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### **Who Leaders Are**

# The Lost Art of Delegation

## What Leaders Do

### Leaders Set Goals

*“Setting goals is the first step in turning the invisible into the visible.”*

-Tony Robbins

Like many people, I enjoy watching a good game of football: two groups of athletes squaring off against each other, using a combination of brute force, guile, and teamwork to move the



ball down field and try to get it across the goal line. Meanwhile the opposing team does its best to prevent that from happening. And when they enter the “red zone” close to the goal, the

intensity increases for players and fans alike. In fact, it’s the existence of the goals that makes the contest interesting. Imagine if there were no goals. What would you have then? A bunch of guys running around and tackling each other for no apparent reason. How would you know which team was best? What’s the point of football if you don’t have an end zone to shoot for?

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And it's the same with anything you do. If you have a clear goal and know what you are trying to achieve, you can save yourself a lot of needless

running up and down

field and wasted

energy. The problem

is that there are a lot

of people out there

who don't really know

where the goal posts are, and they aren't winning many games.

As a leader, that's not where you want to be. You want to be

able to set clear goals that will get you and your team from

where you are right now to where you want to be in the future.

*If you have a clear goal...  
you can save yourself a lot  
of ...wasted energy.*

So we're going to talk about how you can set clear goals that will help you get focused, and help you go from running around aimlessly on the field to scoring lots of points! Otherwise, it's kind of like Yogi Berra said,

*"If you don't know where you are going, how are you going to know when you get there?"*

Often you will hear people express goals like "I want to lose weight" or "I want to get in shape" or "I want to get better grades" - these are all great ideas, but the problem is that they are vague – how much weight? How will you know when you are in shape? What grades qualify as "better"? Because their ideas of what they want to achieve are not clear, it's hard for them to know what to do to achieve them. A better way to

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approach this is to make your goals clear and concrete by using the acronym **SMART**.

A lot of people are trying to lose weight, so let's take that for an example. We'll apply the **SMART** acronym to try and make this a clear, concrete goal.

**S** **The S stands for Specific.** You need to be very clear about what it is you want to achieve. What kind of weight are we talking about? Is it how much you weigh when you walk to school or get on an airplane – maybe just take some things out of your backpack. But you probably mean body weight, and specifically body fat. For a goal to be useful, it has to be specific. What if we try, “I want to lose body fat.”? OK, that's a little better. Let's keep going.

**M** **The M stands for measurable.** You need to have some way to gage your progress and whether or not you have accomplished your goal; something that tells you how much or how many or quantifies your achievement in some way. People trying to lose weight often measure their progress in pounds, which is fine. Another way



could be to measure body fat as a percentage of total weight. A third way could be by waist size or dress size; there are usually several ways to measure your goals, you just have to pick one that you can easily and regularly

measure so you know if you're getting anywhere. So how

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about, “I want to lose 30 pounds body of body fat.” That’s starting to sound pretty clear, but we’re not done yet.

**A** **The A stands for Attainable.** Your goal should be realistic and within reach. Do you have the resources you will need, like time or money? Is your goal something that you can influence and control? – If it’s dependent on people or forces outside your control, you can’t be sure your efforts will pay off, so make sure success depends on you. In this case, it might be beach week next month, but you’re probably not going to

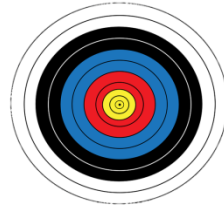
*Ask yourself what your purpose is for your goal; why is this important?*

lose 30 pounds by then. It would be dangerous to try, and you’ll probably end up frustrated and no better off. Make the goal something that is physically possible, something that you can reasonably attain. Let’s go with “I want to lose 30 pounds of body fat in the next 90 days”. Great. We’re getting there.

