



# The Signature Voice

the quarterly newsletter for clients and friends of Isis Associates

## Update Yourself: Who Am I Today?

All too often we get caught up in the daily demands of our lives – checking off our to-do lists, meeting deadlines, checking our PDA devices. The speed of life keeps us on auto-pilot, masking the inherent growth and accomplishment we make each day. However, tremendous power exists in understanding where we are and who we are becoming – such self-awareness fuels our expansion as leaders, increasing our overall self-worth and confidence. With such positive benefit, what then comprises a practice of updating oneself?

### Acknowledge Yourself

The first step is to consciously acknowledge ourselves. We too often dismiss this or look to the external world for approval or self-validation. For some of us, we find it easier to focus on what we have not completed or goals unmet, keeping us in a cycle of self-criticism and judgment.

Take Tom, a principal in a global consulting firm. Despite a great track record and strong first year as a principal, Tom experienced anxiety around his performance and future. His self-confidence and presence weakened by an underlying sense of overall hesitation. As part of our coaching work, I asked Tom to create a list of things he was most proud of across all areas of his life for the last year.

Most surprising to Tom was the sheer scope of his list, going well beyond work goals and milestones. He was actually most proud of his growth as a leader and his increasing ability to motivate and develop his team. He also acknowledged himself for his role as father and husband amidst heavy work demands. For Tom, the very act of writing his list lifted a huge weight off his shoulders. His acknowledgement of himself not only provided anxiety relief but also strengthened what was important to him, what he valued, and where to better focus his attention and energy for the next year.

### Let Go

In addition to acknowledgement, the updating process also includes the ability to let go. Letting go is an intentional recognition of those things or people that no longer serve us or get in our way – anything that keeps us stuck in the past or tied to a future out of reach. Memories and sentiment are wonderful as are goals and vision – but not when we use our past or future to hold us “smaller” than we really are today.

For Tom, the updating process included shedding old beliefs about himself and others, shifting from seeing himself as more junior and great at executing work to now realizing he was a firm leader, a market maker generating business for the firm. In our work together, Tom also considered how even tangible items such as old files, office clutter, and his professional dress reflected a younger, less experienced version of himself.

### Take Your Place

Updating oneself is not about “puffing oneself” up or learning to be more arrogant. In fact, the opposite is true. We use it as an opportunity to learn and integrate from our experiences – a time to reflect, take stock, and allow our accomplishments, growth, and new skills cement and solidify.

There is great humility in such a process when we slow down to get in touch with what is present today. We no longer fear to take our place in this world and occupy it fully. Our impact on others becomes far greater as our consistency, clarity, and confidence frees them to find and do the same.

- Amy Jen Su

Note: To learn more about “Updating Others & Leadership Perception”, see our Fall 2006 newsletter in the news archives at [www.isisassociates.com](http://www.isisassociates.com)

## Quarterly Reflection: The Power of Acknowledgement

*I think of a scene from the Disney version of Cinderella, when the heroine sees herself in the dress for the first time and realizes she is a beauty. It's like the scene when the young hero first puts on his military uniform and becomes who he is. There is a magical click of recognition when the looking glass says back, "Yes, we are what we dream."*

*--Julia Cameron, Walking in this World*

The first step in seeing our true size is cultivating the ability to acknowledge ourselves. The very act can become a "looking glass" or mirror with powerful information:

### Reflection Questions:

1. What are you most proud of in the first three quarter in the year? (this can include accomplishments, new experiences, great moments, new skills gained, how you handled a difficult situation etc).
2. What have you learned from the items on your list?
3. What does this list suggest about your values, character, and commitments?

