

FINDING MINISTRY PERSPECTIVE: GETTING IN THE BALCONY

2026 LEADERSHIP SKILL BUILDING SERIES

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HOLDING THE CANDLE

GETTING OFF THE DANCE FLOOR

- We spend most of our time on the dance floor.
- On the dance floor is where the day-to-day movement is happening.
- It is where things are in motion.
- There we are caught in the movement, noise, and immediate reactions of those around you.
- On the dance floor the urgent takes precedent – that which is urgent often gives a misperception of the whole.
- Limited perspective results in wrong diagnosis and misguide interventions.

GETTING UP IN THE BALCONY

- From a higher point - patterns, group dynamics, and systems issue become visible.
- Leadership requires the movement between the two – it is a skill that is developed by practice.
- More informed decisions are made when we see the bigger picture.
- The benefit of the balcony for ministry:
 - Allows for more objective observations about ministry.
 - Allows for clarity of purpose and the alignment of values and purpose.

THE DILEMMA

- The Messiness of Ministry keeps us on the dance floor – there is always more to do. The boxes are never all checked!
- The Messiness of Ministry necessitates getting up in the balcony.
- The nature of the context of ministry keeps us on the dance floor.
- The constant distractions prevent our getting up in the balcony.
- When we never get up in the balcony, we are not clear about our purpose, and ministry becomes subjects to the whim and way of the urgent distraction.

THE SKILL – GETTING UP IN THE BALCONY

- Dr. Kate Rae Davis – 4 Barriers for mitigating distractions.

PRIORITIES

EXTERNAL PRESSURES

INTERNAL PRESSURES

DECISION PARALYSIS

- 4 Practices for leaders/sessions/congregations to mitigate distractions.

PRIORITIES

- Almost always understood as a plural, but when came into English language was a singular - “first or before” (prime, primary, primal)
- By definition you should have one priority at a time. (Its not forever, can be just for season or a segment of time.)
- Organizations that say they have multiple priorities – no they just have multiple areas of focus and have not done the work of identifying the priority.
- “You have on priority at a time.”
- Push for clarity. If you set the priorities, then push for focus.

PRIORITIES – the helper

- 3 minutes to write down your top priorities for your church/ministry.
- What rises to your mind are the most important?
- What emerges?
- 3 MINUTES
- How many did you write down?
- Now put an A, B, or C next to them to rank them.
- Put a 1 or a 2 next to any that had multiple same letter.

PRIORITIES – the helper

- Look at your A1 priority.
- Two Questions:
 - If you had a better sense of the big picture of your church/ministry might the priority be different? (If yes, priority is getting in the balcony.)
 - If you were to burnout or not be present, would your organization be able to achieve that priority. (If no, then consider the roll of ME.)
- Work your A1 priority ONLY. (Remember it's only a season.)

EXTERNAL PRESSURES

- Sessions and leaders deal with continual external pressures.
- “They keep demanding more.” (Note harsh verb.)
- “Expectations of others.” (Their expectations – not yours. Not God’s.)

EXTERNAL PRESSURES

- Core Skill – Boundaries – How do we say “no” and enforce that “no.”
- Actions – YES, NO, NEGOTIATE
- Pause when have a decision or invitation – yes, no, or negotiate.
- 2 practices for leaders and sessions: Use 2 sentences
- “We will take a season to get back to you.” (Let me think about that and give you a more thoughtful response later.)
- “No.” (It is a full sentence!) [Practice using this sentence.]

EXTERNAL PRESSURES

- Look back on list of priorities.
- Is there at least one thing you/your session can say "No" to?

INTERNAL PRESSURES

- The barriers that are not coming from outside of us.
 - It feels irresponsible to step away.
 - The guilt of things I cannot do.
 - The incessant encroaching of tasks that creep into our minds constantly.
- Common narratives: distrust, the achievement addiction, the need to be needed, fear of what I might see on the balcony, fear of getting in the balcony and no longer being able to blame it on busyness.

INTERNAL PRESSURES – the help

- How do we see ourselves valued in groups?
- What are the stories that I'm holding and how does that influence my internal pressure?
- What are the stories that the institution is holding and how does that influence our internal pressure?
- Hard work – Inner healing – asking the hard questions of *WHY* do we do what we do? *Obligation, keep happy, value in the world...*
- What is our purpose?

DECISION PARALYSIS

- I'm not sure what we need?
- We are not sure what is the best thing to do?
- These questions are only answered by getting up in the balcony.
- Busyness is a flight/fight response. Decision paralysis is a freeze response.

DECISION PARALYSIS – the help

- Sit. Trust.
- Don't just do something, sit there.
- Leaders and sessions must sit and trust and not be in paralysis over making decisions.
- Are you as a leader sitting? Are you as a session sitting?
(What does that look like?)
- Are you as leader trusting? Are you as a session trusting?
(What does that look like?)

GETTING UP IN THE BALCONY

BARRIERS

- 1) Priorities
- 2) External Pressures
- 3) Internal Pressures
- 4) Decision Paralysis

HELPERS

- 1) Priority
- 2) Yes-No-Negotiate
- 3) Inner healing
- 4) Sit. Trust. Decide.