Visionary Leaders Should Stop Doing These Seven Things

As leaders, we have a finite amount of energy.

We either use that energy wisely or waste it. And one thing for sure, we never get it back.

Each day presents us with 24 hours in which our physical, mental, spiritual and emotional capacity is packaged. That capacity is dispersed through our God-given human energy. At the end of each day, our batteries need to be recharged.

There are some responsibilities you carry as a leader that tend to zap and drain your energy more than others. Things like a confrontational conversation that carries emotional intensity, or working on complex details of your church budget. But you must still do them anyway.

There are other things we do as leaders that consume and deplete our energy that we don't have to do, and in fact, should stop doing.

The scary thing is that they are sometimes embedded in our habits in such a way that we don't realize we're doing them. And even more scary, sometimes we do know and do them anyway.

So, I've written an important list of things that if you stop doing, you'll accomplish more, realize a rise in your stamina (energy), and overall experience a higher level of satisfaction.

This is a unique list of practical items that don't fit within one specific category and yet are essential for you and me as leaders to make sure we stop doing.

(Note: There are entire categories not included such as your spiritual life, practical ministry, etc.)

Which one(s) speaks to you today?

7 Things Leaders Should Stop Doing:

1) Worrying about what others think of you.

You will be misunderstood, and you will make unpopular decisions, and not everyone will like you. If you lay awake at night worrying about these things, they'll eat you alive.

It's not easy, but let it go. That doesn't mean you become callous and or pretend you don't care. It means do the right things, with wise counsel, and keep going.

2) Procrastinating difficult conversations.

If you've been leading for a while, you know that putting off a tough conversation only makes it worse. You will likely imagine it more difficult than it will actually be, which is energy draining, and the delay allows the problem to become larger.

Don't move so fast that you are not prepared, but facing the tough conversations quickly often *gives* energy.

When you have the difficult conversation, you feel a sense of accomplishment, and often a relief, because it went better than you expected.

3) Showing up unprepared.

I know what it's like to have a full schedule, with many things required of me and a to-do list that's never done. It's *tempting* to show up unprepared, almost "justifiable," but it's never a good idea.

In everything from the next talk you'll give, to a meeting you'll lead, the anxiety caused by not being prepared drains far more energy needed to prepare. And of course, you never feel good about it afterward.

4) Focusing on results over relationships.

As a leader, you are expected to produce results and simultaneously develop relationships. This is never easy, and it nearly always creates pressure if you allow results to rise above relationships.

Focusing on results over relationships may seem expedient at the moment, even pressure relieving, but over the long haul, it's costly. The relational price tag is incredibly draining.

The bottom line is that over time, if you tend to genuine nurture and development of relationships, while you work diligently toward results, the fruit of your ministry will be greater and last longer.

5) Expecting those who follow you to know what you're thinking.

There are two items on this list that speak to me personally, and this is one.

In some strange way, I have occasionally caught myself assuming others around me should know what I'm thinking. Perhaps I have allowed myself to assume something like, "Well, we've worked together a long time, they should know." No, they shouldn't.

That kind of faulty assumption is an energy killer because it wastes so much time, and it's often counterproductive. If left unchecked over time, it can even cause conflict.

Speak up, make yourself clear, let those you work with know what you're thinking.

6) Doubting yourself.

This is simultaneously a massive energy consumer.

Self-doubt often comes from things like the lies we believe, comparisons, and past failures. It results in a lack of confidence.

Risks are required, and we all make mistakes. That's part of life as a leader. And no leader is a stranger to at least *some* insecurity.

Remember that God is with you. Recall your past successes, give yourself permission to make mistakes, seek wise counsel and go for it. Personal momentum will overcome self-doubt.

7) Allowing email to run your life.

How many emails do you receive a day? How many do you send? I'll bet the number is large, maybe even staggering. Email can suck your energy dry!

Half of your email is junk, and that takes only seconds to delete. It's the other half that can consume you.

If you are like me, you want to be helpful. People write to you and you know you can make a difference, yet realistically you can't answer every email or help everyone that lands in your inbox.

First, identify what email you must answer. Start with the priorities. Email from your boss, your team and the things you are immediately working on. From there, you need to become more discerning.

Can someone else help you respond? Perhaps set aside two hours a week and do what you can, and the rest need to wait. The point is, don't let email run your life.

This was the second one on the list I'm working on.

Did you find one or two that speaks to you?

What one thing would you add to the list for leaders to stop doing?

> [Read more from Dan](#).