



Leadership Living

the MasterPoint™ Series for the ascendant professional

by Tim Herd

Recreation and re-creation

Run with this idea: The greater our connection to nature, the healthier and happier we are.

According to accumulating research, time spent in green outdoor spaces by children fosters creative play and relieves attention deficit disorders. Among adults, the rejuvenation derived from such outdoor pursuits as trailing a tiny ball through the byways of a golf course—or the hours teasing trout with an artificial fly—are well known. Aerobic activities of jogging, walking, and swimming contribute directly to our physical health. But perhaps surprisingly, studies show that the amazing therapeutic benefit of the outdoors extends even to office-bound cubicle workers with a mere view of trees, shrubbery or large lawns—who experience less frustration and stress than their deprived co-workers!

Time was that all our outdoor activities were subsistence-based. The chores of farming, gardening, hunting, and fishing produced food; walking, snowshoeing, skiing, and horseback riding were for necessary traveling. As such, the inherent benefits of interactions with nature were incorporated into our basic lifestyles.

These days, however, such interactions are usually not found listed on our electronic taskminders. Recreation is crammed into overly-busy vacation days, and the concept of outdoor leisure for the conscientious professional is considered naively quaint. Yet getting out there is neither the unproductive time nor the inconvenience it may seem.

The creative soul mates of recreation and re-creation pursue the same worthy goal. By refreshing both mind and body in invigorating diversions (recreating) you are also casting yourself into a new and improved you (re-creating). Such dual exercise is crucial because our careers trample a mind-numbing, body-crushing, and soul-dimming domain. Without recreation/re-creation, the weary world just wears us out.

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So it's not an option if we're truly interested in success. Our highest and best functions—physically, intellectually, psychologically, socially, professionally, financially, and spiritually—can only be achieved and maintained by regular, refreshing, and stimulating personal makeovers. Bring it on!

As a leader in your profession, however, you must concern yourself with more than just Number One. (Selfishness is not only irresponsible, it's counterproductive!) Look for ways to create a positive learning and sharing environment among your staff, board members, and stakeholders. Organizing occasional fun, educational, and team-building activities help to create that kind of learning atmosphere while

strengthening team bonds and individual commitments. And if you can get everyone outside while you're at it, the healthful benefits multiply for all!

Real leadership is not measured by position or rank, nor in accumulated honors and awards, a corner office, or a corner on the market. It is found in the number of the times we've tried, failed, adapted and re-tried; the people we've encouraged and uplifted; the challenges encountered and overcome together; and the healthy, productive balance in recreating and re-creating.

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Get out! Refresh. Create. Lead. Succeed.

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