

## Today Is Tuesday – The Power Of Stating The Obvious

### Don't Assume Everyone Sees What You See

By Kendall C. Wright, President of Entelechy Training and Development, Inc.

Today is Tuesday. Well, it may or may not be, but the fact is - no matter the day, announcing it would be thought of as stating the obvious. And good leaders don't waste their time or the time of their associates by stating the obvious, right? This is a common misunderstanding held by countless leaders. They imprudently choose not to state, point out, or remind their associates of the obvious when in fact--the obvious is exactly what needs to be showcased and highlighted.

Recently, the manager of the Cincinnati Reds and the head coach of the Cincinnati Bengals have each come under fire for failing to leverage the power of stating the obvious. Each of their respective teams were faced with what some define as do-or-die situations, but neither leader – at least publicly – seems to stress or communicate the gravity of their situation to the players. In fact, the Red's manager is on record saying he shouldn't have to tell them how important the game or series is, they should know. I respectfully beg to differ.

Professional athletes, as well as associates in the workplace, look to the leader for guidance and perspective. Whether the leader is aware or not, he or she frames the context in which and by which the associates perceive the situation, challenge, or circumstances.

One incredibly powerful and simplistic approach to getting the team laser-focused and resilient is to present and remind them of the situation at hand. If the response you seek is urgency or calmness, the team needs you to be explicit. Hinting, innuendo, supposition, inference, and the like are grossly ineffective and inadequate in promoting common understanding and focus.

It may seem honorable, even stately, to default to a "they should already know" approach, but such an approach usually leads to higher levels of confusion instead of a high degree of coalescence.

Here are three inherent advantages of a leader clearly and boldly stating the obvious:

**Sets The Tone.** What should be obvious to many may only be obvious to a few. In leadership, if you aren't leveraging the entirety of your human capital from the onset, you're already fighting from a deficit position. The tone created by the leader is vital and contagious. Make sure you're setting the right tone for the situation, and that you're doing so intentionally.

**Builds Credibility.** Nothing seems as prevalent--and frustrating--as leaders who don't have a clue as to what's going on, nor a plan of action as to address the challenge. Communicating that you know and understand the situation helps those in your direct report to confidently and completely put their trust and faith in your leadership.

**Call To Action.** Articulating the situation is an excellent way to rally the troops. The greatest motivational speeches and pep talks are built around stating the obvious, then encouraging the team to take action. The ancient script reminds us, "For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle?" In the end, it is "taking action," clear and collaborative action that produces the winning results.

In stating the obvious, the most effective technique is to simply and clearly characterize the situation, and your desired response or reaction from your associates. Here's an example, "This is the MLB NL Wild Card Elimination Game. Win or Go Home!" Here's another example. Over the last six consecutive quarters our market share has declined and our margins have fallen. I need each of

you to refocus your efforts to stem this negative tide. It won't be easy, but you have the skill, creativity, and intellect to turn this around. Now is the time to step up your game."

Don't assume everyone sees or understands what is "obvious" to you. An Actualizing Leader knows the power of strategically restating the obvious to promote optimum participation and productivity from each associate. Don't shy away from announcing, "Today is Tuesday!"

**Leadership Lesson:** Many years ago I was introduced to a phrase I'd never heard before – A blinding flash of the obvious, also known as a BFO. Leaders must become comfortable with providing those BFOs. This is particularly true if you wish to bring your team to a common appreciation of the magnitude of either the threat or the opportunity. Today is Tuesday, is a wonderful reminder to keep everyone up to date and focused on what the challenge is and what needs to be done to create successful and profitable outcomes.

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