

**Practical Leadership:***Inspiring Action, Achieving Results***Jim Clemmer's Leader Letter**

June 2004, Issue 15

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Growing the Distance: Personal Implementation Guide

I've been delighted by the response to [*Growing the Distance*](#) (you can read dozens of fascinating letters and comments on the book from readers [here](#)). Like a good parent, an author probably shouldn't have favorites among his or her own books. But I especially enjoyed writing [*Growing the Distance*](#) because it so closely reflects my own values, aspirations, and continuous personal growth quest.

I again felt those deep attachments and excitement as I prepared the [*Personal Implementation Guide*](#) sprouting from [*Growing the Distance*](#). The assessments and exercises I pulled together for the [*Personal Implementation Guide*](#) are built around work I have been doing personally and/or within my workshops, coaching, and retreats over the last three decades. My key objective in designing the [*Guide*](#) is to move from the inspiration of [*Growing the Distance*](#) to concrete action.

Most of this edition of the *Leader Letter* is drawn from my new work on the [*Growing the Distance: Personal Implementation Guide*](#). The Timeless Leadership Principle of "Spirit and Meaning" is the theme of this month's newsletter. The stories, exercises, and application ideas are all drawn from this section of the [*Guide*](#).

I will be giving a **complimentary teleconference** introducing the new [*Personal Implementation Guide*](#) on June 23 from 1:00 - 1:45 (EDT). For details and registration go to www.clemmer.net/events/gtdtc.shtml. You can also preview the [*Growing the Distance: Personal Implementation Guide*](#) at www.clemmer.net/books/gtdpg.shtml.



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Scoring:

55 - 70 points – You have a sense of purpose and connection. You're a soulful leader.

40 - 54 points – Keep digging deeper.

29 - 39 points – Lots more work to do.

14 - 28 points – You're likely at the P level of the PIES model (page 110 of [*Growing the Distance*](#)).

- **What areas do I want to deepen and make more meaningful?**
- **What's holding me back?**
- **What will I do to overcome my obstacles?**

The Meaning of My Work

Following is another self-assessment taken from the [*Growing the Distance: Personal Implementation Guide*](#):

Job

- ❖ A means to some other end
- ❖ Providing financial support
- ❖ I don't expect much else from my work
- ❖ Often little loyalty or emotional commitment ("work is a four letter word")
- ❖ Move on if a better job (usually more money/benefits) comes along

Career

- ❖ Mark achievements through income, advancements, power, or prestige
- ❖ Usually involves ongoing training and development
- ❖ Focus on a particular profession/trade/skill set
- ❖ Often certified, licensed, or credentialed
- ❖ "Topping out" (little further advancement) can cause mid-life crisis or big career changes
- ❖ A big source of personal identity

Calling

- ❖ Fulfilling my sense of purpose and making a meaningful difference
- ❖ Contributing to a greater good that's bigger than me – a sense of service
- ❖ Aligned with my values and strengths
- ❖ Being (the real me) is more important than 'doing' or 'having'
- ❖ Following my inner voice or what I feel called to do
- ❖ Income and advancement is secondary
- ❖ Time often flies by



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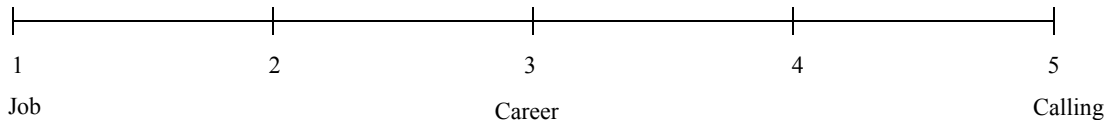
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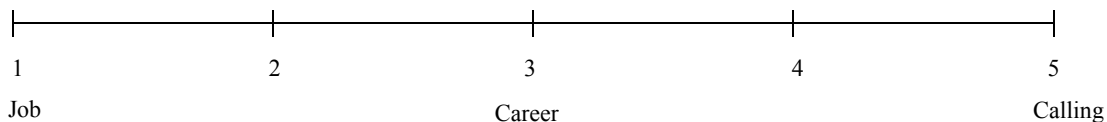
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Any job can become a career or calling and any career or calling can become a job. A scientist, physician, or pastor may have initially felt called. But if he or she finds their work has become drudgery, it's then a job. A production worker or hospitality server may have started in a job and progressed to feeling a calling to make better products, happier people, or the world a little better place.

1. Where my work currently is:



2. Where I would like my work to be:



Diamonds in My Own Backyard?

Before you go looking elsewhere for more meaningful work, make sure you have thoroughly explored your current situation. As this excerpt from my third book, *Pathways to Performance* illustrates, you could be overlooking diamonds in your own backyard.

