

Point of View



A LEADERSHIP COMMENTARY ON LIFE TODAY BY BOB SHANK

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Dear Marketplace Friend,

Before today is over, you need to order a copy of ***The Power of 2: How to make the most of your partnerships at work and in life***, by Rodd Wagner and Gale Muller (Gallup Press, 2009).

My brand confidence runs high: anything that comes out of the thought-leaders at the Gallup Organization is worth the cost of acquisition, as well as the value of the time required to read every word. ***The Power of 2*** is no exception to that preconception. Why?

“The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’” (Genesis 2:18) If you’re a Bible student, you recognize that out-take from the creation account; it’s the preface to God’s most magnificent creation moment: His formation of Eve, the Woman.

Don’t miss the underlying principle, though: *no person does as well alone as he/she could do if partnered with someone different than they are.* It was true in Eden, and it remains true, today.

If together is best, it makes sense that mankind’s fall from grace predisposed us to isolation. The self-protection that is “natural” is anything but optimal. When Solomon the Wise spoke of the matter, he left no

confusion: *“Again I saw something meaningless under the sun: There was a man all alone; he had neither son nor brother. There was no end to his toil, yet his eyes were not content with his wealth. ‘For whom am I toiling,’ he asked, ‘and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?’ This too is meaningless - a miserable business! Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”* (Ecclesiastes 4:7-12). Lone ducks end up on a platter; partners increase their odds of success, while enhancing the experience along the way.

Wisdom is, indeed, timeless. Without quoting Solomon, Wagner and Muller reach the same conclusion: *“Equally troublesome is the concentration of power in the hands of a lone leader whose human foibles cannot help but be magnified under the pressure of*

having to be too many things to too many people. America's most serious corporate governance problem is the Imperial CEO..."

After 40 years of organizational life – with over 30 of those spent in senior leadership – I know that I've always done my best work alongside a partner. My father-in-law's business was already successful when he invited me in; when he empowered me as a partner, the results grew exponentially. My best years as a senior pastor were alongside my colleague Jim Hogan. The Master's Program was a one-man band until Steve Esser sold his business and brought his talents alongside mine. What Cheri and I have learned in 39 years of marital partnership has been mirrored in my four decades of enterprise life: I wasn't made to be single. *It's still not good for a man to be alone...*

Not convinced yet? Listen to the concise summary of Wagner and Muller's case: *"If you want to have great partnerships, be a great partner. Get beyond yourself. Give up the notion that you are well-rounded, and stop expecting your colleagues to be universally proficient. Incorporate someone else's motivations into your view of the accomplishment. Loosen up. Put aside your competitive nature, your pre-packaged view of how the thing should be done, and your desire not to be inconvenienced with the imperfections of a fellow human being. Focus more on what you do for the partnership than what you get from it. Demonstrate trust in more people, and see if they don't surprise you with their*

trustworthiness. Be slower to anger and quicker to forgive. And, along the way, communicate continuously."

Single? Sole proprietor? Lone wolf? Or, part of a team, but "together, all alone?" Take an afternoon to marinate in ***The Power of 2***, and start your search for the partner you always needed...

For the Kingdom,

Bob Shank

Bob Shank is Founder and Chief Mentoring Officer of The Master's Program (TMP).

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