



IN CONCLUSION

Leading With Grace to Fulfill Your Purpose

Purpose is the why, grace is the how • BY JOHN BALDONI



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urpose is what gives people, as well as organizations, the get-up-and-go

they need to move ahead. Purpose is what sparks what you wish to become (your vision), as well as what you do (your mission).
P Achieving that mission takes drive, determination and no shortage of gumption.

You push ahead, and often pull people along for the ride. However, there is something that could make the pushing and pulling easier, more compatible and a lot more comfortable: values. Values are the core beliefs that we hold dear, and within an organization, they are the glue that binds us to one another.

Values determine the ways in which we connect. Values that reflect respect and dignity are those that emerge from grace. Grace, then, becomes our how, just as purpose is our why.

Put another way, you can use purpose to get what you want, but you employ grace to do it the right way — that is, with people rather than in spite of them. Leaders with grace look at people as contributors; they evaluate them with an open mind and, better yet, an open heart. They look to the good side and assume the best. They look at life as one of abundance rather than scarcity. There is much good to go around, if only we look for it.

But what does it mean to lead with grace? Using grace as an acronym, consider:

Generosity is the spirit of openness and sharing. When leaders give of themselves, others feel it. Generosity is generative. The more you give, the more others are given the opportunity to respond in kind.

Respect is the ability to assume the best intentions in others. Invite divergent views. Be inclusive. It is the willingness to show trust and expect it in return.

Action is the power to mobilize. A leader's job is to pull people together for a common cause and to make things happen.

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Compassion is the ability to care and to love. You care about how people are doing at work and outside of it.

Energy is the drive that teams need to have to succeed. It falls to the leader to pull as well as push people forward in order to get the job done.

Each of these attributes harmonize with the concept of grace as a whole in order to orient leaders toward service. In keeping with the notion of servant leadership, it falls to the person in charge to put the needs of the whole ahead of the wants of one.

Leadership really comes down to example. It's not what a leader says as much as what they do. When it comes to the development of others, people remember those who helped them learn and grow their skills. They also recall, sometimes with a wince, the times when a boss called them out when they were in the wrong. Those errors may have been less about the quality of their work but more about how they had treated, or mistreated, a colleague. If they paid attention, they learned from their mistakes, and even better, became more adept themselves at managing and leading others.

Leadership, therefore, is not about an individual; it is about the collective purpose. Grace, then, becomes the grease that enables people to smooth over the rough patches as well as the glue that holds us together in pursuit of a common cause, our purpose for what we do and why we do it.

“The purpose of life is not to be happy,” wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson. “It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.”

Grace enables us to live such a life.

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