By 1910, Russell Conwell had delivered his speech, "Acres of Diamonds," over five thousand times to eight million listeners. The fees from his talks raised millions of dollars to found Temple University in Philadelphia and two important hospitals. The speech centered on Ali Hafed, an ancient Persian farmer. When an old Buddhist priest told him about the fabulous wealth diamonds could bring, Ali sold his farm to look for them. Ali spent years wandering through most of the known world searching for those elusive diamonds. After endless disappointments and futile searching, he became completely discouraged. On the shore of the bay in Barcelona, he threw himself into the tide and drowned.

Meanwhile back at the farm, the man who bought the farm from Ali had found a large, glittering stone and put it on his mantle as a curio. One day, the Buddhist priest returned to the farm, saw the flash of light from the stone and exclaimed, "Here is a diamond! Has Ali Hafed returned?" "No," the farmer replied, "this is just a stone I found down by the river." They went down and found many more like it. And so the diamond mine of

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Golconda, "the most magnificent diamond mine in the history of mankind," was first discovered.

- **What elements of my current work are very meaningful?**
- **Can I expand on those elements?**
- **Who can I work with further in my workplace to make our work more meaningful (peers, team members, mentor, boss, network, etc.)?**

Personal Application Ideas for Spirit and Meaning

- Carve out regular R & R (reflection and renewal) time for yourself. This is vital oxygenation for you so you can more effectively lead others.
- Add to your blessings and brag list every night before going to bed. Drift off to sleep by ending the day on a positive note with an expectation that you'll awaken to another day of accomplishment tomorrow. Just awakening to another day could be the first blessing of the day!
- Keep adding to your blessings and brag list. Continue to record every accomplishment, strength, and success you've ever had or thing you're grateful for. Review the list whenever you're feeling down on yourself, anxious, or a little sour.
- Do you feel that you have a reasonable level of choice and freedom to express yourself in your work? If not, what are you doing to ensure you don't become a victim of your job?
- Continually remind yourself that the Seven Wonders of the World are to see, to taste, to touch, to hear, to feel, to laugh or smile, and, most of all, to love.
- Don't confuse who you are with your performance. Separate your being and innate value from your accomplishments or failures.

Thoughts that Make You Go Hmm...on Practical Leadership

"True poverty isn't to have little. It's to have enough and want a whole lot more."

- *Growing the Distance: Personal Implementation Guide*

"It's better to appreciate what I can't have than to have what I can't appreciate."

- *Growing the Distance: Personal Implementation Guide*

"When work is a pleasure, life is a joy. When work is duty, life is slavery."

- Maxim Gorky, *The Lower Depths*



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"Life is too short to squander. So work only at what really matters. Make a living that ensures a life of giving and loving."

- Mark Albion, *Making a Life, Making a Living: Reclaiming your Purpose and Passion in Business and in Life*

"Joy can be real only if people look upon their life as a service, and have a definite object in life outside themselves and their personal happiness."

- Leo Tolstoy

"If you can find a way to use your signature strengths at work often, and you also see your work as contributing to the greater good, you have a calling. Your job is transformed from a burdensome means into a gratification."

- Martin Seligman, *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment*

Improvement Points Subscribers' Top Picks for May

Of all the short quotes with links to full articles that were e-mailed out as complimentary **Improvement Points** last month, the most popular with subscribers were:

"Effective communication is no more a natural skill than leadership is a born trait. Very few powerful communicators just opened their mouths and let the words naturally flow out. Most leaders learned, developed, practiced, and refined their communication skills through a lot of hard work and conscientious effort. They learned how to sell and persuade. They learned how to infuse a well-formed case or logic with emotional appeal. They were able to light their logic on fire."

- from *Communication Strategies, Systems, and Skills*

www.clemmer.net/excerpts/communication_strategies.shtml

"From all our long-range options, alternatives, and possibilities we've got to establish short-term goals and priorities. There are as many things we've got to stop doing, as there are actions we've got to start taking. Some actions will drive us forward, many will hold us back, and some won't matter much either way. But without clear targets and a strong sense of what's most important, I -- and everyone on my team or in my organization -- won't be able to tell the difference."

- from *The Tyranny of the Urgent Can Cause Priority Overload*

www.clemmer.net/excerpts/tyranny_urgent.shtml



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"Savoring and celebrating is highly energizing. Paradoxically, it's when things are darkest and our goals seem farthest from reach that a focus on what's gone right and what we have to be thankful for can be the most invigorating."

- from *The Pause that Refreshes*

www.clemmer.net/excerpts/pause_refreshes.shtml

Subscribe or view the archives by topic area here: www.clemmer.net/improvement.shtml.

Feedback and Follow-Up

I am always delighted to hear from readers of the *Leader Letter* with feedback, reflections, suggestions, or differing points of view. I am also happy to explore customized, in-house adaptations of any of my material for your team or organization. Drop me an e-mail at Jim.Clemmer@Clemmer.net.

I hope to connect with you again next month!

Jim

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