**R** **The R stands for Relevant.** Your goal has to have meaning to you, to help you accomplish whatever it is that you are trying to do. This is the “why.” So ask yourself what your purpose is. If you are trying to lose weight so you can get better grades, than I’m not so sure a lot of weight loss is going to help, and soon you might start to lose motivation. If your purpose is to become more healthy and fit, it is easy to see how losing excess body fat can contribute to

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better health. So how about: “I want to lose 30 pounds of body fat in the next 90 days so that I can improve my health.” You could be even more specific about what part of your health you want to improve (blood pressure, cholesterol, etc. but you get the idea). Now you have your purpose built in and a reason to go to the effort to accomplish your goal. Almost there, but wait, there’s one more...



**T** **The T stands for Time-Bound.** When are we talking about getting this done? Tomorrow? We already made the target 90 days so that it would be attainable. But 90 days ending when? An arbitrary number is still a vague idea that doesn’t really grab your attention. But guess what? Once you put a date on it, it gets a lot more real. There’s no dancing around about when you really started, or if weekends and holidays count, or other ways to try and quibble out of it. A



date is a date. Now you have a no-kidding real target to shoot for. Let’s go with, “I want to lose 30 pounds of body fat by the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2015 (90 days from now) so that I can improve my health.”

Using the Acronym **SMART**, you now have a very clear goal and you will definitely know whether or not you have accomplished it. You can even measure your progress along the way so you know if you are on track or not.

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SMART goals are a great way for you as an individual to focus on what you are trying to achieve and measure your progress in getting there.

So what comes next? Now that you have this goal, it's time to start taking steps to achieve it. Check out this video on [Three Ways to Make Your Goal a Reality](#) which will give you some great techniques to follow to start making your dreams come true.

If you are leading a team and plan to do some delegating so that you can get organized, it might be helpful to take a look at the [video series on delegating](#), and how you incorporate SMART goals to do it well.

Whether you are setting SMART goals for yourself or your team, using this tool will take you a huge step forward in doing what leaders do: turning a vision into a reality.

Credit:

Doran, G. T. (1981). "There's a S.M.A.R.T. way to write management's goals and objectives" *Management Review* (AMA FORUM) **70** (11): 35–36.

# The Lost Art of Delegation

## Leaders Learn Continuously

Axe sharpening story

Definition of insanity

Garbage in/garbage out

Investment in yourself

How Leaders Learn

**Reflect** on recent events – someone once said that “the unexamined life is not worth living” and someone else said “those who do not remember the past are doomed to repeat it.” A leadership twist on this idea is that every time you do something significant, it’s a good idea to take a moment and think about how it went.

One way to approach this is Start/Stop/Continue. While thinking over the event, begin by thinking about what you should start doing that would help things go better. Then list those things you should stop doing. And then it’s always

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important to keep in mind that several things you did probably went well and you want to continue doing them.

Keep a little notebook somewhere and keep a record. Like so many other things, when you take the time to actually write down what you are learning, you are XXX more likely to remember it. Because the point is to remember what to do right and what to change the next time this comes up.

**Gain new experience** – back when I was a Captain with a parachute unit in Panama, there was a lieutenant who was always volunteering for every parachute mission, even on ones where he didn't jet to jump, but just doing grunt work and helping with what was going on inside the airplane. While others were taking a break at the end of the day, he could be seen heading off to the airfield to join some other unit and help out. Very soon, he had far more experience with all aspects of parachuting than even people of higher rank. And they knew it. When it came time to plan or execute another jump, pretty soon he was being asked to lead it or provide his advice. By seeking out additional experience, the Lieutenant had gained additional competence and confidence, and his growth in these areas helped him become more and more of an influencer throughout our organization, despite the fact that he was so junior in rank.

