

3 Warnings Signs of Vision Dissonance

Harvard business professor John Kotter has stated, “Behavior from important people that is inconsistent with the vision overwhelms other forms of communication.”

If Kotter is right, and I believe he is, then a leader whose life does not match the vision being articulated nullifies the vision message, the website, the brochures, and the catchy slogans. Really, all those things are a waste of time, rhetoric, and money if leaders do not live what they are asking others to live. Communication is a waste of time if leaders do not live the vision they are communicating.

What are some warning signs that your life is drifting from the vision you are articulating?

1. No personal illustrations

Your life is speaking much louder than your words. If you have given those you lead “values we live by” or “a mission we are pursuing” but you have no personal illustrations about how you are living those values or pursuing that mission, then you are not personally consumed with the direction you want others to be consumed with.

2. No recent personal illustrations

Perhaps you have illustrations, but they are really old ones. Be warned, it does not look like the vision is compelling you today. Example: If you are a church leader who keeps painting the vision of biblical community but the illustration you keep going back to is from 11 years ago, then you are not living your own message today.

3. Frustrated with your own culture

Brad Waggoner, the executive vice president at LifeWay, once told a group of seminary students, “If you have been leading in a context for several years and you don’t like the culture, the culture is likely a reflection of your leadership.” The leaders, for better or worse, impact the culture of the teams they lead. If you are frustrated with your own culture, ask yourself, “What are the people I serve seeing in me?”

A leader whose life does not match the articulated vision fails the credibility test. Leaders, be sure you own what you are asking others to own.

> [Read more from Eric.](#)

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