



## Look Where You're Going!

It was the end of one of those two week transcontinental road trips, and I'll admit I was summoning the energy gods the last day or two. Interestingly enough, I enjoy those last days for two reasons: first, I know I will be heading home and second, my mind becomes more creative, which is very beneficial in this business.

I was finishing the trip in Vancouver, one of the most beautiful cities on the planet. It was Saturday morning and my flight from Vancouver Airport wasn't leaving until noon, so I had time for an early morning run along The Seawall and Stanley Park. You had to be there; 7 am Saturday morning and it looked like a ghost town. Now I like people as much as the next person, but there's something special about a drop-dead quiet morning in the city, feeling like you have the streets to yourself. The views of the snow-capped mountains were a backdrop against the placid waters of the Pacific...priceless.

Let me pull this together for you: two weeks solid of coaching, training, experiencing and learning ready to let loose in a flood of ideas that my right brain finally has a chance to release. It was in a playful moment of running on a slender rail of concrete along The Seawall that I began to lose my balance and almost dropped 15 feet or so into the frigid water. But that released the most important idea of the morning.

Years ago, I spent some time in my home state of Pennsylvania teaching downhill skiing on what we used to call "mountains." One of the most common mistakes downhill skiers make when they feel they are skiing well (me included) is to drop their head and look at their skis. This is in the ill-fated idea that they will be able to "see" what they are doing wrong. It won't surprise you that this is the worst thing they can do because now they have lost sight of where they are going and the positions of all the obstacles downhill. The bottom line is... their skiing gets worse!

I realized as my mind raced back to this most valuable lesson that decision makers in businesses do this ALL the time! In fact, I quickly started to connect to all the businesses that were struggling to create long-term results and realized something very important. On a consistent basis they were taking their sights off the direction

they had committed to and were staring at something right in front of them. They were consistently losing their vision and each time traveling so far off course that it took weeks, if not months, to get back to where they wanted to be. Do you want some examples?

- A bad month
- Losing an employee
- Losing a key account
- Missing a big client opportunity
- Interpersonal issues between people or departments
- Industry changes, challenges or disruptions

Get this! Any one of these and many more will cause the unenlightened decision maker to quickly take their focus off the direction and “stare” at what is pressing and proximate. Each time this happens direction is lost and you are forced to expend tremendous amounts of energy to get back. That morning in Vancouver I connected the dots as clearly as the day was beautiful; every successful effort to create a culture that is capable of driving sustainable growth has leadership who is committed to “looking where they are going.” These leaders have the strength, knowledge and vision to overcome the pressing and proximate and remain steadfast in their commitment to the vision.

The lesson is this, and it’s a big one! It takes a lot of inner strength for leadership not to react to what appears to be crisis, but it IS the job they signed up for! That inner strength is a result of a commitment to personal growth, leadership growth and overall health and wellness. The strength required to make the right decisions under pressure is not an accident; it is a plan to be and become the leader that can persistently and consistently:

“Look Where You’re Going!”

Until the next edition of *Road Trips*,

Life is good...

KW