As a new leader, you can do the same thing. Look for ways to get more experience, get involved, do more than the others are doing, and the knowledge you gain will bring you greater authority and wisdom

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**Read** – Short of actually going out and doing things, reading about them can be immensely helpful, as well as entertaining. paging through a book can be a great way to gain experience through other people. In a good biography or autobiography, you can follow the thoughts of leaders as they face man challenges, and see the results that come of their actions, whether for good or bad. There are some great works out there that show man at his best (and worst), stories of high adventure and great courage. A steady diet of this sort of reading will consciously and unconsciously condition you to think like a leader. Having the benefit of the experiences of others can also be a great way to give you perspective. If you can think back to the trials that Lewis and Clark faced in their march to the Pacific Ocean, or the incredible challenges that Earnest Shackleton had to overcome to survive disaster on the Antarctic ice cap, and know that they prevailed, whatever you have going on in your situation will probably pale in comparison. It's like we sometimes say in the Army, "I got a roof over my head and no one is shooting at me; how hard can it be?" Make a habit of keeping a good book near at hand for a good dose of inspiration and vicarious experience.

Can also read how-tos, watch videos, consult web sites like this one!

### **Acquire new skills**

Link to Book Resources

Start/Stop/Continue Worksheet

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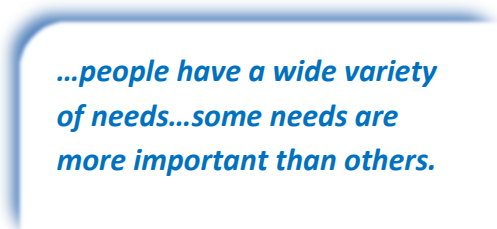
## **How Leaders Lead**

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### Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

There was a video that made the rounds on YouTube not long ago in which a woman was interviewed on camera after escaping from a house fire. She had gotten up in the middle of the night and smelled smoke. In the excitement that followed, she described how she ran out of the house, without even stopping to get her shoes. She says, “..and then the smoke got me. I got bronchitis! [Ain't nobody got time for that!](#)”

That video has almost seven million views now, and it's a great mini lesson on what motivates people to do things the way they do, and how they view priorities in their lives. Understanding some of the basic reasons behind how people make choices and what motivates them to act is critically important for



*...people have a wide variety of needs...some needs are more important than others.*

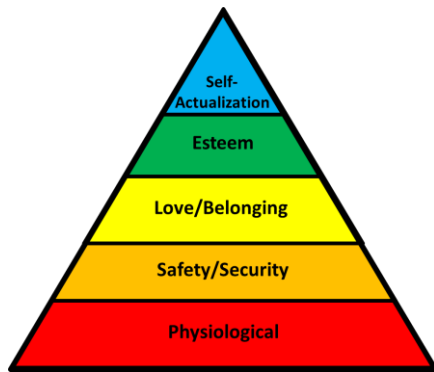
leaders. In this section, we'll talk about an idea that a guy named Abraham Maslow had on this subject, and then about how you can apply his mental framework to become a better leader.

Maslow was a psychologist who wrote a paper in 1943 entitled, “A Theory of Human Motivation.” In it, he outlined his theory

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that people have a wide variety of needs, and all these needs exist in a hierarchy. Some needs are more important than others. Someone who is deprived of food, or thirsting in the desert will be more interested in fulfilling the needs for food or water, before he concerns himself with his need to do just about anything else.

In his original work, Maslow outlined five levels or types of needs, which has often been portrayed as a pyramid. The general idea is that you have to satisfy the baseline needs before you can move up to the next level and start worrying about what's there.



From the most basic to the top end, the hierarchy looks like this:

- **Physiological Needs.** These are the basic requirements for human survival. Air, water, food, along with clothing and shelter. We need these before we get too concerned about anything else, and it's easy to see why.
- **Safety and security.** Once they can breathe, eat, and are protected from the elements, people focus on making it through the day. Long ago, this might have included safety from wild animals. Now it includes things like feeling safe at home, school, and community,

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having financial security, and protection against accident and illness.

