't become overly loyal to this one.

Keep focused on your goal. Share your purpose openly with others. Read the consternation you're experiencing about the strategy carefully. Don't let a misguided strategy sink your overall purpose.

Onward!

