

## **To Be Inspiring, Be Intentional**

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“You are an inspired and inspiring leader!”

Have members of your staff given you that compliment recently? What could you do differently to make such a favorable remark possible?

I asked myself that question just this week. I have lunch every Friday with a colleague who inspires me and holds me accountable to my values and life objectives. We missed last week, so I started this week’s update conversation with “It’s been an uninspiring two weeks.”

I was surprised to hear the next sentence out of my mouth: “Actually, I’m stunned at how the time has flown! What have I been doing for the past two weeks?”

Do you ever find yourself caught up in the day-to-day grind? Blindly following an uninspiring routine can occur at work or at home. One day you wake up and wonder, “How can it be June already?”

For example, think back over your week. When you spent time with your family, were you intentional? Would an independent outside observer have been accurate in guessing what you expected to accomplish with your actions?

My weekly conversations with my friend are usually upbeat and encouraging. We celebrate victories as we report the outcomes of the behaviors we committed to each other the previous week. We also share visions of opportunities we expect to encounter in the coming week.

Ah, but not this week! My friend reported that he’s not yet initiated in his weekly staff meeting an idea he generated with a colleague two months ago! As we explored why there had been no progress, he had no specific explanation.

I attempted to be helpful. “What result would you want to accomplish by implementing that activity in your staff meeting?” He thoughtfully responded.

“Now tell me a few simple things you could possibly do in this next week to move in that direction.” He offered several options, and I joined in with some additional ideas. “So, out of all these possibilities, what will you choose to do before next week?”

He selected one specific action step. He’ll accomplish it easily, and the likelihood is that it will move him significantly in the direction of his improved outcome. I’ll ask him about it next week, and we’ll likely celebrate his progress.

By the end of our lunch hour, we both felt better. We are looking forward to the upcoming week and what we expect to achieve. Before we separated, I asked for a few minutes to determine why we felt so much better than when we started our conversation.

This article is the result. We concluded that every time we are intentional about considering possibilities and committing to specific action steps, we are far more productive. We celebrate that progress every week! We realized we had merely been going through the motions.

As a leader, seeking improvement and gaining alignment is your role! Don’t get hung up on what currently exists, and don’t just blindly go through the motions. Think about what could be better. Approach “better” from a variety of different perspectives. Ask your colleagues and those under your authority for their ideas. Describe that improved state graphically to others. Invite their thoughts as to how to move toward a better result.

Then intentionally select a path of action that will stimulate the organization. Agree with others who will do what and by when. Then prepare to celebrate their efforts. Give them all the credit for making it happen. Someday, one of them will say, ““You are an inspired and inspiring leader!”

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