- **Love and Belonging.** Once they know they will probably live to see the sun rise again tomorrow, man's nature as a social being becomes important. Feeling a sense of belonging and acceptance through friendship, family, and intimacy are essential. Humans have an innate need to love and be loved and will sacrifice a great deal to get it. Hollywood has made a lot of money over the years making movies about people seeking love and belonging.
- **Esteem.** Once they are part of a group, the next motivation is to feel respected and valued by it. Esteem includes not only respect by others, but also respect for self. This is where you see people working to earn impressive credentials, learning valuable skills, buying fancy cars, and doing a wide variety of other things. They have a need not to just be a member of a group, but to be considered a valuable member of it. From group esteem and perception of value can come self-esteem, the sense of self-worth, and its offspring, self-confidence.
- **Self-Actualization.** With all other needs met, man is free to pursue his individual potential, to see what he can accomplish. This could include mastering the piano, writing a book, becoming a superb athlete, painter, inventor, or seeing where and how far his talents can take him.

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Of course, like any theory, there has been plenty of debate as to whether these are the right number of levels, if they are ordered correctly, and whether or not you have to have entirely met the needs in one level before the next one becomes important.

*...this structure provides a useful guide in working with people...*

For our purposes as leaders, we don't need to worry so much about the academic details, but rather the idea behind them. The key is that this structure provides a useful guide in working with people, and if you are paying attention to it, it can help you greatly.

What do I mean? How about a few examples:

**Scenario 1:** Say you are out on a hike in the woods with a group, it's a hot day, and several people have already run out of water and are getting thirsty. They have basic needs that need to be met – they are on tier 1, Physiological. But your plan for the day calls for you to stop up ahead and spend an hour learning to identify some local plants. You are trying to get them to function several layers higher up on the hierarchy. Guess what is going to win out?

But recognizing this, you are aware that it would be pointless to attempt to carry out the original plan until the basic need is met, and so that's what you need to focus on. Maybe you see if others can share their

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water, or detour to a stream, or some other solution. As you act to help them meet their needs they will be far more willing to follow your lead.

OK, that was pretty basic, so let's try another one.

**Scenario 2:** Maybe you are in charge of a club or group of some kind, or have a small team at work, and you have just taken on some new members. Ask yourself, why are they there? Part of it has to do with that need for belonging up on the third tier. And just letting them join might enough to get the job done for them. But as a leader, you can help them meet that need much more fully. Think about what you could do to welcome the new members: make introductions, do some sort of ice breaker, maybe hold a welcome social event, or invite them to join a working group or committee right away, and get them introduced. Anything you do to make them quickly feel as though they are a part of the team will pay dividends. If you, as the leader, focus on helping the new members meet this social need, soon they will be able to focus their efforts a little higher on the scale, and become a productive member of the team. And you may have earned a little loyalty and respect from them along the way.

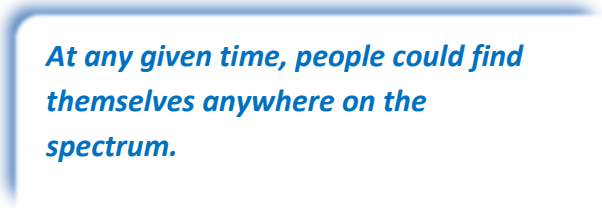
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So you can see how understanding this hierarchy can be helpful to you in your position of leadership. It's worth taking a little time to think about where you are, and where your people are on the scale. But be aware that where they are could change from day to

day. At any given time, people could find

themselves anywhere on

the spectrum. Even someone who is self-actualized at the top of the pyramid and striving to fulfil his potential will need to pause to eat and rest once in a while. To lead effectively, you need to stay constantly aware of where people are on this scale and how you can help them meet their needs.



*At any given time, people could find themselves anywhere on the spectrum.*

So the next time you find yourself in a leadership position, pause a moment to think about where you and everyone else is on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. If you are about to give out some new instructions and think that you might hear someone say, "ain't nobody got time for that!" you might want to reconsider how well you are meeting the needs of your team.