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*“You can read all  
the books you  
want. What makes  
a difference is your  
willingness to look  
into a mirror.”*

*~ Dr. Laura  
Schlesinger*

*“Leadership is  
unlocking people's  
potential to  
become better.”*

*~ Bill Bradley*

## Your Compelling Reason Why

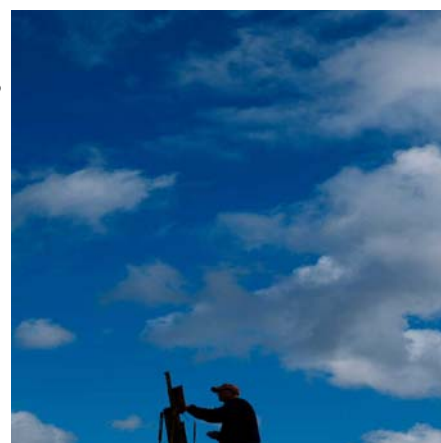
*“Are you in your job to do something, or are you in your job for something to do?”  
~ James Kouzes & Barry Posner*

Can you honestly answer this question for all the different facets of your life – your work, your volunteer involvement, your religious activities? *Are you here to do something or for something to do?*

Take a moment to reflect on the reasons you chose the career or business in which you work. Did you choose your work just for something to do, or because of a deeper desire to contribute something meaningful?

I suspect it was because *you wanted to do something*. Although you may not have clearly articulated the reason at the time, there was something appealing and exciting about this work that motivated you to accept the new challenge.

And then, something happened. Maybe it was the bills that need to be paid, or the seemingly endless deadlines that need to be met, or the employees or co-workers that seem to need so much of your time and attention. Or perhaps you have just developed a routine in (continued on page 2)



## The Leadership Challenge Coming to Guelph January 24-25, 2008!

The Leadership Challenge Workshop demystifies leadership development and approaches it as a measurable, learnable, and teachable set of behaviours, establishing a unique underlying philosophy—*leadership is everyone's business*.

The foundation of the Leadership Challenge Workshop is the 5 principles of exemplary leadership:

- **Model the Way**
- **Inspire a Shared Vision**
- **Challenge the Process**
- **Enable Others to Act**
- **Encourage the Heart**

Using an individualized feedback report about each participant's current leadership behaviours, the workshop discusses how to apply the 5 principles in daily practice.

Workshop participants will leave with a better understanding of key leadership behaviours and a personalized plan for their own leadership development.

The *early bird registration rate* is \$975, after December 21, the rate is \$1375. (Rates include assessments and meals).

For more information or to register for the workshop, please contact Denise at 519-923-9968 or [denise@insearchofexcellence.ca](mailto:denise@insearchofexcellence.ca).

# Your Compelling Reason Why

## (cont'd from page 1)

which you are just 'going through the motions'. Whatever the cause, gradually your attention has been shifted away from the purpose you found so compelling in the beginning.

Occasionally that original spark of purpose fires you up again – often when you have had a chance to get away from the daily grind, to hear a great speaker, or to go to an uplifting conference. You are instantly reconnected with the drive and the passion for what you want to accomplish. So you know it is still in there, somewhere.

The question then becomes how to sustain this spark so that day after day your focus is on that 'compelling reason why' and your inspired vision of the future.

The first step is to become clear about your own compelling reason why. Take some uninterrupted time to reflect on, and clearly articulate, what impact you would like to have on the world. Then give some thought to how this purpose can be achieved through your work.

Share your insights with your colleagues and employees. Start a discussion to find out what are *their* compelling reasons for choosing this work. It may seem strange to have these kinds of discussions, but numerous studies have consistently shown that the most important reason people stay with an organization is that they feel their work is challenging, meaningful and

purposeful. Repeatedly, this idea of finding meaning and purpose in interesting work is rated as more important than salary or prestige.

Develop a shared mission and vision for your business. Whether you are a company of one, or you are just one of many people in a large department, develop a collectively meaningful statement about



why your work is important and the bigger goal you are trying to achieve.

This is not a public relations exercise to develop a splashy tagline that gets posted on a wall somewhere and then forgotten – you may even decide that you won't publicly display your mission and vision statements. Your challenge is to create something that is meaningful to the people who work there, to guide their daily decisions and act as a constant reminder of the greater purpose of the organization.

Simple reminders such as printing your statements on a card to keep in your wallet or to post by your computer can help to keep the purpose (and

spark of passion) in the forefront.

After going through these reflection exercises, some people get frustrated with this process: they are clear on what their purpose was for starting a business or choosing a career and they still believe passionately in that purpose. However, they are no longer motivated by the *activities* they are doing.

This shifting is normal – we are constantly changing and growing, so we may have outgrown activities that we once found stimulating and are now ready for new challenges. In other words, the 'why' is

still important but the 'how' may need to change.

If you find yourself in this situation, it doesn't mean that you need to do something radically different. It may mean that you need to make slight changes in how you do things. Perhaps you can focus on a different type of customer, expand the range of products/services you provide, or take on more of a leadership/mentoring role within your organization.

Find other ways you can contribute your unique skills to support the mission of the organization *and* make the activities more meaningful for you. Let *your* 'compelling reason why' re-ignite your passion for your work!

**"When you discover your mission, you will feel its demand. It will fill you with enthusiasm and a burning desire to get to work on it."**

~ W. Clement Stone

Do you have suggestions for upcoming newsletters or success stories you want to share?

Contact Denise [denise@insearchofexcellence.ca](mailto:denise@insearchofexcellence.ca)