

Building a Sustainable Leadership Life

Lesson 2: Intentional reflection

Welcome to Lesson 2 of Building a Sustainable Leadership Life.

I want to talk to you in this particular lesson on how to learn to reflect intentionally. And I use that word intentionally, well intentionally!

What is intentional reflection? Well I think every leader reflects. Every person on the planet reflects and thinks about their life and talks to themselves and other people about their life but leaders I think need to develop the habit of intentional reflection. Which primarily is sitting down and asking yourself intentionally a whole series of questions to kind of run an audit. That sounds too formal but to kind of run a bit of an audit on your life and where it's going and how it's going and how you could improve.

We're talking about sustainability and I can imagine that more leaders intentionally reflecting would actually increase the sustainability of Christian leaders across the planet.

Benefits of intentional reflection

So if you become a person who intentionally reflects, what are the benefits to doing such a thing?

- 1. When you see how I get you to do it you'll stop work.** It's always good to stop work.
- 2. You'll avoid some traps and pitfalls that you otherwise would have fallen into.** I think the lack of intentional reflection does leave us open to hitting some hidden reefs that we've ignored or haven't focussed on or maybe haven't even seen because we haven't stopped to have a look.
- 3. You get in front of your life.** Leaders are needing to define where they're going and intentional reflection helps you get in front of where you're going.
- 4. It allows a bit of pruning.** You can prune some bad choices that you're currently making that will lead to bad habits. You can prune out some relationships that aren't really healthy for you to be involved in.
- 5. You get to focus on purpose.** We talked about it in the first lesson - the power of being on purpose as a leader. Intentional reflection just amplifies that focus on purpose.
- 6. You get to reset your goals and outcomes.** What are you trying to achieve? You don't want to be goal driven, but I think you do want to be focussed on outcomes. Where am I going?

That doesn't mean that it's all about achievement. Sometimes an outcome can be that I need to rest more. I need to take a holiday. I need to turn my phone off and unplug more. I need to play more. I need to have more fun in my life. So it's not just about productivity goals.

So there are six benefits, I believe, for intentional reflection.

How do you do intentional reflection?

Now how do you do intentional reflection? Well it's pretty simple. Firstly, book 30 minutes into your calendar about every 4, 5 or 6 weeks. Find a quiet place when that appointment comes up. A place that's not your busy workplace. Find yourself a place where there are less distractions and obviously I get a cup of coffee when I do this! I would encourage you to have something that's a bit relaxing, a cup of tea or coffee, whatever your preferred mechanism to relax with a hot drink is.

And then ask yourself a series of questions. Now I think there's two types of intentional reflection. One is personal reflection questions, the other is I call it "think like a leader" reflection questions. I'll put a PDF in with this lesson that you can download. One will be about those personal questions, the other one will be think like a leader questions.

I think they're two separate appointments. 30 minutes each about every 4, 5 or 6 weeks. Sit down and go through those questions and you'll find that intentional reflection will increase your sustainability. Trust me this works. I've been doing it for many years in my own life and I love the results I get out of stopping, thinking and interrogating myself with really good questions.

Next steps

Set calendar appointments

Firstly, get a hold of your calendar and put some recurring calendar appointments in there. 30 minutes for personal reflection, 30 minutes for think like a leader questions. If you do them about every 5 or 6 weeks that's about a 30 minute appointment every 3 weeks, I think we can cope with that in our world.

Download the PDF's

The second thing I would say is download those PDF's, grab a hold of them and do 2 x 30 minute appointments in the next 7 days. Get it rolling in your life. Do a personal reflection for 30 minutes then on another day do a think like a leader reflection for 30 minutes.



Trust me, building a sustainable leadership life requires intentionality and learning to reflect intentionally will help you build sustainability.