

Do You Know Your Desired Outcome?

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Many people with whom I interact don't know why they do what they do! Now that may seem incredible to you. Yet we are all guilty of this at times!

Sometimes my wife will ask me, "Dennis, why did you do that?" Usually, I'm able to answer with something that seems plausible. Occasionally, however, the real answer is, "I don't know."

Huh? I'm inside my body, totally in control of my behaviors, and I don't know why I did what I did? Yep, I confess. I spent no time in advance of my action thinking about the possible outcome. I did what I did without considering options, without really thinking about the effects of my behavior.

I work with leaders on improving the impact they have on those over whom they have authority. I emphasize that what we intend is not always the effect that actually occurs. We initiate the action, but we usually don't know the actual long-term impact.

We blindly believe that what we intended actually occurred. That's true maybe half the time. About half the time, though, something we hadn't even considered is the outcome. And unless we ask, we'll continue on blindly unaware of what happened. (I strongly encourage leaders to become very comfortable inviting feedback!)

Of course, thinking about our desired outcome doesn't guarantee it will occur. We are not in control of all the environmental elements that affect our results. However, we increase the probability of making happen what we desire if we have a clear image of what that is.

Let me provide an example. In old Jerusalem, there was a gate at the northeast wall of the city. Just outside that gate was a pool known as Bethsaida. Allegedly, when an angel stirred the waters, the first person in the pool would be healed.

Gathered around the pool were many blind, lame, and paralyzed individuals. One in particular had been brought there each day for thirty-eight years! Can you imagine? After all that time, can you understand if perhaps he'd lost hope?

Jesus, on his way to a religious festival, passed the pool and asked the disabled man, "Do you want to get well?"

The man could have answered, "Of course!" Or he could have sarcastically replied, "Why else do you think I'd be lying here?" Instead, he explained, "Sir, I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me."

Jesus simply asked a version of "What is your desired outcome?" The man responded instead with a long explanation for why he'd been unsuccessful for most of his life!

Leaders, don't allow yourselves to be seduced into a similar outlook! Opportunities come your way every day! If you don't have a clear picture of your desired outcome, you'll miss more chances at success than you'll ever realize.

Fortunately, Jesus is more forgiving than most of the situations you'll face. Despite the man's failure to clearly state his desired outcome, Jesus satisfied his need. (Read beyond the first verses in the book of John, chapter 5, and you'll see that both the disabled man and Jesus were criticized for what happened! Isn't that just the way it is? Whatever good you do, you'll always have critics!)

Your power to focus your limited energies is greatly enhanced when you clearly know what you desire and why! Practice until it is natural to think, "What is my desired outcome in this situation?"

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