

Less is More: Dealing with Sideways Energy in Your Ministry

I've posted about **SIDEWAYS ENERGY** before, but I wanted to bring this topic back up.

Are you busy but not intentional? Do you feel like you are just spinning your wheels and not getting any traction? Does there seem to be a lack of any kind of momentum in your organization? Could be you are dealing with way too much "sideways energy." There is good energy and bad energy- and bad energy usually shows up as sideways... not because it is necessarily bad, but because it is usually a distraction.

We need to avoid sideways energy. It drives me crazy!

So what is Sideways Energy?

- Sideways energy is showing up to work but spending two hours talking about what you should have done an hour and a half ago.
- Sideways energy is **gossiping** about your boss or co-workers.
- Sideways energy is **procrastinating**.
- Sideways energy is the **same meeting eight times in a row** regarding the same idea that still has yet to be implemented.
- Sideways energy is having three sales to close and not calling them back because you are asked to help clean up the office for the Christmas party .
- Sideways energy is a staff handbook that **collects dust** but took hours to create.
- Sideways energy is an organizational system that takes 4 weeks to move a sale through the process because there is **too much bureaucracy**.
- Sideways energy is a **meeting** with no follow up, action plan, next steps or implementation that everyone knew would be a **waste of time** but no one was willing to say so.
- Sideways energy is cleaning your office or cube **instead of finishing the project** that was due yesterday.
- **Paper shuffling** is sideways energy.
- Dealing with the **same problem multiple times** is sideways energy.
- **Too many cc'ed emails** is sideways energy.

- Creating **new policies** for the company that everyone knows will **never be implemented** is sideways energy.
- **Micromanaging** is sideways energy. **Lack of trust** is sideways energy.
- **Brown-nosing** is sideways energy.
- **Office politics** is sideways energy.

And many times, the reason sideways energy becomes such a regular happening is because there is pressure coming from all sides within and around an organization- the very top, your boss, and those who you are leading. And the side seems to be the only place to find some relief and maybe focus on something, even if it is not the right thing to be focused on at the time. And growth can cause pressure that facilitates MORE sideways energy. Ultimately, this all leads to a lack of focus, which causes pressure because you choose not to deal with reality and instead want to focus on things that ultimately don't matter.

How to combat sideways energy?

- First, realize it exists and will paralyze an organization.
- Second, identify it and deal with it.
- Third, measure your productivity and create a system that will help you determine how much sideways energy you are creating, both for yourself as well as for your team.
- And finally, be clear on your goals and what the right kind of energy looks like for your team- if you model the right kind of energy, your team will follow in the same direction. Ultimately, use common sense.

Most of us can identify sideways energy in others, so being self aware and making sure we don't allow ourselves to get caught up in sideways energy personally is really important.

Read more from Brad [here](#).