



APPLICATION GUIDE – October 2019 How to Lead in a World of Distraction, Part 1

BOTTOM LINE:

Great leaders must learn to turn down the noise low enough and long enough to be ruthlessly curious of their emotions.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

White Noise and Distractions

- White noise is an effective sound-masking tool. It creates a distraction to cover up the sounds you don't want to hear.
- Everyone has their fingers on the dial of some kind of distraction or white noise that keeps them from paying attention to the things that might actually need their attention.
- What all distractions have in common is their ability to mask or hide those deeper needs. Distractions keep us from focusing on what's really driving us: the desires, emotions, motives, and needs that lie below the surface.

Axis of Distraction for Leaders: These three distractions have the strongest gravitational pull on leaders' attention.

- **Appearance of Success:** So often, leaders lead for the appearance of success because we want the pat on the back and the immediate reward for the least amount of work. Sometimes, underneath the appearance of success you'll find someone stumbling toward mediocrity or even on a path toward failure.
- **Allure of Progress:** Leaders don't like to wait or sit still. Every leader has that innate drive to move things forward, which can lead to wasting time spinning our wheels just to feel like we're going somewhere.
- **Attraction of Certainty:** The attraction of certainty is a dangerous distraction for leaders because it can lead us to compromise our integrity. We all crave certainty in uncertain times, and leaders want to provide that certainty whether they have good reason to do so or not.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION OR TEAM DISCUSSION:

1. Emotional health isn't something you often hear discussed in the workplace, but as Clay says, you can't be a healthy leader if you're emotionally unaware. How can you encourage other leaders in your office to be curious about their emotions in order to lead in healthier, more effective ways?
2. We are the only ones who can honestly identify the noise in our lives. When Clay defines "white noise," what's the first thing that comes to mind? Could that be part of your noise?
3. Have you ever found yourself caught up in the Appearance of Success and working on things that will only help you *appear* successful? How can you keep the short-term wins from distracting you from what really matters?

REFERENCES:

How to Lead in a World of Distraction by Clay Scroggins