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Personal Excellence

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The Magazine of Personal Leadership

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Take Positive
Action
Exercise
Courage
Unlearn
And Then Dream

Stretch Yourself
Increase Your Boundaries



"Personal Excellence is the only reading you'll need to do for continual self-improvement both personally and professionally!"

—Sharlene Hawkes, Former Miss America, award-winning ESPN broadcaster

Unlearn and then Dream

It's a precondition of financial success.



by Lance Secretan

EACH WINTER, I RUN A *Leadership Summit* in which we enable skiers of intermediate ability to overcome their fears so that they can ski moguls (bumps) in their first half day and double black diamond runs (experts only) by the end of the first day. Many teachers say this is impossible, but we do it all the time.

How can such a breakthrough be achieved so quickly? When people ask me to share the *secret sauce*, I tell them, "You're asking the wrong question: It's not so much about what you need to learn—but what you need to *unlearn*."

When you are frightened, you calcify your attitudes and beliefs—you resort to the familiar and close your mind. New learning is impossible, and effectiveness is impaired. An intermediate skier, facing a 60-degree pitch, will resort to old habits—a *snow plow* (the skis are wedged to slow speed) or *side-slipping* (the skis are angled at 90 degrees to the incline of the slope). Until these old habits are set aside, no learning progress can be made.

Unlearning is prerequisite for growth. Unlearning is like seeing the world with new eyes. To unlearn, you: 1) admit that an old practice, belief, or attitude is not solving the current problem and that doing more of it won't lead to desired outcomes; 2) open your mind—yield to the view that there are alternatives to the way you've always done it until now; 3) switch from *trying to rationalize the use of your long-favored solution*, to *asking questions about how you can change, learn and grow*; 4) commit to terminating the old way forever; and 5) practice and perfect the new way.

As Satchel Paige said, "It's not what you don't know that hurts you—it's what you know that just ain't so."

Have One Dream

The common, unifying experience among winning teams, great endeavors, and extraordinary achievements is a dream. Yet we rarely talk about dreams. Instead, we create "mission, vision, and values" statements. The stale barrenness of these statements pales in comparison to the inspiring power and passion embedded in a dream.

As a leader, your role is to identify, realize, and sustain a dream. You must ignite the passion in yourself and your colleagues to fuel the achievement of something extraordinary—a bold, daring, audacious, thrilling, exhilarating, rewarding, and inspiring *dream*.

A powerful dream inspires other people to embrace it, make it their own, and make it real. A powerful dream can transcend differences, disagreements, and petty arguments. The dream unites us at a higher level, engages us in a higher purpose.

All great leaders have a dream. In his speech in 1963, Martin Luther King repeated *I have a dream* eight times. It is their ability to articulate their dream that inspires and unites people. Dreams have the power to inspire us, and great



dreams, well executed, are sustainable. When you describe your richly imagined dream, you describe your most extraordinary, outrageous, never-before-achieved aspirations, often secretly held until now, because you have permission to be fearless and imaginative, to think outside the box and be extraordinarily creative. You then come up with some remarkable ideas.

You invite others to believe in the dream, to assume that the dream can be realized, and to put their energies behind that dream and achieve it. As you harness the passion and energy of every person behind that dream, you begin a journey toward peak performance. Competition for resources, ideology, the need for control, or power hampers the creation of an inspiring dream.

Scientific Intelligence® operates on the principle of identifying *permission space* that supports the dream, leading to a sound plan for change. SI yields a clear picture of the energy that constituents

freely contribute to power the dream and identifies the key drivers of success that propel people toward that dream.

Realizing the Dream

How can you create and realize a dream? As a leader, your role is to inspire others. When you do something that is uninspiring or demoralizing, it sucks the passion from the dream and frustrates the people who are trying to achieve the dream. You are directly responsible for inspiring and coaching those who are realizing the dream. So, you must be fully inspired—all of the time—to live your life in a way that inspires others—all of the time. Your role is to inspire everyone, every day, all the time, in every way, in every communication and action so that every decision, communication, feeling, and relationship moves people closer to the realization of the dream. The first act that demoralizes someone who is trying to realize a dream will break the spell, trash the passion, and waste the opportunity.

When you think about what's possible, even if never attained before, and identify it as a dream that you hold dear and seek to realize, and then make the commitment to align the entire team who is serving the customer—and the customer themselves—behind everything necessary to achieve that dream—the dream becomes possible. Identifying the *One Dream*® that gathers and galvanizes the passion of all constituents ignites inspiration.

The magic of having One Dream is remarkable: Committed team members share the rigor of defining the *One Dream*, co-create it, and become champions for realizing the *Dream*. The team is focused on a richly imagined future that harnesses their energies behind attaining the *Dream*. Internal and external messaging is simplified and clarified—there is only *One Dream*. Many buzz-words and slogans, tag-lines and marketing themes dissolve in the presence of *One Dream*. Leaders share an inspiring story—*One Dream*—and use it to market, recruit, persuade, inspire, build, grow, and excel. The buzz around the *One Dream* excites and inspires people, creating new opportunities. Where there is no *Permission Space*, there is insufficient energy to propel certain strategies, priorities, or projects, and they should be relegated to a lower priority or dropped altogether, since they don't contribute to realizing the dream. PE

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ACTION: Have a financial dream.