

INSIGHTS:

A COACHING NEWSLETTER BY BILL PULLEN, PCC, CPCC



Trusting the Leader Within

This has been a year of change for Pullen Associates. I brought new members to my team. I worked hard to diversify and to build my business so I can offer a wider range of services to a wider client base. As I worked, I sought the counsel of various individuals who are genuinely interested in my success. Each one answered my request for advice from a different perspective. Like every leader, I needed honest input from people who can challenge my old habits of thought and call attention to factors I do not or cannot see for myself.

While I spent the last year listening to others' suggestions and ideas, I stopped listening to one very important voice: my own. I paid consultants and outsiders to help me, all the while ignoring a nagging inner voice that told me some of my choices were wrong. I went in the wrong direction. I even went as far as to scrap a long-held business vision on the advice of someone who said my vision was too broad, that it should be specific and narrow.

What was the cost of ignoring my inner voice? I lost the vital passion and fulfillment of my work. My excitement waned. As I retreated from what my heart and my gut told me to do, I lost touch with my business and with myself. My team's energy and enthusiasm for our work faded. Business slowly declined.

The writing was on the wall.

Fortunately, my internal voice, my intuition, my heart or my gut (we all experience the internal voice a little differently) became too insistent to ignore. I set aside some quiet time to listen to it, to concentrate and to reflect on the message. In the silence, I was able to hear my inner leader reminding me of my original vision. Taking my renewed insight to heart, I acted according to that visceral prompting.

What happened when I listened to the voice of my internal leader? Everything changed. I reconnected to the excitement of my work. I communicated and shared my rediscovered excitement with my team. Thus, the team re-engaged in our work and found creative, energetic and innovative ways to re-connect to the business. New ideas for spreading the message of leadership to a broader audience flowed freely again.

We were back on track.

What, then, does my experience have to do with stepping out of leadership? Like many others, I stepped out of leadership by failing to listen to myself. Each of us has an internal voice that guides us through the most difficult of times. We often marginalize or completely ignore its promptings because its message is contradictory to others' advice.

Contributions from coaches, mentors, colleagues, employees and friends are necessary and important. I always will work with a coach. In the final analysis, though, each of us is responsible for our own decisions. We should consider others' advice in relation to our core values and what is most important to us. Ultimately, we as leaders must learn to trust our inner voices, our intuition, and our gut reactions. This trust will enable us to follow our instincts in spite of the apparent risk.

- How do you experience your inner leader?
- Is it a voice in your head? A gut reaction? A feeling? A whisper in your ear?
- In what ways do you ignore the leader within you because the action it tells you to take seems too risky?
- What circumstances would be different if you were to listen to that voice?
- What actions are you willing to take in response to inner prompting?

I challenge you to be bold. Listen to your internal advisor. Pay attention and you will feel a new vitality, a fresh sense of adventure. I promise. Heed your inner voice as it leads you to a higher level of fulfillment and satisfaction. Yes, it will be scary. In the end, though, it will be well worth the effort.

I am interested in your thoughts and comments about this article. Is it helpful? Why? Why not? Send your comments to me at Bill@PullenAssociates.com.

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