



EXECUTIVE VITALITY™: MANAGING THE DRIVE TO CONTROL

Many of the leaders we coach are control oriented...controlling the future, controlling staff, controlling profits. The problem, of course, is that a lot of what a leader faces is not controllable.

Rather than controlling outcomes, or trying to, have you ever noticed what happens when you “let go” a bit? When you go with the flow, you open yourself up to possibilities and opportunities that otherwise you might miss.

Successful leaders are programmed to think that if they are not actively pushing an agenda, then they are not doing something useful. A counter position to that is put forward in an interesting article that appeared in mid-January in The New York Times, [Why I taught myself to procrastinate](#). It is basically about giving oneself the time and space to come up with creative solutions by slowing down and opening up to clues the universe is trying to drop in one’s lap.

I had an eye-opening experience recently. As a typical business traveler, I was stressed out and rushing to catch a plane. However, I took the time on the concourse to do some shopping, because who has time for shopping anyway if not in an airport or online? There was another shopper in the store who had a seemingly endlessly complicated check out process going on. Perhaps detecting my angst, she asked if I was in a hurry and needed to move ahead of her. I said with great relief and gratitude, “Oh, yes, that would be very helpful.” She said – “No problem; I have plenty of time.” I made my purchase and continued at a rapid pace down the concourse to my gate.

Imagine my reaction when after a few minutes, the very same shopper showed up at my gate for the very same plane. Same plane; same time; very different perceptions of urgency; both of us on time for the plane. We laughed when we realized this and sat together on the way back to home base for each of us. As it turns out, we work in allied fields and discovered we had a lot in common. In my haste, I almost missed the opportunity to have a conversation with this interesting executive. I am glad that I granted myself the opportunity to learn something from a colleague and have a mutual discussion about the work we are both so passionate about. You never know where an opportunity may come from. You cannot always engineer them by pushing a rock up a hill. Sometimes you just have to give serendipity free rein. To that end:

1. Take the time to listen to intuition.
2. Pay attention to cues that life is presenting.
3. Take some time off, perhaps.
4. Rediscover your resilience and potentialities.

How can you manage or lead and also be open to “the possibilities?” How can you succeed and also have serenity?