

## Leading Within Your Sphere – A Mandate for Making an Impact!

“Don’t ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.”

**Howard Thurman**

“Desire is the key to motivation, but it’s determination and commitment to an unrelenting pursuit of your goal - a commitment to excellence - that will enable you to attain the success you seek.”

**Mario Andretti**



Leading within your sphere was an imperative I gave to every individual in my command when I was fortunate enough as a Marine Officer to command a Navy flight test squadron. I have held the belief that we should all lead within our sphere since I was a cadet at Texas A&M. I continue to espouse that conviction daily while directing the finest group of people I have led since I left active duty in the Marine Corps - my teammates at The Albers Group!!

If you are reading this, you have been to our website and see something different, a spark that makes you want to be a part of our team. We so appreciate that interest! I will tell you that joining our team is reserved for those that want to make an IMPACT and who won’t quit until they do. If this describes you, this short primer should resonate with you and give you something to think and act on while waiting to see if there is a spot for you on our team.

In every situation, there is a need for a leader: work, home, and play. Someone needs to lead; and our belief is that YOU should be that leader. Sometimes we leave “leading” to those with a title or role that says they are supposed to lead. But *our belief* is that *real impact makers are always looking to ensure that good leadership is in place - and to be a great follower when someone else is leading!!* The best leaders are great followers because they know how important following is.

There are three elements that we feel strongly about when it comes to leadership: Integrity, Commitment & Excellence (ICE). **Integrity** is not simply telling the truth. If we must discuss the necessity of truth telling, then you aren’t the right person for our team. By integrity, we mean the concept of being “whole” as a leader. Wholeness necessitates examining ourselves as whole individuals and viewing our teammates, subordinates, direct-reports (however you refer to your people) as “whole” people. Like the “integrity of a ship,” our identities must be whole for us to be effective team members and, more importantly, to be effective leaders in our sphere.

**Commitment** and the importance of being committed to others is tremendously important and helps us remember that the world doesn’t revolve around us. Too often we see leaders more committed to themselves than their teams or their customers (think Enron). As we said, commitment should take many forms - commitment to your customers, to your employees, to your family, spouse, to doing the right thing, regardless of the cost - whatever your endeavor is...but commitment *must* be a part of your Leadership DNA. Without it you will falter. You will collapse when you are “hit” in the battle of life. Without commitment you won’t last, and others will suffer alongside you.

Finally, **Excellence**. That elusive and often over-used term that implies greatness.

What does excellence mean to you? Do you strive for excellence in all you do? Is your leadership style and method bathed in excellence? If you lead a team, is your team known for performing with excellence? Here is what I mean by excellence - I mean striving to exceed expectations and stand apart from the rest. Mistakes are made and failures occur (only Jesus can claim to be perfect), *but* do you and/or your team, in an effort to achieve excellence, embrace mistakes and failures as opportunities to learn and to improve?

We want to extend your view beyond just excellence in business ops and urge you to apply excellence to everything that you do - work, play, rest - ALL of it matters and ALL of it should be done with excellence. Do you play with an attitude of exceeding expectations? That doesn't mean that every "play session" is like a movie with fireworks and "over the top" fun but it does mean that the same energy and diligence you put into doing things well at work (e.g., planning what to do or what needs to be done) gets put into your play time - thus *magnifying its effect*. Who wins when that happens? Well, we do, those around us do, and our work/business efforts win because we come back to work more energized and enthusiastic! Is not the purpose of real and effective leadership to magnify the effect of those being led? I believe so with all my heart and soul. Do you strive for excellence in your rest? Do you rest? For leaders, rest is very important. If we aren't rested, we aren't thinking well, and therefore we aren't performing well. All hands suffer. Many of us driven, Type A leadership fanatics convince ourselves that rest is a waste of time. I mean, what is being accomplished while we sleep?!! Well, a great deal actually, but that is for another discussion! Used properly, rest can be the ultimate multiplier to our leadership efforts. Plan and execute your rest efforts with excellence and watch what happens to your leadership "returns!"

Now let me leave you with this thought. In many situations and contexts, people are confused and think that great leadership means that there must be more of it. This can be suffocating and down-right counterproductive. We call that micro-management and we are against it! Excellence in leadership might mean getting out of the way! Create an environment where your team can achieve what is required, and even more, because you give them the tools they need and get out of the way. Excellence as leaders doesn't mean that we are everywhere all the time or that we are everything to all people. It certainly does not mean that we as leaders believe WE are critical. Excellence in leadership means understanding that leaders are merely the ones blessed with the responsibility and opportunity to create environments where ordinary people achieve extraordinary results. What a blessing that is for anyone trusted with a position of leadership! Excellence in leadership is both demanding and freeing. It demands much of the audience and frees them to get it done. What effect do you have on those around you? Do they feel challenged and yet alive?

Excellence - in everything we do - work, play, rest... your acts of service. Let's be focused on excellence...we won't achieve perfection, but when we pursue excellence and aren't satisfied with just getting by...THAT is when I believe that your leadership will have the most effect and you will be the most engaged and fulfilled.

Leading within your sphere - a sure-fire way to elevate your effect on the world.

"Unless commitment is made, there are only promises and hopes; but no plans."

— Peter F. Drucker