

Session 3.19 | The Secret to Better Results

In this Module, we have been looking at the reasons leaders struggle to apply learning. In the last session, I showed you 3 challenges every leader must confront to apply learning to their life and to their work.

In this session, I'll show you the first of 2 tools which will dramatically improve your interactions and your productivity and results at work.

Take a moment right now to download the Worksheet for this session so you can follow along.

The first tool is specifically designed to help you get better results, particularly in areas where you've failed in the past.

Take a moment to think about an area of your life or work that you've just not been able to get the results you want – the results that you know are possible. Maybe it's a project at work, maybe an unproductive team member; maybe it's your health.

Whatever it is, I have good news for you! The answer is really quite simple – in fact, it's so simple, it's really hard to believe. So, let me illustrate it first...

Years ago, I wrote a Simple Personal Plan and I mentioned that before in this Fast Track. In my Simple Personal Plan, I included several guiding principles and advice that I'd received from mentors, career plans, family plans, and financial plans.

Though I reviewed and updated my plan regularly, I continued to struggle to gain traction and see significant progress in a number of areas. In fact, for 7 years this went on – make progress and then fall back into a rut.

So, in 2011, I gave up! I threw away my life plan!

Well, it didn't happen exactly like that but I did start all over! I rewrote the entire plan! This one decision has made all the difference in the world! Since I rewrote my personal plan, I have seen dramatic improvements at home, in my career, in my leadership, in my relationships, in my health, and in hundreds and hundreds of leaders that we've worked with over the last 15 years!

In fact, it made such a difference in my life, that I developed a tool to help other leaders experience the same results.

What made the difference?

The primary difference between my old plan and my new plan was – I got very specific with the commitments or the disciplines in each area of my life. I got so specific with these actions, that I can now plug them right into my weekly calendar.

For example, in my old plan I wrote about my relationship with my wife, Sarah: I wrote this...

I will regularly communicate my unconditional love to her by always thinking of her first, valuing our differences, caring about her feelings, respecting her opinions, sharing my most intimate thoughts with her, and by expressing appreciation and care.

Sounds pretty good, doesn't it? That's because I'm a romantic!

But here are the specific commitments for Sarah in my new plan and notice the difference between the concepts in my old plan and the specific actions or commitment in my new Simple Personal Plan. Here they are. There's 3 of them.

- Spend time with Sarah at the end of every day communicating with her with no interruptions. (9:00-10:00 pm)
- Go on a lunch date with her every Friday at noon. Leave our phones in the car.
- Take her on two weekend getaways each year – one before May 30 and the other before November 30. Unplug from technology.

Now, you see the difference there? I got way more specific in the Simple Personal Plan that I wrote most recently.

The reason why I did that was because I wasn't making the progress that I wanted to make. I wasn't getting the results that I wanted to make previously.

I realized that the secret to better results is specificity.

Guess which plan has better results! The new one does, right?

Here's why...

Specificity Tool

The current effort + more specificity = better results.

Why is that?

Specificity produces a higher level of accountability (self-accountability - best kind of accountability).

It's much better for you to hold yourself accountable then it is for someone else to hold you accountable, because that's frustrating!

So, specificity produces a higher level of accountability and accountability yields more consistent results.

If you're working yourself to death and you're still not getting the results that you anticipated, then you're probably not being specific enough.

To get better results, get more specific. Get more specific with what you want to accomplish. Get more specific with when you want to accomplish it. Get more specific with how you're going to do it. Get more specific with the help that you might need. Get more specific with who you might need help from. Break the project down into smaller very specific tasks. Block out specific time on your calendar. Whatever the project is or whatever the initiative is – get more specific!

When you do, you'll experience greater productivity and efficiency and you'll be more fulfilled in your life and work!

I now use this principle on a regular basis – it's really become a habit! When I'm not getting the results that I desire, I ask, "How can I get more specific?" When a team member is struggling to get momentum, we look at how we can get more specific for them. When we do, we always get better results!

What is it today that you need to get more specific about?

If you haven't already, take a moment right now to download the Worksheet on this page and complete the action steps for this session.

Next Session

In this session, I showed you the first of 2 tools which will dramatically improve your interactions and your productivity and your results at work. I'll show you the second tool in the next session.

Remember, you don't have to get these perfect. You just need to take the next step.

I'll see you in the next session.

Fast Action Steps

1. What is it that you need to get more specific about today?
2. Take that area and apply the 5 steps listed above.