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The Empower Letter with Mark Bowser

January 2005

Dear Don,

Welcome to *The Empower Letter*. I appreciate your interest in our newsletter. I believe you will find it interesting, inspiring, and helpful. My commitment to you is to make it relevant and beneficial as you succeed in your personal and professional lives. Thank you again for the privilege of sharing with you. Make it a great day!

God bless,

Mark Bowser

P.S. If you are enjoying The Empower Letter then please help us spread the word. Forward this issue to your family, friends, and associates. If they would like to have their own free subscription then have them sign up at www.MarkBowser.com.

In this issue

- **Featured Article**
- **The Power of Vision**
by Mark Bowser
- **Making the Most of Every Experience** by Dr. John C. Maxwell
- **What People Are Saying... Quotes to Live By!**
- **Advertisements**

The Power of Vision by Mark Bowser

Throughout time, champions have always had vision. Vision is one the most important elements to being a champion. The Bible states it this way, "Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he (Proverbs 29:18 KJV). The New Living Translation says it this way, "When people do not accept divine guidance, they run wild. But whoever obeys the law is happy." Vision keeps us on track. It even shows us

Featured Article



Mark Bowser is "providing inspiration to individuals and organizations through effective training that produces Positive Results!" Mark Bowser is one of the top Professional Speakers and Corporate Trainers in the market today. Organizations he has trained include Southwest Airlines, Makino, Inc., Ford Motor Company, The Kellogg Company, FedEx Logistics, the United States Air Force, and many many more.

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where the track is. So, if vision is so important to success and happiness then where do we get it? Well, as a Christian, I get it from God. I do my best to listen to God's guidance on who He wants me to be, where He wants me to go, and what He wants me to do. As long as I stay on God's vision then I am on the right track but as soon as I begin to follow my selfish motives then that is when I get into trouble.

I believe that there are two elements we have to keep in mind if we are to be successful with our vision. One, the vision needs to be a challenging vision to stretch you and your team (REMEMBER: In order to reach your vision, you are going to need to get people on board with it which means you have to lead them. Every great leader has a vision that is worthy of following and the confidence and integrity to get people to follow them).

When I think about a leader with a challenging vision, I think of President John F. Kennedy. In 1961, he stood before the nation and said, "I believe this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before the decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to earth." That would be a challenging vision for NASA to repeat today let alone in 1961. Let me remind you where we were when JFK made that statement. In 1961, we had just successfully launched Alan Shepherd into space as the first American into space. Up until that point we had had failure after failure. It was a miracle we didn't kill Alan Shepherd in the attempt to get him up there. Rocket after rocket blew up in our faces. The Soviet Union was stomping on us in the space race. Then, we have one success and President Kennedy said we are going to the moon. Our scientist probably wanted to send him to the moon. What an outrageous statement. Did we know how to accomplish it? Probably not. Was it possible? Some of them probably weren't sure. But what happened at 4:17 P.M. in the afternoon on Sunday July 20, 1969? The spacecraft ever so smoothly landed on the lunar surface. Neil Armstrong called back to earth, "Houston, Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed." Later, as he and Buzz Aldrin stepped out of Eagle onto the moon, Neil said, "That is one small step for man one giant leap for mankind." We had done it! We had landed two men on the moon and we did return them safely back home to earth. You see, a challenging vision isn't one you necessarily have all the answers to at the beginning but one that will stretch you to accomplish something you didn't know you were capable of. It makes you stronger and better. In JFK's case, it is my belief that if his integrity had matched his vision, he would have been even more successful.

The second thing we have to keep in mind in order to make our vision a reality is the courage to put it in action. Michele Borba tells a story about Rocky Lyons. When

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Rocky was five years old, he and his mother Kelly were traveling in their pickup truck down a country two lane road. Rocky was asleep with his legs resting on his mother's lap. When they turned onto a narrow bridge, the truck hit a pothole. Trying to get the truck out of a rut, Kelly sped up and turned the steering wheel. Rocky's foot got caught between the steering wheel and Kelly's leg and she lost control of the vehicle. The truck tumbled over a 20-foot ravine.

The crash woke up Rocky. He looked at his mother and said, "What happened, Mama?" Kelly was hurt bad. She was covered with blood. Rocky said, "I'll get you out, Mama." He crawled out the window and tried to pull his mother out of the truck. It didn't work. He climbed back into the truck and somehow used his 40-pound body to push his 104-pound mother out of the wreckage.

Rocky was planning on climbing to the top of the ravine to get help for his mother. Fearing he would get hurt, Kelly refused to let him go by himself. Inch by inch they struggled along. Rocky not only had a vision to save his mother, he also knew how to motivate her to success. He told his mother to remember that little train. He was referring to the train in that children's classic The Little Engine that Could. In Rocky's own version of that famous line, he kept motivating his mother by saying, "I know you can, I know you can."

Well, they made it to the top and Rocky flagged down a vehicle. They got Kelly to the hospital and after 8 hours of surgery and 344 stitches she was put back together. She looks much different today then she did before the crash. BUT SHE IS ALIVE! She is alive because a five-year-old boy had a vision to save his mother and the courage to put it in action. Rocky just did what he had to do. He wasn't trying to be a hero. He just did what he was called to do.

