

The CHOICE Connection

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CHOICES
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December 2015 - In This Issue:

Quotable Quotes

Leadership in Action

Tools and Resources

Reflections - Mine and Yours

Choose To

Joyful Observances

Administrivia

Quotable Quotes

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader." ~ John Quincy Adams

"A great man shows his greatness by the way he treats little men." ~ Thomas Carlyle

"Act now, for now is all you have." ~ Og Mandino

"Leadership is not a position. It consists of action with transparency to set high example of integrity, honesty and to strive for the welfare of all." ~ Dr. Anil Kr Sinha

Dear Jean,

In February of this year, I invited you to choose one of five leadership skills - Communication, Delegation, Positivity, Creativity, Commitment - and to focus on that one skill for the rest of this year. I encouraged you to explore that skill, dig a bit deeper and find the venues to learn more, practice more and share your strengths related to the skill you chose. The year is coming to an end and we are in that month where you have an opportunity to reflect on how you grew one of the five skills and the learning you experienced. This month, I ask you to now take this skill, your learning and develop a personal leadership action plan. What did you learn that you can immediately begin to put into motion? Read on and get ready to prepare a Leadership Action Plan for 2016.

Here is a peek at what is coming in 2016 - a shift from our focus on Leadership to deepening our learning about *Performance Management*. Yes, the Leader holds a critical role in working with the performance management system and its subsystems to maximize the potential of the organization and its employees. Join me in January as we begin the conversation with a few practitioners to consider what performance management is and can be.

Leadership in Action

This year has been a different type of exploration for me and I hope the sharing has had value for you. In the past few years, my newsletter topics have been focused on a single topic and not necessarily holding a link or thread to the topic of the month before or after. This past year has had a sole focus on Leadership with an intention to consider how those who live these roles have an impact on our lives. I had my year's framework of Leadership topics chosen and ordered since last December. It has been an interesting journey to hold this topic up and inspect some of its facets and the light that reflects into so many areas of our lives.



So, now what? There may have been an issue or two that touched you and inspired a thought - yes, I can see myself there! I sincerely hope so. I know I was and was reminded as I began the year that Leadership can be a rather worn out topic and a bit overdone. And as I dug deeper and read the literature, it became evident that there isn't much new or earth shattering when it comes to who our Leaders are, how one becomes a Leader and how to even become better at being a Leader. No, the most significant aha for me now is the question - "Leadership - OK, so I am one and I can show up where I choose, so now what?"

I have spent many hours this past year reflecting on the journey I have taken to get to where I am today and why others saw me as a Leader long before I was ready to embrace this element of my being. I came to realize that my Leadership journey began at a young age during many of those life opportunities that show up as "good things for us to do and good clubs/groups to belong to." Birth order, school, Girl Scouts, Service Clubs really do establish and nourish a foundation that supports the choice to be a Leader. The focus on my life's work opened doors time and again and presented such rich choices for me to step up as a Leader. I found myself saying yes and growing in worlds I never thought to experience. Today, I could stall my life here and believe that at age 63 I have met all the Leadership challenges I care to take on - however, it just isn't like putting a coat on or taking it off.

Now, it is time for me, and I invite you to join me here, to reflect on the five leadership skills mentioned above and then plan my 2016 Leadership Intentions and Actions. The three areas of focus for me are Communication and Positivity, which are combined for me, and the third area is Creativity.

1. Communication & Positivity - Language focus and a stronger belief in the true and the good.

2016 Leadership Action Plan

- Keep my language simple ... more "ands" and an elimination of the 'buts' in my language. Less language of dismissiveness, more openness to what can be. 3-5 daily statements that reflect on events of the day and end each with " ... and ..." to complete the statement.
- For one daily challenge that shows up for me, hold and strengthen the positive intention. Make it real by sharing this with another that may be sitting in the same challenge.

2. Creativity - I have been craving the time on a personal level for more creativity in my life. It is time - actually past time. I need this more to strengthen the balance in my life of all things outside of work and reengage my channels of creativity.

2016 Leadership Action Plan

- Five hours each week engaged in an artistic endeavor. It can be one hour daily or five hours on the weekend. It can be drawing, painting, or stitching. The focus is to use tools and a part of my brain that I don't consciously engage during my week. Calendar the time in my week so it isn't forgotten.

For you ... what is your 2016 Leadership Action Plan?

