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“And when do I get time for myself, for my own growth, plans and possibilities? My life is packed full with too much to do already ...

There just isn't any more time!” said Max, CEO

Di Percy

Giving time to your self is like giving water to plants. Without water, the plant will die. Without time, your inspiration will die. What's more, giving water or time to sustain life and keep growing aren't one-of experiences. Repetition is needed in the right amounts over time for growth to occur. This is especially so for leaders who hold critical scale and depth responsibility.

Three Resolves:

Will, Reflection, Staying on Purpose

Working closely with CEOs over two decades, the most successful made sure they had enough time for personal rejuvenation. Frequently. To be revitalized mentally, physically and psychologically gave huge advantage and potency to the leadership task. To take such personal time regularly was no mean feat and needed resolute defense. These CEOs shared three resolves in common. The first was willfulness.

Will was a crucial factor in determining how they spent their time. However, adages about time that were woven into the cultural psyche formed unnoticed patterns that needed to be identified and debunked. For instance, the idea contained in the adage “in the fullness of time” implies that all comes to pass to those who wait patiently and passively. Not useful for time-poor leaders. What was absent was the element of willfulness and taking action.

“If I'm not in charge of my time, can I be in charge of my life?”

It was a challenge to exercise will and take charge of their time. What they actively did to start was take a conscious and deliberate decision. It was based on what was most valuable and defied what others expected. The question they faced was, “If I'm not in charge of my time, can I be in charge of my life?”

The second resolve was **Reflection** and contemplation to clear accumulated mind clutter and noise.

Pythagoras said that there are three distinct approaches to life – the acquisitive, the competitive, and the contemplative. He argued that the third approach, being

contemplative, is superior and the basis of wisdom. The acquisitive is concerned with *having* and getting more; the competitive with *doing* and winning. The contemplative embraces having and doing, and goes beyond both to *being*, what Buddhists would call the middle path. We need aspects of all three, having, doing and being in balance and as needed. To reach enlightenment and wisdom, time must be devoted to contemplation and the investigation of life, particularly of our own life and growth.

In which life approach do you spend most of your time – acquisitive, competitive or contemplative?

What goes on internally, within the self, is transmitted externally to others. In the video called *Place (2010, 2012)* I explore inner leadership, so easily forgotten and by-passed in a world driven hard by external results and economics. Consequently, attention is largely directed “out there” onto the external world and people around us. *Place* is an attempt to re-balance the internal life with the exterior life, wisdom and knowledge, enlightenment and facts, creativity and logic. The goal is vastly increased capacity for insight, creative thinking, and fulfillment.

The third resolve was **Staying on Purpose**. This was their true purpose that they really cared about, that led them to the job in the first place. The “why with soul”.

Knowing their authentic purpose required some soul searching. Gautama Buddha said, “Your purpose in life is to find your purpose and give your whole heart and soul to it”. Finding the path with heart was the first part of the process. The second part was to stay on course.

Extraordinary and powerful leaders do this. They stay focused on their purpose

Extraordinary and powerful leaders and elders do this. They stay focused on their purpose, even in times of turmoil demanding detailed attention. It may sound simple, but it can be extremely hard to do.

“Efforts and courage are not enough without purpose”, according to John F. Kennedy.

Distractions for CEOs were huge, constant and often a surprise. Circumstantial turbulence, rapid change, complexity, conflict, paradox, new paradigms, new technology, breakthroughs, not to mention human and relational dynamics – all disrupt and steal attention from true purpose. Purpose can be easily lost to more immediate crisis or disruption.

“A warrior chooses a path with heart, any path with heart, and follows it; and then he rejoices and laughs. He knows because he sees that his life will be over altogether too soon.” *Carlos Castaneda*