
WHAT'S IMPORTANT | Volume II, Issue 1 | April 20, 2006

"What's Important" is a universal concern. The phrase resonates with an infinite number of meanings. What's important is both a question and an answer, depending on the situation.

From the well-meaning New Year's resolution long abandoned by Valentine's Day, to the brilliant spark of genius silently begging for attention, too often our best intentions get sidetracked. Whether by the agreements we've made to others, not enough time in the day, or perhaps even a twinge of fear, our excuses for not pursuing our priorities can dog-pile, leaving our personal goals suffocating at the bottom of the heap.

For most of us, it's baby steps, not giant leaps, that help us arrive most assuredly at our goals. Taking small, deliberate action everyday adds up. Both ants and elephants can cover large distances by continuously planting one foot in front of the other. People are no different.

Easy to say, but harder to do. We can be masters at getting in our own way, unwittingly frustrating our own progress by either trying to leap frog to our goal, or by failing to consistently take the baby steps necessary to get us there.

It boils down to a matter of being loyal. How important to us are our goals? Are they worth devoting the time and attention necessary to plant the seeds and help them grow? Are they worth the baby steps? Are they worth being loyal to?

If the answer is "no," then it's clearly time to set different goals. But, if the answer is "yes," then we owe it to ourselves to take the consistent action to turn our goals into reality.

To show loyalty to our goals, self-discipline must evolve from a noun into a verb. It is an active state of doing, of being, of creating our personal reality rather than allowing it to be created for us.

Leadership and management consultant and author John Maxwell contends that "The first person you lead is you." Leading ourselves with purpose and discipline is not only the surest path to achieving our goals; it's also our most powerful tool for leading others.

Author H. Jackson Brown Jr. once wrote, "Talent without discipline is like an octopus on roller skates. There's plenty of movement, but you never know if it's going to be forward, backwards, or sideways."

Leading by example offers those around us a glimpse of what is possible if they too harness their talent through self-disciplined action. If we can make great strides taking baby steps with two legs, imagine what could be possible harnessing the potential of eight legs – or more – all going in the same direction.

What's important is that with self-discipline good intentions evolve into real results.

Email me at chuck@durakis.com to share your thoughts.

Thanks,

Chuck