

THE BALCONY DISCIPLINE

The balcony discipline is the regular practice of getting above the action of one's life to see the wider moves on the dance floor of life. So how do we “get on the balcony?” How do we get above the fray and see the bigger picture of our context?

1. Block out time every week for getting perspective on the overall picture of your life, leadership context, and system. Get away to a coffee shop or a quiet spot if this will help you focus better.
2. Create and maintain a one-, two-, or three-page summary or mind map of your entire leadership area, the present responsibilities and initiatives under your care / the makeup of your team. List every lead, apprentice, special event person, project team member, large group organizers, and team/task force member.
3. Brood over this current reality. If you are a praying person, pray by name for your leaders. Pray over the gaps and missing pieces. Deliberately focus and look beyond the waves of this month or season to longer-term issues, needs, and opportunities.
4. Remind yourself of your role. As a leader, “I am here to serve, support, encourage, and equip people towards effective and sustainable (fill in the blank).” So, within your balcony time, come back to this question: “Who do I/we serve?” Or, as an organizational leader – “I am here to provide clarity, direction, and motivation to my team to do our best work.”
5. Lay out your life and/or team-strengthening strategies. What is your priority/immediate need? What will be your next step(s)? Be specific and time-focused on how and when these strategies will unfold.
6. Accelerate and multiply the power of this discipline by letting a team member or supervisor in on what you have discovered and resolved to address in the weeks ahead.

The “balcony discipline” is a life giver, an organization strengthener, and a leadership multiplier. This is why we must never live or lead without a balcony! So how do you become better balcony sharers? First is to shape your personal balcony discipline so that you never lead without a balcony. You are taking time every week to go to high ground to see, sense, and interpret what is really going on in your life and leadership. Second is to formalize in your secure base setting a time and place for making explicit what you are seeing, sensing, and interpreting. This is making your experience observable in the full light of day – letting others in on what you have observed, thought, felt, and hopefully desired as an outcome in your unique world. This can also be done with a leadership team in your setting, but when a secure base environment tackles your experience, they lean into it in a qualitatively different way. This is due to the stakes that a secure base commits to; it is about much more than the leadership situation or challenge; it cares about the soul of the leader and friend who is in their midst. The challenge dimension is balanced by the care dimension, and this mesh makes the outcome different in spades.