

SESSION 9: Leadership Decision Making

MAIN THEME OF THE SESSION:

Decision making is the central activity of leaders. And leaders need to answer three questions in order to make good leadership decisions: Where are we? Where are we going? And what will guide me on the way?

Perhaps one of the most important things that leaders do is make decisions
History can 'turn on a dime' around a good or a bad leadership decision
So, how do leaders make good decisions?
They have to answer three important questions:

1. Where are we?

What are the present realities that have to be taken into account?
This includes the strengths, the weaknesses, the constraints, and the possibilities
Leaders have to align leadership action with reality
They are trying to figure out in any given situation, "What is true?"
If you want to know the truth, you have a love for the truth
You have to cultivate a love for the truth in your life
Loving the truth is protective: it keeps you on track

2. Where we are we going?

It's a leader's job to take people somewhere
And without a clear image of the goal, it's impossible to get there!
They have to have a clear vision of the destination and move patiently, resolutely toward it
A leader's vision is a bit like a rudder on a ship; it keeps things going in the right direction
Without a rudder, you don't know what to say 'yes' to and what to say 'no' to
Leaders have to wean themselves off their need for other people's approval
Otherwise in their decision making they will simply bend towards the loudest voice

3. What will guide us on the journey?

It's the middle bit of the journey that's the bit filled with uncertainty!
Leaders wade out into the future with an image of the destination in mind
But they take with them a set of guiding principles that help them to navigate
Some might call this their 'moral compass'
Or if you were an American football coach, you'd call it your 'play book'
A playbook is a 'book of truths' that a good leader carries inside himself
It's based on what has worked in the past
Without a 'playbook' a leader will find herself just responding situationally all the time
Without a set of guiding principles, the work of leadership is just too filled with unpredictability
We all inherit a 'book of knowledge' from those who have gone before us
And we ought to think of this book of knowledge as a sacred thing

QUESTIONS:

- 1. Do you think of yourself as someone who has a relationship with the truth? How would you describe it?**
- 2. To what degree have you learned to live with a goal in mind?**
- 3. What are some of the things that have given shape to your 'playbook'?**