



Being good at what you do is not easy. Being great is even more difficult. Being one of the best in the world at what you do is a monstrous undertaking. It's not something everyone can achieve; not everyone can be the best in the world. Most people aren't even striving for it.

To be the best at something you can't just "show up" and expect world-class results. You can begin by asking yourself an important question. "Why did I take this job?" Your answer to that simple question can determine so much of your success. The motive behind your decisions is no small matter. Needing a job and wanting a job are very different situations. Needing a job is driven by *fear*. Wanting to be the best at your job is driven by *desire*.

FEARLESS

By Steve McClatchy

Fear is an emotion and, like every emotion, it has a specific purpose which is to keep you alive. Fear's job is to keep you safe, secure, free from danger, and protected from harm. Fear will keep you out of trouble, steer you away from threatening situations, and help you avoid making mistakes, messing up, falling on your face, and dealing with the consequences and repercussions of failure.

In addition to its clear purpose, fear has predictable outcomes. It will prevent you from taking risks, meeting new people, trying new things, experimenting, asking questions, being vulnerable, growing, learning, exploring, and challenging yourself to do and become more. The problem is that these are the very behaviors you need in order to thrive and achieve excellence. Excellence requires a commitment to never-ending, ongoing, continuous growth and improvement. These are benefits that can only be pursued with *desire*. Fear does not inspire improvement; it settles for compliance and it motivates you only far enough to prevent the consequences you fear, not to pursue the benefits you desire. Avoiding painful consequences and assuring compliance with obligations may be an acceptable way to manage some things, but it isn't leadership. It isn't going to make anything better than it is today. Leadership requires one to set that *fear* aside, and pursue improvement, progress, and innovation from a place of *desire*.

To be fearless doesn't mean nothing will scare you or challenge you along the way; it means to lead with desire *in spite of the challenges*. Like fear, desire serves a very specific purpose; it helps you to thrive. It helps you to go after what you want. It helps you to take risks, be vulnerable, dream, ask "what if?", brainstorm, trust, change, turn your visions into reality, and make the impossible possible. These are the risky behaviors required to achieve excellence.

So why did you take your job? Is it because your company asked you to come and work for them, is it because you needed a job to provide for your family, is it because a head hunter contacted you, is it because you just needed a change, or is it because you really wanted it and you saw the potential to make a difference there? If your answer is a mix of all of the above I would ask you which reason is the strongest. The only reason to create anything outstanding or new is because you desire it. There are no consequences to fear for not becoming the best at what you do. Improving is not something you do out of fear. You do it because you desire and envision a workplace high in trust where people are not afraid to fail but excited to grow, develop, mature, gain new experiences, acquire new skills, and set goals and achieve them. You desire

a workplace where customers get their questions answered, problems solved, and get excited about what your products and services can do for them. You see a workplace where your work and the work of your employees is fun, has meaning, and makes a difference.

We have all worked with or for someone who was motivated by fear instead of desire. They go through the motions, take shortcuts, do the minimum, look at their watch, put on a fake smile, roll their eyes, talk behind your back, see what they can get away with, play passive-aggressive games, complain, blame, and avoid taking responsibility. This actually takes as much time and energy as doing their job well but they don't see it that way. They do enough to meet expectations, keep their jobs, and not get fired. They are motivated by fear, they lack desire. How does this mindset affect their employees? *A manager cannot lead their employees past where they are themselves.*

On the other hand, have you ever been truly engaged in the work you were doing? What drove your engagement? Was it your relationship with your manager, your mastery of a task, the meaning of your work, the way you were valued and respected, or all of the above? Are your employees experiencing that? How is their experience affected by *your* level of engagement and desire for continuous improvement? Driving employee and customer engagement is not about asking a few questions, checking off a box, and trying to be interested. It's about igniting desire in them by creating an authentic relationship that comes from valuing and respecting their unique talents, skills, and abilities and finding out what they want to accomplish. It's about guiding, coaching, advising, giving feedback, and challenging others to perform at their personal best. If you want to recruit and retain employees who are willing to go the extra mile, work with passion, solve problems, innovate, grow your business, and feel a profound connection to the company they represent then it's time to lead without fear. It's time to lead with *desire*. How would their experience be enhanced if you did that? What results could be achieved?

We need each other. Reaching peak performance and consistently producing excellence is difficult to do all alone. Willpower, discipline, and motivation can burn out without the systems and structures that support teamwork, collaboration, innovation, creativity, and a consistent high-energy work environment. This is where your focus needs to be if you want to create an engaged workplace that consistently produces excellence.

So, if you could select any job in the world would you pick the one you currently have? If you would then doesn't it make sense to continually get better at

it? How much you enjoy your career is directly related to your proficiency in it. The better you get the more you enjoy it, the more you enjoy it the more time you will spend getting better at it. If you would not select your job over any other job then you're probably less likely to invest the time, effort, and energy needed to build proficiency in it. Yet, remaining stagnant or slacking in your skill level could be the very reason you don't enjoy it. If you were the best in the world at your job would you want to keep it?

I encourage you to commit today to leading with desire and to commit to continual, ongoing, never ending improvement for both you and the systems that run your business. We need more leaders that lead by example and walk their talk when it comes to goals, growth, and improvement. Improvement is exciting and leaders that create excitement attract lots of followers. The excitement that comes from improvement creates a work environment where morale and productivity are high, new ideas are ignited, success is accelerated, employees are engaged, and retention and loyalty are high. The first step is to open your calendar right now and schedule time to make something in your life or in your business better than it is today. When you get to that time on your calendar follow through and don't push it off. That's it. That is what you need to do to continuously lead you and your business forward. We need more people in authority to actually be leaders. Your business needs you to do it, your employees need you to do it, and your customers need you to do it. So go do it!

Steve McClatchy is a keynote speaker and author of the award-winning New York Times Bestseller *Decide: Work Smarter, Reduce Your Stress & Lead by Example*. *Decide* has been translated into 9 languages. In every speech weaves insight, interaction, and actionable content with humor, inspiration, and motivation. He has worked with some of the most successful organizations in the world including Google, Under Armour, Disney, John Deere, Microsoft, NBC Universal, Accenture, HP, Tiffany's, Wells Fargo, Campbell's Soup, and many teams in the NFL, NBA, NHL, and MLB. He speaks frequently at Harvard, Wharton, and Chicago Booth Business Schools. He has appeared on ABC, CBS, Fox News, Wall Street Journal TV, and NBC's The Today Show and has been quoted in The Wall Street Journal, Fast Company, WebMD, Oprah Magazine, Entrepreneur, and Investor's Business Daily. Steve's passion is for continual improvement and believes that when we stop growing, learning, gaining experience, and achieving goals we stop living. You will be captivated, motivated, and truly inspired by his unique and practical approach to effectiveness and success. **For more information about Steve or to contact him, go to: www.Aller.com, email Steve@Aller.com or call 800-860-1171.**