

LEADERS TO FOLLOW

Spring Ahead, Fall Back

Daylight savings time is a puzzling concept. Changing the clock at will is confusing to the mind and challenging to the body.

But maybe there is some wisdom in this practice. The saying “spring ahead, fall back” helps you remember what to do with your clocks; it also helps you keep you restore your energy for the battles you have chosen in life.

One key aspect of leadership is commitment. The world is full of injustices that cry out for someone to care enough to redress them; everywhere you look, there are people in need and causes that stir your heart. But you are, after all, one person, and you can't do everything.

Sometimes life can be overwhelming in its demands on your energy, time and love. Effective leaders have learned to choose just one or two areas of activity and commit themselves fully in those areas, not letting themselves be distracted by other needs and opportunities.

It takes maturity and wisdom to pick your battles, as it goes against the desire to keep your options open, in case something better comes along. You could compare this dilemma to marriage vs. dating forever—marriage closes the door on variety, but it opens the door to depth of caring and trust.

For someone who is serious about being a better leader, picking your battles—choosing the one or two areas of commitment—is the first step. The second step is keeping your commitment alive, and this is where “spring ahead, fall back” comes into play.

Every leader becomes weary and downhearted at times, feeling the burden of trying to change what's not working anymore, and to bring fairness and hope to unpleasant and unjust circumstances. The leader may have sprung ahead in the past, when he or she chose the areas of personal commitment, but now the spring has lost its bounce and resilience. What's needed is to fall back for a time.

Without giving yourself time and space to fall back periodically, you run the risk of burning yourself out. We all need a chance to lick our wounds and close ourselves from further action, in order to heal and regain strength. Leaders are especially vulnerable in their areas of commitment; they need to carve out times to spring ahead and to fall back.



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Fall 2011 Programs and Publications

Programs:

- Your Next Job (September-October 2011)
- American English Language Institute: AELI (year-round)
- Essential Prague, 4 Days (year-round)

Blogs:

<http://jbt-yournextjob.blogspot.com/>
<http://englishinprague.blogspot.com/>
<http://ilileadership.blogspot.com/>
<http://writingwisdom.blogspot.com/>
<http://praguepies.blogspot.com/>

Publications (available at www.ili.cc for free download):

Leaders to Follow
Servant Leaders
A Lesson on English
Careers

ILI trip to USA extended by Hurricane Irene

In August, I went to the USA to check on our Florida belongings, visit our children in New York and New Jersey, and get ready for another winter in Prague. What started as a whirlwind 10-day visit became an even bigger hurricane-driven 16 days in the USA.



Melissa, Amelia and Tina: Syracuse and Ithaca, New York



Noah at work: Jersey City, New Jersey



Enjoying the Nature Park in Syracuse



Atlantic Ocean beach in Florida

Hurricane Irene followed me to Orlando and almost caught me at the airport there, but I managed to fly back to Syracuse with only about a 6-hour delay (thanks, Paul, for picking me up at the airport at 1:30 am!) I was scheduled to fly to Newark, then on to Prague, on Monday August 28, but all flights had been grounded over the weekend, so Monday was chaotic. I ended up going home on September 4 (thanks, KLM, for the free seat upgrade!).

I got back to Prague, safe and sound, on September 5. Hurricane Irene continued to inflict damage in Vermont and the Northeastern US, but somehow I managed to avoid the worst of it. All I can say is I sure did enjoy my extra 6 days in the USA!

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