

Personal Mastery/Creative Tension; A Blueprint for Effective Leadership

In previous issues we have established the cascading effect of leadership; how it paves the way for accountability and innovation. Let's now explore *how* to lead people. This exploration will not be on a tactical level, that is, a listing of universal tips and techniques for effective leadership. Those kinds of simple prescriptions just don't work. Instead we will explore the strategy, the conceptual framework behind effective leadership. Equipped with this framework you can begin to create your own approach to more effective leadership.

Personal Mastery?

The primary outcome of leadership is to engender *personal mastery* in those being led. Personal mastery occurs when people are acting out behaviors designed to achieve the future they are committed to rather than acting from their comfort zone. We all have a comfort zone, a set of behaviors that we have designed over the years that has produced success; our habits, our skills and unconscious competencies. Although this comfort

zone behavior is the source of our success, it also limits our ability to creatively design new actions. When you hear people say "that is just the way I am" or "that isn't the way we do it here" you can be assured that their comfort zone is being challenged, and they are pushing back. Even the most logical argument in the world is not effective in overcoming this resistance, because humans' commitment to comfort is not based in logic. The way to have people choose to take action that makes them uncomfortable is to generate in them a commitment that is more compelling than comfort...consciously. Creative tension is a method for doing just that.



Brad Zimmerman
Managing Director
PMP East

Why Create *More* Tension?

The central practice of *personal mastery* involves learning to keep both a *vision for the future* and a clear picture of *current reality* before us. Doing this will generate a force within ourselves called "Creative Tension". Tension, by its nature, seeks resolution, and the most natural resolution of *this* tension is for reality to move closer to a committed vision. It's as if we have set up a rubber band between the two poles of our vision and current reality.

Dr. Martin Luther King

This may seem a very abstract concept, so let's see how it has been used in the real world. Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech is a very clear, and possibly the most effective example of our time. Dr. King started out by acknowledging the Emancipation Proclamation and the possibility for

There is a time tested "Template" for leadership...that has been used by the world's great leaders.

Are you applying it in your organization?

Can you teach others?

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freedom for the slaves that it created. He then presented his view of the current reality:

“But one hundred years later the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity...”

After expanding on the current state of the civil rights movement and declaring his commitment to a future distinct from that past, he describes his vision for the future:

“I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, sons of former slaves and sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character. I have a dream today!”

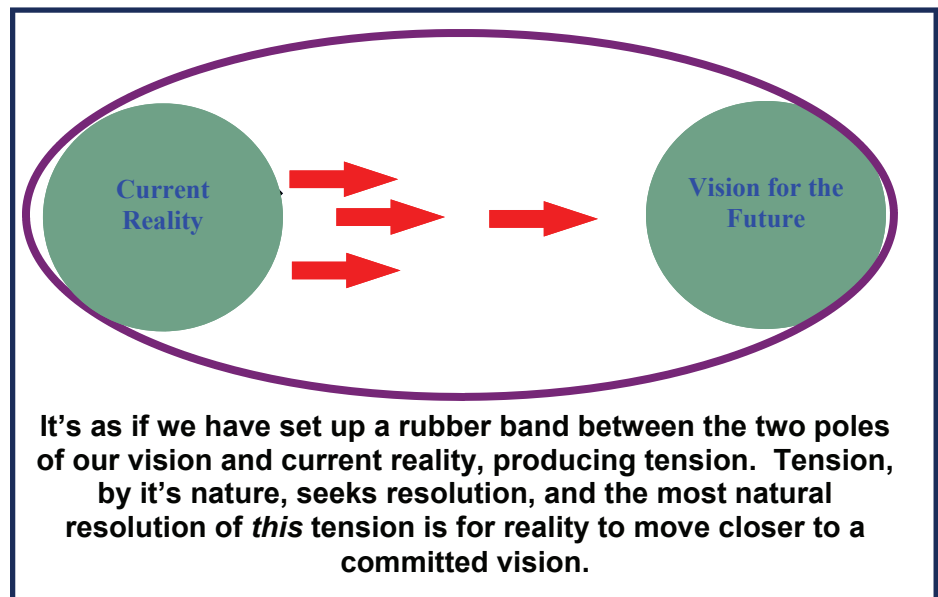
Dr. King’s vision for the future was so compelling that it elicited commitment from a broad base of the population...and the rest is history. A brilliant example of creative tension.

