

Action Oriented Leader

"Know the true value of time; snatch, seize, and enjoy every moment of it. No idleness, no laziness, no procrastination: never put off till tomorrow what you can do today."

- Lord Chesterfield

I have had the opportunity to lead many groups through outdoor challenge course experiences over the years. When taking groups on high courses that are up to 45 feet off the ground, the greatest challenge for many people is the fear of taking that first step. Stories start to form in participants' minds. Stories like...

"I cannot do this!"

"What will people think of me if I mess up?"

"I'm not sure which way to go. I'm stuck!"

"This is too tough!"

The root of these stories is **fear**. I can completely understand. Participants are doing something new, there are people watching, there are difficult decisions to make, and it is tough work.

These stories are much like the stories we create when we are in the "real world." We are constantly faced with many daily tasks and decisions. These stories lead to the dreaded word procrastination.

Why do we procrastinate?

Lack Confidence - We do not take action because we are afraid to fail.

Perfectionist - We do not take action because we fear what people will say if it is not perfect.

Paralysis by Analysis - We do not take action because we fear making the wrong decision.

It's just not fun! - We do not take action because we fear hard work that is not enjoyable.

I am convinced that **leaders overcome these fears** and take the first step. It is not that leaders do not have fear; they find a way to go beyond the fear. But how do leaders overcome this fear? Here are two suggestions.

First, leaders **practice taking action** when faced with these fears. Leaders find the strength to take just one step that moves them closer to the goal. A simple way to do this is to commit to five minutes doing the task. You will be amazed how five minutes turns into more time very quickly.

Second, leaders **change the "fear" story** to a story of "hope". Leaders focus on the hope of the potential reward. Hope can drive away fear.

I remember the participant that came down from the Outlook Tower and enthusiastically said, "That was the most difficult and the best thing that I have ever done in my life!"

What fear story have you created that keeps you from taking action?

What will you do to get started?

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