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Being-in-the-moment

Leaders Take Real Control

Andrew Burnham

Leaders lose the capacity for authentic, creative and measured responses by allowing their buttons to be pushed. By learning how to be in the moment, leaders and others take control and remain calm and centred in challenging situations and with difficult people.

What do we look for in Leaders?

We admire and appreciate leaders who are calm and centred in difficult situations. We are more comfortable trusting and following people who stay focused on constructive action. This is true across cultures and times. We look to people who are not adversely affected amidst chaos and are able to make decisions.

How do we want to be as Leaders?

As leaders we are not satisfied with merely appearing calm in challenging situations and with difficult people, we want to *be calm*. We also want to be *authentic, creative and action* oriented. We cannot evidence these qualities consistently nor are we walking the talk of leadership when we are letting our buttons be pushed.

Making Wise Use of Limited Time

Can you afford the time it takes to become and stay agitated? Agitation has an uninspiring effect on others. When conditions are right agitation in the leader becomes productivity loss in the followers and rising costs for the organization. As leaders we have two problems and no solutions.

Buttons

When someone or something pushes our buttons we are having a negative reaction. A negative reaction is simply an automatic and uncontrolled way of processing what is happening. The 'what happens out there' starts to negatively affect our 'in here'.

Where are our Buttons?

Start the process of reducing and eliminating your buttons by considering the following: If a golf ball hits you on the head is the pain in the golf ball or is the pain in you? "Of course the pain is in me", you say. It's easy to see that our reactions are not in the difficult people or challenging situations. Our reactions are clearly in us so why not look for solutions where they really are and not where we are unlikely to find them?



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Stick to the Facts

As far as being in the moment is concerned, we deal only with facts. And all we know is what we experience. What the golf ball experiences and what is going on in the minds of the difficult people we encounter is unknown and inconsequential. Knowing what is going on in the minds of others doesn't change the fact that we are still agitated and have buttons. For this reason, it's far more useful to pay attention to what is going on in our own minds and leave the speculative thinking for later.

The Problem is not 'Out There'

We sometimes erroneously think that it is the other person or the situation that is responsible for our stress. Our focus is not on the real problem. Thinking in this way puts everyone and everything else in control, paves the way for problems to recur again and again, and leaves us floundering when we can least afford it.

Being Response-able

Being responsible begins with developing an awareness of what our attention is directed to. This is being in the moment and it's the most practical place to be. When we are in the moment we are 'response-able'.

Take Action or Take Attention Away

Take constructive action right here and now to change the situation or person if this is possible. There is no agitation or stress in this approach. Is something bothering you right now? What can you do about it? If there is nothing that can be done right now, in this very moment, then where is the value of continuing to focus on it?

Where is the Problem?

If we can control or change the other person or situation, then that is where our focus would be right now. Where is the problem now? If we can do something constructive then that is what we are doing in the moment. As we start to learn how to process our work and interactions with others in this way, what we can control on the outside also increases.

Be Vigilant, Be Aware

When buttons are pushed, our reactions usually occur with lightning speed. Being in the moment creates space between the outside event and our reaction to it. Cultivating this awareness is the key to trading our self-defeating reactions into authentic responses. We respect and trust leaders who are authentic.



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Quick Change

Once we become aware that we have just picked up a searing hot pan we put it down. This is what awareness is like. And once we realize that we can trade our reactions in for responses, dealing with difficult people or situations is no longer a problem and change is easy. We don't pick up the pan anymore.

Focus on What Is

It's not difficult to see that many things and people should be different. But does dwelling or stewing on what or who should be different change anything? Continuing to dwell on our own make-believe worlds does not create solutions. Deal with reality as much as you can. Are you going to take action now or are you going to dwell on what should have happened or how someone should be behaving?

Focusing on the Wrong Things

As our thinking becomes less automatic we notice some telling things. We actually see in real time when and how our thinking has gone off the rails. For example, we directly realize that dwelling on the faults of others doesn't diminish their faults nor does it make our own leadership qualities grow. Powerful and immediate learning like this is par for the course as we learn how to be in the moment.

To realize something is to know something directly and it is the quick way to long and lasting change.

What is Being in the Moment Like?

Leaders and others who are in the moment experience the same challenges as everyone else. The critical difference is that they *create no negative reaction* and are in control. They actively work for change and solutions without any negativity, loss of time or wasted energy. Another way to say this is that these leaders don't make a problem out of what is happening in the moment and have unlimited access to all of their skills.

In the Moment Questions

- What is my mind now focused on?
- Is what it is focused on leading to action?
- Can I take action or am I just dwelling on something without results?

Andrew Burnham is President of Improv at work, a team and leader development active on two continents for 8 years.

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