

I’ve written before about dealing with the pervasive problem of being too busy (see <http://www.enlumenls.com/say-no/>, or the videos at <https://youtu.be/llqgjjR3m68>). There is a way to gain significant ground against this problem. Now don’t roll your eyes at me until you’ve heard me out, but I believe the best, most lasting solution to being too busy is...*Leadership*. Your personal leadership ability.

BTW...Leadership is not defined by title. Leadership is primarily influence, and you can influence your peers, bosses, vendors, customers – or even the supermarket checker with good leadership skills.

Here’s why developing your own leadership abilities can equip you to slay your busy-ness dragon:

1. Good leadership builds on a foundation of character and core values. Values provide the clarity you need about what’s really important in order to have the guts to recognize and say “no” to less important things.
2. *Management* focuses on getting things done, while *leadership* focuses on developing people. Both skillsets are important. It is possible to manage with some measure of success without good leadership skills, but you will never unlock the potential that only comes with leadership. People development doesn’t automatically happen when you are task focused, but tasks will tend to get done by people who are well led. It takes more time to help people grow than to bark orders at them, but investing that time is the path to spending less time barking orders.
3. Good leaders create a safe, healthy, trusting environment for those they lead. Studies abound that prove significant, even dramatic improvement in productivity when the people aren’t burning mental and emotional energy trying to navigate a dysfunctional culture. Higher productivity in existing staff creates capacity to hire more staff to keep workloads balanced.
4. Becoming a good leader removes you from being the bottleneck in your organization. Bottlenecks are always too busy and reduce everyone else’s productivity.

There is a potential pitfall to this: Once you begin to experience greater capacity from the increased productivity of highly developed people in a safe environment, you have to be intentional about using part of that capacity to create some margin. If you don’t have the self-discipline (a leadership trait) to manage your rate of growth, you won’t keep a healthy environment for developed people to be highly productive in. You’ll be back in the busy-ness trap with even more busy people living stressful lives at less than peak productivity.

It takes time to develop leadership skills. It takes time to actually lead well. And I know, you’re too busy to take that time. But it’s an investment, not an expense. Like investing in retirement, you can choose not to invest and have to keep working to survive until the day you die. Or you can start investing a little now so that you have more flexibility in the future. The more you invest now, the sooner you’ll be able to access that greater flexibility.

Skeptical? Perhaps it’s because you haven’t personally experienced the profound impact of good leadership yourself.



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