That is what vision is all about. A challenging vision which will get you out of your comfort zone and the courage to put it into action. What is your vision? Is it to change the entire world or just your corner of it? Whatever it is; wherever it is GET THAT VISION AND MAKE IT HAPPEN!

This article is adapted from The Champion Within by Mark Bowser

Making the Most of Every Experience by Dr. John C. Maxwell

On December 18, 1998, I had an experience that dramatically changed my outlook on life. It began at a

Christmas party, but there was nothing festive about it.

On that day, at the age of 51, I had a heart attack.

As I tried to make sense out of what was happening to me, the brutal reality of the situation hit me head on. I didn't know if I was going to live to see another day. As I contemplated the possibility of dying, I suddenly understood that all I have is today. There's no dress rehearsal for life. This is it.

I had known that intellectually, but having a heart attack drove the point home like nothing else could. If I want to live a useful life-in my role as a leader as well as in every other capacity-I have to make the most of every experience. Obviously, some events and situations-such as my heart attack-will fall into the "defining moment" category. But even those less memorable moments influence our lives and contribute to our usefulness and overall fulfillment.

I'll talk more specifically about defining moments later. For now, though, let's look at experiences in general. Each one falls into one or more of the following realms:

1. Entertainment.

We absorb this type of experience through our senses. People who engage in this type of activity can see, hear, feel, smell or taste what is happening.

2. Educational.

Here, we have the participation of a person's mind and/or body. The goal, of course, is to learn.

3. Escapist.

This is an experience that completely involves a person-like spending the day at a theme park: riding the roller coasters, eating the funnel cakes (unless you've recently experienced a heart attack, of course), interacting with the sidewalk performers. The emphasis is on doing, as opposed to feeling or learning.

4. Aesthetic.

With this type of experience, you're immersed in a setting, but you have no effect on it. Think of visiting an art gallery or seeing the Grand Canyon-you're affected by the experience, but you did nothing to contribute to it. You're there simply because you want to be there.

Jim Gilmore, co-author of *The Experience Economy*, said, "The richest and most compelling human experiences draw from all four realms." Very often, those events and encounters we consider to be defining moments do exactly what Gilmore described. They capture our hearts, souls, minds, senses, emotions and sometimes even our bodies

in a life-altering way.

This is an important observation for leaders who want to communicate effectively. Whether you have an audience of a thousand or of one, you need to make sure you are utilizing as many of the four realms as possible. You also need to be aware of the powerful, growth-triggering impact that these types of experiences can have on people, and do what you can to provide them in settings that are relevant to what your team does on a daily basis.

Defining moments don't just shape followers, of course. In *Geeks & Geezers: How Era, Values and Defining Moments Shape Leaders*, Warren G. Bennis and Robert J. Thomas state that all of the truly effective leaders they studied, regardless of age, had "undergone at least one intense, transformational experience" that set them on their "desired, even inevitable" leadership paths. These "crucible" experiences, as Bennis and Thomas describe them, are defining moments that "unleash abilities, force crucial choices and sharpen focus." In essence, they teach "a person who he or she is."

Based upon what I have observed in my own life and in the lives of those around me, I believe there are at least four different types of leadership-defining crucibles.

1. Ground breakers.

These experiences literally thrust us out and enable us to break new ground.

2. Heart breakers.

These are those painful, unwelcome events-such as my heart attack - that stop us in our tracks and force us to reevaluate our priorities.

3. Cloud breakers.

The encounters allow us to see the big picture-suddenly and clearly-like never before.

4. Chart breakers.

These defining moments allow us to soar with confidence. According to Bennis and Thomas, one key difference between lifetime leaders and "nonleaders" lies in how they respond to the defining moments they experience. "Leaders create meaning out of events and relationships that devastate nonleaders," they write.

We don't always know it when we're in the middle of a defining moment; sometimes, the importance of these experiences can only be seen in retrospect. Either way, it is up to us to decide how they are going to affect us and our leadership. As Aldous Huxley said, "Experience is not what happens to a man. It is what a man does with what happens to him."

This article is used by permission from Dr. John C. Maxwell's free monthly e-newsletter 'Leadership Wired' available at www.MaximumImpact.com."

What People Are Saying... Quotes to Live By!

"The price of greatness is responsibility."
~Winston Churchill

"No man is above the law and no man is below it."
~Theodore Roosevelt

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."
~Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Winning is a habit. Unfortunately, so is losing."
~Vince Lombardi

"You cannot shake hands with a clenched fist."
~Golda Meir

"Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power."
~Abraham Lincoln

"Beware of little expenses. A small leak will sink a great ship."
~Benjamin Franklin

"Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets."
~The Holy Bible (Matthew 7:12 NLT)

"An idea is the greatest investment."
~Mark Bowser

"The heart of a fool is in his mouth, but the mouth of a wise man is in his heart."
~Benjamin Franklin

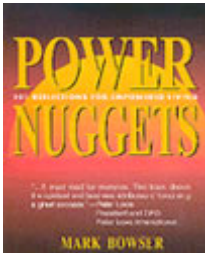
"Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadows."
~Helen Keller

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