



Lead. Create. Make a difference.

Sustaining Leadership: Finding Your Path Through Self-Care

The 9 Practices

1. Breathing Well

“Learn about your breath, then focus on your breath. Pay attention throughout the day. If you find yourself feeling tense, take a deep breath and remember to exhale. If you find yourself feeling sleepy, take a deep breath, maybe pair it with a forward bend. ”

2. Paying Attention

“Pay attention to your physical, mental, and emotional state throughout the day. Notice what makes you happy and relaxed. Acknowledge when you become tense, unhappy or upset. The act of paying attention teaches you about yourself. It helps you understand the causes of the different behaviors you exhibit through the day. It allows you... to choose your actions and reactions to your experiences and your emotions.”

3. Setting Your Intention

“Unlike the ever-changing tasks on our to-do lists, what is most important may not change often. What are the big ideas that you want to have as the foundation for your leadership today? How do you want to lead? How do you want to be remembered? Big intentions, indeed.”

4. Developing Your Strength

“All leadership positions include some level of power and authority over others. Some leaders abuse this power while others shy away from their responsibilities and, in doing so, fall short of being the fully capable leader the world needs them to be. Do you understand the power you command in your position? How do you exercise the power that comes with your title, the authority you have over others, and the responsibility entrusted to you as a leader?”

Be honest with yourself. Are you meeting your obligations with strength and integrity? Are you abusing your authority and power? ... Reflect on your understanding of the concepts of strength and power.”

5. Understanding Balance

“Make a list of the things that you say you value or that are important to you. Take a look at your calendar, or if you only keep scheduled appointments on your calendar, take time over a week to keep track of everything you spend time on. Then sit down and compare the list and the calendar. The calendar/time review often teach us some hard truths about the choices we make.”

6. Stretching Yourself

“Whether you select something directly in your employment or start a new hobby, pick something new to learn or do. It could be learning a new software, creating a program, or identifying a new service to design. Take a bit of a risk. Or perhaps you decide to throw yourself into a new kind of exercise or hobby. Try something that scares you. If you don't want to jump out of an airplane, maybe zip lining or a high ropes course is enough. Push yourself, safely and thoughtfully, to stretch and try something new.”

7. Managing Your Energy

“To do all that is asked of us as humans and as leaders, we need to create space in some way. ... Can you teach the people you share space with a ritual of quiet time together? Thirty seconds may be all they can manage, but it’s a start. How might you create thirty seconds of space for yourself? How might you create space for the others around you?...

As a leader, what would it be like to create space for the people in your organization? Where can you give them permission to take some time during the day, during a busy week, to have a moment of calm?”

8. Learning to Twist

“When you face new opportunities or challenges, try out a different response than your traditional one. If you usually solve things on your own, ask for help. If you tend to rely on a group of friends or colleagues, try to find your own solution first or invite someone new into the process. Find ways to recognize habits and make even a little turn to something new and different. Cultivate options for meeting life’s challenges and opportunities is a form of flexibility that we can all benefit from.”

9. Relaxing and Reflecting

“The best reflection activity is regular journaling. In our work world, when we take time after a program or event to identify achievements and shortcomings, we often call this practice debriefing. Afterward, we determine the necessary changes to the process to not make the same mistakes next time. A journal allows us to do the same thing for ourselves.”

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