

Paul Understood One Thing—But Is It Your Thing?

Leaders can mistakenly assume that their teams have similar views about almost anything. In our multigenerational and diverse workplaces, we cannot assume intellectual alignment about work priorities.

Priorities are learned by instruction or experience. I'm often surprised by what someone tells me when I ask, "What are you working on?" Sadly, I've learned to understand that my priorities as a leader are not understood by the team.

Whose fault is that? Well, it's not the worker. It's a leadership issue.

Leaders pile on the work (we like to call this "delegation") and then have a false expectation that everyone will understand the order of completion.

Leaders who love understand delegated pressure to complete work. Leaders must be mindful of the overall workload and be willing to postpone some due dates in favor of others. Communication is key during times of heavy workloads.

In addition, leaders must continually train on the topic of time management. As we teach the principles of getting more things done with less stress, we must begin by helping our team remain sharply focused.

Consider this quote:

"It's wonderful how much work can be got through in a day, if we go by the rule—map out our time, divide it off and take up one thing after another."

"To drift through our work, or to rush through it in a helter-skelter fashion, ends in comparatively little being"

done.

“One thing at a time will always perform a better day’s work than doing two or three things at a time. By following this rule, one person will do more in a day than another does in a week.”

—Thomas Mitchell, Essays on Life

Leaders must lead the completion of *one thing*. “This is the one thing that matters most today. Please complete this task before moving on to something else.”

I think this is an example of the love language of a leader. I no longer believe that multi-tasking is a badge of honor. A leader who expects his team to multi-task is setting his team on a course to produce very low-level work. Our team can’t do their best work when pressed.

They know it. We know it. They hurt. We look away.

We need to reach deep and find compassion for the list-driven worker.

The apostle Paul came to an understanding of his “one thing”:

“Brothers, I do not count myself to have attained, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead” (Phil. 3:13).

I believe that Paul struggled with his past. I think it would be hard for anyone to forget the sight of a stoning. As a Christian, when he thought back about how he persecuted the church with such vigor, he certainly felt the after-effects. Much of Paul’s writing included ministry about our thought life (Philippians 4 for example).

A love-leader helps his team find the one thing that matters most. At work and in life. Leaders must attend to the development of the individual.

Does your team understand work priorities? How do you lead your team to one thing? Do you know the one thing for each member of your team?