Don’t Lower Your Vision.

Personal mastery teaches us not to lower our vision, even if it

seems as if the vision is impossible. People who have conceived of and committed to a Personal Vision, can see clearly that they must change their life in order to reach that result. This produces

or what it **really** means. Arguing over who’s version of current reality is right is like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic; it is a lot of work, but it doesn’t get us anywhere. Instead the prac-



a sustained sense of energy and enthusiasm, producing tangible results, which can then make the energy and enthusiasm stronger.

Face the tough issues.

Personal mastery also teaches us not to shrink back from seeing the world as it is, even if it makes us uncomfortable or we don’t agree. It requires the ability to allow other opinions about the current reality to co-exist with our own.

Humans, by nature are driven to be right about our view. We will argue to convince others that we are right, even when it is counter productive. Start to pay attention to how much time is spent arguing about what **really** happened,

tice of Creative Tension teaches us to accept all versions of the current reality, to accept and understand the opinions of others.

Declaring and aligning on the vision for the future is where the work is invested. Try it, if you are effective, you will see that people will take action, of their own initiative, to advance that vision for the future.

From Insight to *Action*.

We suggest that you make note of any insights that you have generated while reading this article, and list the actions that you could take to turn those insights into reality.

Select a challenge or initiative that you are working on.

Current Reality

Does everyone involved see the issue the same way? The cause(s) of the issue?

How can you get everyone's perspective on board?

Future

What is the goal you are going for?

Is it compelling enough to get everyone out of their comfort zone?

What expanded future is more compelling?

EXTRA

CHANGE LEADERSHIP TRANSFORMS ORGANIZATION...

Personal Mastery

Programs deliver change management services; supporting the development of cultures that foster creativity, openness, and accountability.

Concentrating support in behavioral health and human services organizations, PMP has partnered with some of the most innovative organizations nationally, both large and small, to implement change initiatives:

- Adopting Evidence-Based Practices
- Implementing Electronic Health Records,
- Ushering in the Recovery Model
- Increasing productivity
- Integrating Behavioral and Primary care

PMP's approach to change management is based on a "personal growth model": An organization, by nature, is a group of people organized to fulfill a common purpose. Therefore any effort to expand an organization's capabilities must focus on personal growth for each individual.

PMP promises sustainable value to each individual in client organizations. The

"PMP has served as a leadership consultant, trainer, and coach for me and members of my executive cabinet and senior leadership team. In my nearly 30 years of executive leadership I have encountered scores of management consultants, though none in PMP's league. They are very smart, insightful, and truly committed to the success of their customer. I have found their work to be of enormous benefit to both the organization and to me personally."

**David Guth, CEO,
Centersone of America**

PMP Change-Leadership programs are comprehensive in nature, combining three distinct disciplines:

Breakthrough Workshop

Personal Coaching

e-learning



If you are faced with the daunting task of reducing costs, increasing productivity, improving quality of service; while keeping staff motivated and included, we can help. Call or write Brad Zimmerman; (248)647-9290 bzimmerman@pmpcoach.com.

"Projects with specific outcomes that impact the bottom line build the business case for engaging PMP. All of us have hired consultants that got everyone excited and then we went back to the office and fell back into the same old patterns. The involvement of Brad since the retreat truly holds us accountable to change.

If you find yourself in a situation similar to ours and are truly committed to change, engage PMP. I highly recommend them, but only, if you are committed to break through thinking and operating."

**Marn G. Myers, President & CEO
The Judson Center**

Executive Coaching / Leadership Development / Change Management



Personal Mastery Programs

Transforming Organizations Through Personal Growth

www.pmpcoach.com

31000 Telegraph Rd., Suite 260, Bingham Farms, MI 48025
(248)647-9290