

The Monster that Ate Your Call!

A Check-up for Mission-Driven Leaders

by Tony Stoltzfus

With our current emphasis on visionary leadership, we tend to assume that God will evaluate our calling journey based on how well we accomplish our vision. That's not actually the case. *As a leader, you will be judged on how you steward your personal life first, and second on how you steward the people God has placed in your charge.* In other words, if you accomplish your organizational mission but use up a lot of people in the process, you have failed as a leader. Too often, especially in ministry circles, leaders get caught up in doing the task of their call and forget what the task was supposed to be for--to impact people for Jesus and to make their lives better.



So what does that look like in practical terms? How do you know if your vision has become the monster that ate your calling?

The process is simple: you turn your focus away from the mission for a bit and look at the state of your team. If your life is out of balance, your team will probably reflect it (it's hard to lead a balanced life while working under a leader who doesn't!) Here's a check-up--a set of questions that will let you (or the person you are coaching) discern whether your devotion to your call has gotten out of balance:

- Are your team members' lives more or less joyful since they started working under you?
- How many people have burned out or dropped out because they are tired in the last two years?

- Do people on your team have time to have lives, or does their entire existence revolve around working for your mission?
- Are your people replaceable parts--when one person leaves, we just plug in another?
- When people leave your team, is there a sense of celebration of them moving to a new stage in life, or do they tend to leave frustrated or angry, for whatever reason?
- When was the last time you had a fifteen minute conversation with a person on your team about something other than the mission or your work?
- What are these people's life dreams? Do you know what they want in life?
- How has each person's job role been adjusted to prepare them to reach those dreams?
- What have you sacrificed in the last year to invest in their dreams, even at the expense of yours?
- In unguarded moments, what do their spouses say about their marriage relationships? Do they enjoy adequate time and attention from their spouse, or do feel neglected or overlooked?
- How are you stewarding the calling of your own spouse? Is his or her role mainly to support you, or are you actively investing in what he/she can do as person who is called by God in his/her own right?

People are eternal; tasks and organizations are not. Stewarding the people in your charge means that *their lives are more important than what they can contribute to the organization's mission*. That's what unconditional love is.

If your vision is so all-consuming that the lives of those in your inner circle are worse off with you than without you, your mission has become a false God.