

Becoming the Leader You Were Meant to Be

By Ron Marsh

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Meet Dan, a 47 year old pastor at a relatively contemporary church on the west coast. Dan has been the senior leader for eight years and has watched a handful of people meeting in his home grow to a formidable church of over 700. Leading a staff of three full-time pastors and four part-time administrative staff, Dan has been instrumental in the growth of hundreds of people. In the past two years however, Dan began to sense an uneasiness about his role and began to see a change on the horizon. During a recent all church vision casting event, as he stood before the church painting a picture of the future, he found himself less than enthusiastic about the vision he was casting and his role as the senior leader. Somehow in the busy-ness of ministry and the challenges of a growing congregation Dan had realized that what was required of him to lead at this stage of the church was not the leader God had called him to be.

Dan wasn't the only one recognizing that something needed to change. His staff had begun to feel the effects of his internal struggle. Pastor Dan, who had been so casual, caring, and relational had now become tense, distant, and difficult to work with.

Clarifying the Call

It's clear that Dan was faced with an opportunity to grow. Just how he would embrace this opportunity would be up to him. Before he made any decisions about his future, Dan set out on a journey to clarify his own leadership call. Encouraged by a colleague, he hired a leadership coach to help him through this process.

During a pivotal point in his coaching, Dan was asked to reflect on the reasons he started pastoring this small group of people in the first place. He then began recounting the early days of the church. With great excitement he described starting from scratch in his living room, working a full time job, meeting people at night in their homes, and the various evangelistic efforts on the weekends used to draw others into their little community. What was once fun, fulfilling, and challenging had somehow become ordinary, lackluster, and burdensome.



Suddenly, Dan had an "ah-ha." As he reflected on those early days, he realized that God had called him to lead a brand new work, establishing a body of believers where none had existed previously, and blaze a trail for others to follow. He now had a point of clarity about the leader God had called him to be. His coach asked him, "So Dan, who do you want to be?" Dan's answer was, "I want to be the kind of leader who starts a new work, develops that work into a thriving congregation, and then somehow passes the baton to other competent leaders."

Dan had now painted for himself a compelling picture of the future. For the first time in a few years he had a sense of intention and excitement as he tapped into his motivation. Where he once saw only overwhelming circumstances, he now saw opportunity.

Getting in Touch with Reality

His next challenge was to define his current reality. His coach asked another powerful question. “Dan, what kind of leader are you now?” Dan responded with, “One who doesn’t like what he’s doing. I’m just not suited to manage multiple staff members, it takes me away from the congregation and I feel disconnected with what’s happening in the body. I guess I like starting new things, and I’ve really struggled with this one because I want to be sure I’m not just saying I’m unwilling to grow in my managing or leadership skills.”

Dan was now on a quest to accurately and honestly assess his current reality. He gathered information from his staff, elders, and congregation to evaluate his current leadership. The result was a gap between the leader Dan had become (the reality) and the leader Dan believed he was called to be (the ideal).

In the subsequent months, Dan worked with his staff to develop a win-win plan in which he could continue pursuing his leadership call as a church planter and what he calls a “ministry entrepreneur” and still be connected to his founding church.

Every leader is faced with the responsibility of developing their leadership skills. There is no shortcut to the process of leadership development and becoming the leader you were called to be. However, there are tools you can use to help catalyze the process. See the attached worksheet to help you define your leadership call, your current reality, and how you can bridge the gap between them.

Click here to download a simple [assessment of your leadership role](#) you can use to begin the process Dan went through.

Ron Marsh is a certified life coach who helps others live in the center of the purpose and passion. Meet Ron at www.PurposeFilledLife.com or www.CoachingPastors.com/Marsh.html.