

Do You Demonstrate What You Expect?

Comfort is the enemy of great expectations.

Sometimes as a leader, I feel guilty about having high expectations for team members. I learned this guilt the hard way.

I remember a time when I was leading a group of sales people in broadcasting. Selling air isn't easy. Every day is filled with rejection. The ratio of wins to losses is abysmal. But some people sell broadcast television commercials with excellence and earn high incomes.

I was coaching a young sales person who had been having a bad decade. I reviewed our systems and processes but finally reached a point in coaching in which I stopped and asked, "I really expected more from you, don't you want more?"

His answer shifted my equilibrium.

"No, I don't want more. I don't want what you want. I want to play volleyball at the beach every day and enjoy my life."

This was the first of many lessons I was taught by California dreamers.

One thing seems certain to me as a leader, if I don't raise expectations, my competitors will. Moses needed to raise the expectations of his people to lead them to the promised land. Some folks were comfortable in the wilderness and didn't want more!

Discomfort is a powerful change agent.

Leadership can be a lonely office when surrounded by comfortable people. Leaders must, by necessity, remove the

office pillows. We must distribute discomfort while speaking into job security.

Wait. What?

Create discomfort while encouraging the security of the worker.

“Your job is safe, but I need you to do things in a different way. Let me show you how we want you to do it.” First show, then tell.

Safe, secure, demonstrated change.

If the leader cannot demonstrate the desired performance with sustained consistent action, expectations for change are folly. In this scenario, either the expectation or the leader must change.

My great expectation of any leader is to demonstrate how to achieve high expectations.

“When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, “Where did this Man get this? What is this wisdom that is given Him, that even miracles are done by His hands?” (Mark 6:2).