

Catalyst

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The Bigger Game – Sustainability

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

There are two aspects to sustainability: sustainability of the player(s) and sustainability of the Game itself.

In this model, we talk about the Bigger Game as rooted in the world around us, rather than focused on our own limited – and limiting – needs, wants, fears.

Nonetheless, the taking-care-of-the-players part of sustainability is about taking care of us as the stewards of the Game, engaging in what might be called advanced self-care. If we are unable to retain our balance and sense of perspective, we may still have an impact as leaders but we are unlikely to be healthy or effective.

Personal sustainability can take many different forms (some of which may feel like Bold Actions!):

- taking stretches of time – five minutes, a weekend, a month – to do nothing, allowing creativity and new energy to flow in
- limiting the number of meetings you attend to those that genuinely require your involvement
- creating uninterrupted time in which to accomplish major priorities
- asking an ally to remind you to leave work and go socialize
- using a timer to prompt you to turn off the computer
- delegating tasks others can handle

- regenerative time with family, a vacation buddy, or spiritual practice
- changing the work you do so it enlivens and re-energizes rather than drains you.

- getting rid of the monkey on your back or, if you're involved with an addict, detaching in order to focus on your own work in the world.

What is your version of these?

The Bigger Game Model

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

Sustainability is not something you do once (or even once a week) and it's done. It needs to be on-going, and at times will need to take precedence before you'll be clear enough to focus on your Bigger Game. It might even become the source of your Bigger Game, because sustainability is the way we keep in touch with our core of wisdom, which is where our Bigger Game lives. Sustainability of the player is about having a strong sense of peace and internal connection with the tractor beam of your higher purpose. Otherwise,

the noise and chaos of everyday life can come in and scatter the signal.

Sustainability of the Game is about legacy. How will you ensure that the Game lives on after you're gone? Perhaps it involves establishing a company, foundation, or other organizational structure around your work, building the architecture of the Game alongside your product or service. Or maybe you need to establish such a strong culture that even if the original team is disbanded, your trainees will propagate the ideas wherever they go. Maybe it means writing a book or making a movie. Sustainability of the Game means ensuring it thrives until it has served its purpose.

For companies, sustainability is about more than the bottom line. It's about sustainability of employees, culture, vision, and legacy. Read Jim Collins' book *Good to Great* for some examples. Playing a Bigger Game is not solely the province of political, not-for-profit, religious or other "social conscience" type organizations. Growing numbers of CEOs are starting to recognize this fact, and to explore corporate sustainability.

What needs to be in place to ensure your endeavor will continue past your involvement with it? And how will you create sustainability for yourself?

– by *Deborah Huisken* (original material derived from and published with permission of the *Bigger Game Company*, www.thebiggergame.com).

ARE YOU UP FOR IT?

If you or people you know are committed to having an impact in the world, and can use the services of a coach to help you stay on target amid myriad demands, 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.

[Learning and growth] take time. Haste and impatience can only defeat our purposes. – anonymous



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One must have chaos within to give birth to a dancing star – Nietzsche

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Your newsletter includes many "Bold Actions" that are the mainstay of any and all businesses. Anyone who is or has been successful has had to muster up courage and willingness to stand or fall out there and, often, alone.

- Ken Crannell, *Crannell Consulting*, www.crannell.com

AND A QUOTE

Besides the noble art of getting things done, there is the noble art of leaving things undone. The wisdom of life consists in the elimination of non-essentials. - *LinYutang*

Deb's Corner



Sustainability can take many forms. An example I love is of a gem merchant in India in the '30s named Dada Lekhraj. In 1936, at the age of 60, he had an increasingly intense series of spiritual experiences, which he started to share with people around him.

Drawn to his teachings were women of wealthy families, including his own. His teachings encouraged them to realize their full potential – radical for upper-caste women in India at that time.

The families of these women objected to their "crown jewels" being empowered in this way, as they would no longer let themselves be used. Some of the families grew so angry that they began persecuting these women – shouting at them, locking them up, beating them – and threatening Dada Lekhraj. Finally, he and his followers left for a distant province, and there continued to learn about the teachings he was being given and to share them with others.

Both in choosing to go into a form of exile as well as in their daily practices, sustainability is evident. Dada Lekhraj and his followers embodied the idea that, for their work to survive in the world, they needed to take care of their physical as well as spiritual safety and prosperity. They also needed to build an organization to sustain their work.

This small group of spiritual seekers – now known as the Brahma Kumaris (www.bkwsu.org) – is today

a global organization with consultative status to the UN, and hundreds of centers in over 70 countries worldwide. They teach spiritual values, and work internationally for peace and the health of children, among other projects. Many of the original women still guide the organization; Dada Lekhraj died in the '60s.

The Brahma Kumaris provide non-denominational havens in which other spiritual seekers rest, rejuvenate, and study. Their services (including accommodation) are offered for free – financial support comes entirely from contributions.

Another example of sustainability comes from Susan Valdiserri, an early adopter of the Bigger Game. Susan brought this model into her sales force at IBM in early 2002. On sustainability she says: "I need to exercise – tend to neglect it – so I joined a new club, putting money down to force myself to use it. I've found I have to be honest, and put structures in place that, for instance, force me to turn off the computer. I make plans with people to pull myself away, design allies who help me."

About her legacy she says: "I want my legacy to be about contributing to a total transformation in the IBM culture, where everyone is coach-like; a culture where we look at people as human beings not human doings; where people are clamoring to come to work; where [the environment] is collaborative, and successful."

ONE RECIPE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The time to be especially gentle with myself is not when I'm doing well, but when I'm doing poorly. I may be able to push myself hard when things are going my way, but I invite trouble if I try this when I'm already struggling to manage the basic activities of my life. I used to worry that if I didn't push myself all the time, I would turn into a slug and nothing would get done. But [experience] showed me that the opposite is true. I tend to be very hard on myself, so hard at times that I make my own life unmanageable. As a result, I often accomplish less than I would if I took a more gentle approach. For me, the best antidote is the slogan, 'Easy does it'.

When I notice that I'm having trouble with my day, I try to slow down. And instead of automatically assuming I am wrong, I try to consider the possibility that I might be right on schedule.

'Easy does it' suggests not only that I learn to slow down, but also that I learn to lighten up. [I can] strive to take a more accepting attitude toward myself and to enjoy the day, regardless of what I achieve.

-*excerpted from The Courage to Change*

A useful tool for sustainability is HALT. Am I Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired? If so, what do I need to do to get back on track?