

Catalyst

Catalyst is for alumni of our seminars and workshops to remain connected, and for coaching clients, prospective clients, and other interested parties to learn about who we are and what we do. Also available electronically in *Writings* at www.DancingStar.com

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The Bigger Game – The Gulp!

[This is part four of a series on the Bigger Game leadership and change model. For the rest of the series, see *Writings* at www.DancingStar.com]

“Why not go out on a limb – that’s where the fruit is.” – Will Rogers

Of course we all know the answer to this question. We don’t go out on a limb because limbs break, and we could fall and kill ourselves. It’s just too risky, and besides, Will Rogers was a smart alec!

And yet, what if the fruit out on that limb was the last apple on the tree of life? What if you were fairly certain that plucking it would save all that you hold dear, or transform your world for the better?

We’ve said that playing a Bigger Game designs who you become, calls you forth to be more than you’ve been. It is about identifying and satisfying your deepest hungers, which leads you to look for a compelling purpose for your work or your life.

Once you’ve identified that compelling purpose, the next step is choosing – naming, in ten words or less – your Bigger Game. This is what you are going to do to make your dream come true, your vision a reality. What can you initiate to achieve this vision, how will you use your talents, time, and resources to make a difference?

One indicator that you are playing a Bigger Game is that you suddenly

gulp with the enormity of what you are taking on. If it’s big enough, you find yourself thinking:

“Oh my gosh, I am betting the whole company on this. We’ve only

The Bigger Game Model

Comfort Zone	Hunger	Compelling Purpose
Sustainability	The size and quality of the game you play designs who you become	GULP!
Allies	Bold Action	Investment

got one shot, but this is what everything I know tells me has to happen. Am I crazy?” Or perhaps “who am I to tell these people what to do – they are the experts... and yet, I see something they don’t see, and it will make all the difference between success and failure”.

Imagine the gulp Martin Luther King felt once he realized the next step was to lead his fellow marchers into the heart of Ku Klux Klan territory. Or the continuous gulps those moonshot engineers felt, from when the idea of putting an astronaut on the moon was first mooted to when the door closed on the astronauts and the first US or Russian rockets took off...

A recent series of articles about IBM (see the March 17th on-line

issue of **Business Week Magazine**) outlines the risk that CEO Sam Palmisano faces in implementing his vision for IBM.

Here’s the thing about playing a Bigger Game. It is scary! And it won’t be just one scary moment – the gulps don’t stop. In fact, if they do stop, it’s time to have a look at whether you and your team are going to sleep, getting caught in a comfort zone (more on this in an upcoming issue), not playing big enough.

For the timid among us, it’s not all scary! Another part of the gulp is exhilaration. It is a knowing that this thing **MUST** be, that you, your team, your company is uniquely positioned to do it, that maybe it has never been done before or never been done in quite the way you envision, and that while many people will not understand, **YOU** do. There can be great excitement in that, which fuels making it happen.

Or there may be a quiet knowing, a deep conviction. Still scary perhaps, but with a sense of connection to something larger...

Another part of the gulp is understanding what winning makes possible. The stakes are huge, **AND** the payoff is equally large, as your impact will be huge. This makes playing a Bigger Game worth it.

Next month we look into some of the kinds of investments you’ll want to be making to make your Bigger Game happen. – Deborah Huisken

ARE YOU UP FOR IT?

For coaching (of high-potential international executives, entrepreneurs, and other artists) or consulting services, to bring an experiential workshop (Bigger Game, Dimensions of Leading, Power at Work) into your company, or to subscribe to this newsletter, contact Dancing Star Productions, phone: +1 413.367.9416, email: info@DancingStar.com, or on the web at www.DancingStar.com.

Life’s challenges are not meant to paralyze you, they’re meant to help you discover who you are.

– Bernice Johnson Reagon, composer, historian, scholar



Deb's Corner



We've said that a Big-ger Game is about continually experiencing the gulp.

But, what is a gulp? Do revealing myself, speaking my thoughts

whether they are likely to be acceptable to someone else or not, committing myself to be open with someone, qualify as gulps?

I'd like to ask the teens who take part in Challenge Day.

Started by a husband and wife, Challenge Day is a program which is being taken into high schools around the country where the animosity among cliques which has reached the ugly, even violent stage.

On Challenge Day representatives from each clique come together for a day of conversation and learning. They sit down in a room with their peers, many kids to whom they have never spoken though they may have been fighting for months or years.

Toward the end of the day, in one particularly compelling exercise, the kids line up on one side of the room, then cross to the other side if a given statement describes them. Initially these are innocuous statements - "if you have brown hair, please cross to the other side". All look to see who is on which side.

Then, "If you feel you have ever been discriminated against because of the color of your skin, please cross to the other side" And all look.

"If you've ever come to school hungry because there was no food in the house, please cross to the other side". All look.

"If you've ever been beaten then come in to school anyway, please cross to the other side".

"If you've ever tried to turn your music up loud enough to drown out the sound of one of your parents hitting the other, please cross to the other side".

"If you've ever been physically or sexually abused, please cross to the other side".

"If you've every physically or sexually abused someone else, please cross to the other side".

In case you've never done something like this, I once took part in a similar exercise with a group of peers – other adults with whom I'd already spent three intense, intimate weeks. I found it hard to cross that widening gap for similar questions, then turn, exposed, as we all looked, and I was far from being the only one in the room who felt that way.

Watching a video about Challenge Day, I could hardly imagine what it must have taken some of these kids to participate in this exercise. Yet participate they did, and you could see it change their lives just on the video. By the end of the day, they had not only spoken with everyone else in the room, they were hugging, and had committed to bring others from their clique to the next session.

I call that a gulp, and they were showing no signs of stopping.

There is more information about this remarkable program available from www.ChallengeDay.org.

What will it take for you to go for your gulps?

Publisher

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Submissions

Send comments, questions, and submissions to 32 North Taylor Hill Rd, Montague, MA 01351 USA, or e-mail to info@DancingStar.com.

For return of postal submissions, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. We reserve the right to edit articles for length, clarity, and readability.

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NOTABLE QUOTES

...while knowledge generates power, learning is also power. In a true learning organization where power is infinite, learning agility – the ability to learn from differences, the desire to change, evolve and grow even at the risk of making mistakes – is powerful, especially in times of continuous change and complexity. Knowledge as power reflects a limited notion, where there is only so much to go around. Learning as power reflects a more infinite notion of power.

- Ray Flautt, Vice President for Strategic Talent, J.P. Morgan Chase & Co.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I recently watched someone walk through a series of gulps during a training weekend. This was her experience...

I just did it. I closed my eyes and jumped off my own personal high diving board, by publicly owning with this group who I am capable of being. It seems so simple – yet it was not easy. It was absolutely a leap of faith. I busted through core childhood beliefs which have stunted my growth personally and professionally. What joy! The water was invigorating and peaceful...more than I ever dreamed. My inner, critical voices vanished. I came face-to-face with my own power, and embraced it! A remarkable peace and tranquility came over me; my body changed; I stood taller and suddenly wanted to jump into the world to share my new, commanding presence. Energy filled my body. What an extraordinary surprise. This quote from Dr. Phil sums it up perfectly for me: "If you're being self-righteously selfless, you may be a great, well-intentioned martyr, but regardless of your intentions you will cheat everyone in your life out of you." Don't wait. Jump now! – Robin DeSantis, Relationship-Focused Life Coach