

Session 3.16 | The Importance of Your Quarterly Review

In the last session we started looking at how you can Measure, Track, and Celebrate progress to consistently maximize your influence and impact. In this Module we are looking at 3 regular reviews that need to be a part of your calendar.

Again, one of the top problems we've identified in our work with leaders all over the country and all over the world is that they stop reviewing their vision and plans. And those things that were once identified as most important fade into the noise of work and life.

Your life and your work are not something that you can plan once and then put it away. They are far too important for that! To have maximum impact, your action plans and the tools that we've looked at together in this Fast Track must be reviewed regularly.

In the last session we looked at The Importance of The Weekly Review. In this session we're looking at the Quarterly Review and how they differ from each other.

About 10 years ago, I began the discipline of scheduling a Quarterly Review into my calendar. My Quarterly Reviews are now scheduled at the end of March, June, and September. (I also conduct an annual review which serves as my fourth quarter review and that's at the end of December. We'll look at that more in the next session!)

Over the years I've learned 2 Important Tips for Maximizing the Impact of my Quarterly Review. Here they are...

1. Get Away.

At the time when I started my quarterly reviews, we were living in Dallas. And for my very first Quarterly Review, I spent a couple of days away at a retreat center in southern Oklahoma. These 2 days were huge for me – I spent time relaxing, reflecting, thinking, and praying.

At the time, I was going through something incredibly challenging, so I really was kind of grieving and mourning this process that I was going through in my work. And everything that was associated with that. And I made significant progress in a couple of areas in which my growth had stalled.

Getting away for these reviews is important for me. In fact, several people when they found out that I was doing this quarterly reviews, they ask me "How does your wife let you get away like that?" She was there and she heard them ask about it and she said "You know, when Mike goes away, and when he comes back, it's almost as if he's a different person. He's refocused, he's re-energized."

And so I'm happy to let him get away for a couple of days every quarter if that's the person that I'm going to get back." Getting away for these reviews is really important to me. And I know you know that you'll find greater clarity and focus when you leave the busyness and demands of the office behind.

So when you plan your Quarterly Review, plan time away. Budget for it if you need to. And protect it.

2. Prepare.

Another thing I've learned over the years about the effectiveness of the Quarterly Review is that I am far more productive with the time away when I have a plan before I go. Without a plan, I would fumble around for the first half-day trying to figure out what I needed to get done to make me feel like I accomplished something of value during my review.

I wanted to be more productive with my time. So I did 2 things...

The first that I did was I developed a tool – a Quarterly Review Template. We will look at the template in more detail in a moment.

The second I did as I identified the things that I needed to do before leaving. And this was huge for me...

The first thing I identified that I needed to do was...

1. I review the template and pull together all the items that I needed to take with me. I didn't get down the road, or get away, and realize I don't have what I need to accomplish what I want to accomplish.
2. I write down one or two top priority goals or projects for my time away. If I don't get anything else done, these are the things that I want to accomplish. Then I review these goal(s) with my wife and with my business manager before I leave. You may also want to review them with your boss – or your team, with other team members. You want to make sure that you're working on those things that are most important to you, your family, and your team.

Now, let's take a few minutes and look at the template together. Again, you can download the worksheet and the template on this page.

So as I created the quarterly review template, my question was – What am I going to do with the time away?

To help me be more productive when I get away for planning and reflection, I developed this tool.

Many of the concepts included in the tool, I learned from Michael Hyatt years ago. Others I have added as I have grown as a leader. And I've seen how these things impact my effectiveness during my time away.

So here is my Quarterly Review Template...

1. Spend time in Meditation and Reflection. This may not be your style, but I first like to reconnect with God to make sure that I am still on track with His agenda for my life. If praying, or faith, isn't your style, just take time to reflect or meditate about your life for the past or the coming quarter.
2. Review my SIMPLE Personal Plan. Now this is a little bit different than my weekly review, which is pretty much just a cursory glance through the top items in my simple personal plan. This is more of an in-depth review through the plan or I'm identifying things for the coming quarter, areas where I can grow and make progress. I review my simple personal plan to make sure I'm still headed in the right direction. If you don't have a SIMPLE Personal Plan, you really need one to help you identify what's most important in life and to ensure that you are making the progress that you desire in those areas. The simple personal plan is really the foundation for everything that we've looked at in this Fast Track. In the Simple Leadership Masterclass we walk you through creating your SIMPLE Personal PLAN step by step. Again, you can click the link on this page to learn more about the simple leadership masterclass and the simple personal plan.
3. Review my SIMPLE Vision for my business. Again, while we review it during the weekly review, it's really more of a glance down through it just like the glance through the simple personal plan. But during the quarterly review, we're looking more in-depth at the vision asking ourselves, "Is there anything that we need to change?" "Or is there anything we need to reset on?" The vision is a giant magnet pulling us forward, particularly in tough times. Again, if you haven't created a simple vision, in the Simple Leadership Masterclass we walk you through step by step how you can create your vision for your work and for your career.
4. Review 4 Critical Gauges for a Healthy Leader. More than anything else, this tool helps me to identify how I'm doing - as a dad, as a colleague, as a leader. And it will make a big difference for you too! (In the Simple Leadership Compass Course, we walk you through the 4 Critical Gauges and we show you what they are and how Healthy Leader's use them. So I won't go into any more detail here. You can find those in the simple leadership compass.)
5. Write Goals for the Next Quarter. I generally identify 2-3 goals for my personal life and 2-3 for my professional life to accomplish over the next 90 days. I track my progress each week on these throughout the quarter. (I even print my 90 Day Goals this lists and put them on my computer, I put them in the bathroom on my mirror that I see every single morning, I put them on my vehicle dashboard, on the night stand next to my bed. And

I've been doing this for more than ten years. And every single quarter, I generally enable to complete all of the goals that I set both personally and professionally. And with a little bit of practice, you'll be able to do the same thing,)

6. High Impact Projects. With the rest of the time that I have left, I work on the projects I previously reviewed with my wife, and with my team. I plan an implementation strategy for completing these.

This template will help you get started with a framework for your Quarterly Review.

I want to give you a note of caution – if you take my template and you use it just like it is, it probably won't be as effective for you – because I'm different, you're different than me. You want to customize it to fit your needs.

I have tested and tweaked my Quarterly Review template for years. In fact, it was almost two years before I was really comfortable with it. As with many things of value, you're going to need to exercise some patience with it.

Everything's not going to work right the first time. And that's ok! Make changes where they are needed, then test it again.

Whatever you do – don't do nothing! Decide right now that you are going to take one step today toward being more purposeful in your life and work.

When it comes to the Quarterly Review process, start with this template and then develop something that works for you, remember, you don't have to get it perfect, you just need to take the next step.

After working through these tools with thousands of leaders, I've seen dramatic improvements in their life, work, and leadership – particularly in areas that are top priority for them.

Next Session

In the next session, we're going to look at the Annual Review and how it differs from the Weekly and Quarterly Reviews.

If you haven't already, take a second, download the worksheet with this session and complete the action items for this session.

I'll see you in the next session.

Fast Action Steps

1. Gather everything you need for a quarterly review.
2. Place a quarterly Review on your calendar or schedule.