- Which one or two of the Leadership skills do you want to focus on?
- What will your plan look like?
- Have you thought about what will get in your way?
- What kind of support do you need?
- How will you keep track of your progress and celebrate the wins?

Tools and Resources

FROM THE BOOKSHELF

[Leaders in Action](#) (Series; multiple years) George Washington, Winston Churchill, Booker T. Washington, George Whitefield, C.S. Lewis, Theodore Roosevelt, Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, etc.

[The Serving Leader: Five Powerful Actions that Will Transform Your Team, Your Business, and Your Community](#) by Ken Jennings and John Stahl-Wert; A Ken Blanchard series (2004). Actions explained include: Upend the Pyramid, Raise the Bar, Blaze the Trail, Mending a Broken Track, Build on Strength and Run to Purpose.

[Leadership in Action: Lessons for the real world by a real leader](#) by John Cantwell (2015). A five by five leadership framework. Discover the elements of his "A, B, C, D and E Lanes."

[From Values to Action: The Four Principles of Values-Based Leadership](#) by Harry M. Kraemer (2011). Learn more about "Self-Reflection, Balance and Perspective, True Self-Confidence and Genuine Humility."

[Leadership in Action: How Effective Directors Get Things Done \(The Directors Toolbox\)](#) by Paula Jorde Bloom (2014). "Leadership begins in the head and heart. It is a way of thinking about yourself and the vital role you play in your early childhood program. This book dispels the myth that there is one best leadership style that all directors should emulate. It will help you understand the subtle but important distinction between leadership as a role and leadership as a set of skills and competencies that can be supported and nurtured at all levels of the organization. Filled with practical suggestions and lively examples from high-performing directors, you'll learn how you can create and sustain a compelling vision for your center and lead your program with confidence and integrity."

THE INTERNET CONNECTIONS

[Leadership in Action - Journal Description](#) - "Leadership in Action offers unprecedented access to one of the world's premiere leadership research institutes - the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL). Since 1970, CCL has been in the forefront of leadership research and education. Through its research, CCL has gained extensive knowledge of the best leadership strategies and practices."

[Leadership Blog](#)

[Leadership in Action: Business Radio Sirius XM](#) "Whether you are running a small family business or a large public company, being in charge has its own set of challenges. Each week, hosts Professor Michael Useem, Jeffrey Klein, and Anne Greenhalgh invite business leaders from top organizations to reveal the steps to effective leadership. It's more than just what you say and how you say it. Do you have what it takes to influence others and achieve high results?"

[Leadership Action Plan](#) - a .pdf of a simple leadership plan for your next steps

[Leadership Action Planning - Examples/Templates/Images](#)

Reflection

Before you give some energy to your 2016 Leadership Action Plan, take a few minutes and reflect on this past year of 2015 and consider the following?

- At the start of 2015, did you consider yourself to be an emerging, experienced or executive Leader?
- What was the greatest strength you exhibited this past year as a Leader?
- What was the most significant lesson you learned this past year in your role as a Leader?
- What new learning has shifted your view of what it takes to be an effective Leader?
- As 2015 comes to a close, what, if anything, has changed your view of yourself as an emerging, experienced or executive leader?

Choose To

Define with clarity your Leadership role ... name your Leadership strengths ... reflect quietly on you as a Leader in 2015 ... consider you on a new Leadership path in 2016 ... name your Leadership intentions for 2016 ... write the intentions and the plan ... schedule the plan start ... continue the Leadership journey.



December Joyful Observances

National Impaired Driving Prevention
National Tie Month
National Write a Business Plan Month
Spiritual Literacy Month

Worldwide Food Service Safety Month

[Cookie Cutter Week](#) (December 1-7)

Chanukah (December 7-14)

Recipe Greetings for the Holidays Week (December 7-11)

[Christmas Bird Count Week](#) (December 14 - January 5)

It's About Time Week (December 25-31)

Bartender appreciation Day (December 5)

Gingerbread Decorating Day (December 12)

[Our Lady of Guadalupe Day](#) (December 12)

[Games Day](#) (December 20)

[Visit the Zoo Day](#) (December 27)

Administrivia

My Constructive Choices Audience...

- * Professionals wanting to be at choice in their career and daily work,
- * New managers (and aspiring leaders) transitioning to establish a leadership role in their communities,
- * Individuals wanting to sort through the choices, build a more fulfilling life, life their voices, and...
- * Coaches who choose to step out, show up, and say - YES, it IS all about YOU!

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