

PREPARED

FIRST IMPRESSIONS MODULE #3

Focus Competency:Prepared - I operate through a clear and structured plan.

Opening Question: Benjamin Franklin said: "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." How does this resonate in your personal life? Was there a time where you completely failed at something because you were unprepared?

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment 1: Read Proverbs 21:5 and answer the questions below.

Assignment 2: Read articles and answer questions.

Assignment 3: For a period of one week, commit to plan ALL of your meals and snacks. Make your shopping list from these meals, and grocery shop accordingly. During the week, keep track of what was successful and how many extra trips you had to make to the store. Did you veer off your plan? How did that affect your overall experience?

Assignment 4:Follow up with the article question #2 above - make a list of the ways to be properly and fully prepared and commit to each of these ways for a Sunday.

Assignment 5: Work with leaders to create and review a weekend plan for your ministry area

ASSIGNMENT 1

Proverbs 21:5

Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty.

QUESTIONS

1. How would you rate yourself as an effective planner on a scale of 1 to 5? Has it always been that way for you?
2. What happens when you do not prepare or plan for a Sunday service?
3. How do you relate or not to the verse?

ASSIGNMENT 2

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/glennllopis/2014/09/09/preparation-for-effective-leadership-begins-with-5-simple-rules/#2014a3ab6014>

As the saying goes, “Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity.”

A leader’s responsibility is to help their organization and the people they serve to grow and prosper – this is how you earn serendipity. Successful leadership is the ability to create and sustain enough momentum to assure that the marketplace and competitors don’t pass you by. This requires leaders to prepare for the future, while equally staying on point with the present. The constant distraction in our daily work lives makes it difficult for leaders to do both; yet with solid preparation what seems impossible becomes highly probable.

Preparation is the key to evolution and the enabler to avoid substitution in its stead. When leaders fail, it’s highly attributable to their lack of preparation. When an opportunity is missed, it’s often because leaders didn’t prepare themselves or their employees well enough to see and seize it. Preparation demands accountability and is an individual responsibility with so many interdependent factors. Every leader sees through a different lens – therefore they should know what the short and long term preparation demands are for their employees and the business to be successful. But if a leader falls short in their ability to prepare rightly – with proper timing and depth – the negative implications on the business will become quickly apparent.

To avoid substitution as a strategy and to assure that your employees and the organization you serve are constantly evolving in a positive direction, here are five things you should consider in order to prepare more effectively as a leader:

1. Never Stop Being Accountable

According to Webster’s dictionary, preparation is defined as “the activity or process of making something ready or of becoming ready for something.” Simply put, preparation is about being proactive to deliver on a responsibility you are accountable for. As a leader, you can never stop being accountable to others and yourself. In other words, when you miss a deadline, lose attention to detail, fail to ask the right questions, etc. – these are moments when you stop being accountable and inefficiencies begin to rise to the surface.

Leadership is not about you – it’s about others. Being prepared for the unexpected is what you are ultimately being held accountable for as a leader. Don’t let the unexpected stop you, but continually think and move forward.

2. Pause and Pay Attention to Your Employees

Leaders must move and think quickly, but they must also take time to pause and pay closer attention to their employees. As a leader, you can’t prepare yourself to lead more effectively if you don’t know what is really happening with your employees, their state of mind, their required resources and the support they need to experience success and fulfillment in their work.

As a leader, you must broaden your observation of the things that are happening around you. You can't keep moving forward if the things you are leaving behind are dysfunctional and broken. Many times employees will not tell you if they need additional support, more tools, better resources and/or assistance with an internal employee or external client relationship. Don't wait, activate yourself by rolling up your sleeves and getting your hands dirty to see what is really going on – so you can help others better prepare before circumstances force their hand.

Instead of putting a Band-Aid on the matter at hand, or enforcing your authority to demand a quick-fix, be a better leader that's more aware of your employees' needs and prepares for them more effectively.

3. Improve Your Approach to Problem-Solving

The demands of the marketplace require that you evolve as a leader. Evolution is impossible without better preparation. As a leader, you must constantly invest in your own skill-sets and capabilities so that you can improve your approach to problem-solving and avoid the unnecessary ones all together. Leaders need to be better decision-makers, instead of using their authority to organize exhausting, long drawn-out and meaningless meetings with their teams to do the job for them. Great leaders learn how to use their strengths to better prepare themselves for how to solve problems proactively and most efficiently. Time is money and both are lost when problems rise to the surface; preparation allows you to save both time and money as a leader.

4. Listen Carefully

When leaders listen, they can prepare much better. It amazes me how many leaders like to listen to themselves rather than those they serve. You can't lead if you don't listen. As a leader, listening allows you to prepare more intently and solve for things that you otherwise couldn't if you were only listening to yourself.

Recently I was on a conference call with a client to review the status of a project. Without introducing herself, the senior leader (on the client side) boldly began to share her perspectives and opinions regarding the project without asking any questions or soliciting other input. She continued to make negative assumptions about the project without having listened to the people that were directly involved in guiding the project's objectives and desired outcomes. Needless to say, the senior leader embarrassed her colleagues and herself in the process. Instead of listening, learning and processing what was being said about the project (by those that were directly involved with it), she used her authority to set the wrong tone for the call – rather than properly preparing herself, her thoughts and recommendations, which would have set a more positive and objective tone.

5. Allow Failure to Guide You Rightly

When you know why something didn't work or failed in execution, you can prepare better to avoid future hardships. As a leader, failure is your guide to success and the trigger that forces you to become more diligent about your overall approach to better preparation. Preparation can never guarantee success, but the lack of preparation can certainly increase your propensity toward failure.

This is why case studies are such a good resource to learn from -- and why you should be more mindful on a daily basis about creating new case studies for why things worked and why they didn't. Take more time to allow failure to guide you rightly and value what you learn from both the big and little ones by preparing with the same attention to detail to avoid them from happening again.

You can't demand high performance from others when you aren't prepared to effectively lead them to it. When you demand more from people, the pressure to perform rises – and so does the pressure to lead them rightly. This mindset requires more preparation and as a consequence performance will elevate on all fronts. In other words, increase performance standards for yourself and others and you will notice that preparation becomes a leading measure of success. You can't expect people to perform better if they are not prepared to successfully deliver what is expected from them – and you are not prepared to deliver the leadership they expect from you.

QUESTIONS

1. What are three instances where failing to prepare could be detrimental. Describe how you have experienced any of these personally.
2. In the ministry you serve in, what are some ways to be properly prepared? What are some ways to be woefully unprepared? Now think about it from a team member standpoint and a team leader standpoint. How would you now change your answer?
3. Which do you find comes easier for you: Setting aside time to prepare and plan something out, or thinking on your feet when things don't go as planned, How can this impact your relationship with your team?
4. How would you train someone to be a planner?
5. Section 2 says to pause and pay attention to your employees/team members. How do you feel this would enable you to be better prepared?

Assignment 3:

For a period of one week, commit to plan ALL of your meals and snacks. Make your shopping list from these meals, and grocery shop accordingly. During the week, keep track of what was successful and how many extra trips you had to make to the store. Did you veer off your plan? How did that affect your overall experience?

Assignment 4:

Follow up with the article question #2 above - make a list of the ways to be properly and fully prepared and commit to each of these ways for a Sunday.

Assignment 5:

Work with leaders to create and review a weekend plan for your ministry area