## Quarterly Book Selection: Quiet Strength

*What dog-eared, highlight-filled books are on our bookshelves that we find ourselves turning to time and time again and frequently recommending to others? Here's our book selection for this quarter:*

"Quiet Strength"  
By Tony Dungy

In early 2007, Tony Dungy became the first African-American coach to lead a football team to win the NFL Superbowl championship. Not only was the moment historic because of his race, but more importantly because of the type of leader and individual Tony Dungy is - - one who is an anomaly for his "industry" in terms of his humility, low-key profile and universal respectability. In his memoir, Dungy recounts his career and what led him to that momentous occasion. He shares the moments of triumph and more importantly the times of adversity that brought him his biggest lessons. While Dungy resisted writing a book for years, he chose to write one now as he felt that the Superbowl win provided a platform from which he could effectively extend his message: *"I really wanted to show people you can win all kinds of ways. . . . For your faith to be more important than your job, for your family to be more important than that job . . . we all know that's the way it should be. . . . I'm not afraid to say it."* Quiet Strength brings to life a man who leads with purpose.

## From the Coach's Corner: "Lead with Purpose"

### From the Client:

"I have a very successful career and excel in what I do. But lately, I feel like I have been losing my edge. A large part of it has to do with the dwindling sense of fulfillment I obtain from my work. While I have worked hard to attain my leadership position, something is missing. I am not sure if it is time for me to change jobs or am I going to face the same thing elsewhere once the newness wears off. I am concerned that this will begin to impact my performance and my leadership presence."

### From the Coach's Corner:

From the outside, you seem to have it all together. The corner office, the great job and title, and an enviable resume to show for it. But at some point that is not enough. To lead effectively, one must also learn to lead with purpose. This requires you to look beyond the "job" of what you do. Essentially, you must take it to the next level by identifying how your work is a means to a much bigger end rather than the end in itself. Throughout history, you can identify those successful individuals who lead with purpose: Bill Gates, Oprah Winfrey, Warren Buffet and the list goes on.

And one does not need to be famous nor on Fortune's richest people list to lead with purpose. Take for example, Pierre, an economist who spent 30-plus years working with global financial institutions. During his longstanding career, Pierre was quite effective in leading teams and efforts to bring relief to various parts of the world. But his true purpose is to bring attention to his birthplace, a small rural Caribbean village. Today, Pierre is leveraging his professional knowledge and network to start a movement encouraging those who left the village years ago to return for their retirement years and contribute to the economic development of his birthplace.

So how can *you* lead with purpose? In essence, follow the Three Points of Purpose:

#### **Purpose Point #1: Prioritize**

What are your priorities in life? How you spend your time is often a reflection of what is truly important to you - - whether you like it or not. Spend some time reflecting on what you want your priorities to be. What is important to you? What type of impact do you want to have? What imprint do you want to leave on the world? Now, take inventory of what you are currently doing - - how aligned are you with your priorities? Leading with purpose requires taking stock of what's most important to you and aligning yourself with those priorities.

#### **Purpose Point #2: Promote**

Leading with purpose is not for the fearful. It is your responsibility to promote your purpose - - you must learn to live it rather than just dream about it. Be bold in speaking and acting according to your purpose regardless of what others might say. If others aren't talking about what you are doing, it probably is not big and bodacious enough! Leaders lead by example and they walk the talk. Leading with purpose requires the same thing.

#### **Purpose Point #3: Perspective**

Leading with purpose necessitates the right perspective - - one that balances meeting your own needs with serving those of others. Too often, professionals reach a point of unfulfillment because their career track has been focused on self-centeredness (my life, my family, my retirement... my, my, my). While taking care of one's own needs is fundamental, those who lead with purpose have a more expansive perspective. They recognize that their actions, successes and efforts are to be leveraged beyond benefiting themselves. Therefore, purpose is not self-fulfilling but rather a reflection of their commitment to be of service to others. How narrow is your perspective? Effective leaders hold a balanced perspective.

As you continue on your career trajectory, you will enjoy the fruits of your hard work. Take the time to reflect on the true purpose of your journey. Leading with purpose promises to give you the biggest reward of all.

- Muriel Maignan Wilkins