



Dear Friend,

Fill 'Er Up!

A while back, I was facilitating a training session, and a participant asked me to describe the concept that we were tackling in a bit more detail. So, in this off-the-cuff moment, as I searched my brain for an analogy, I dug deep and began talking about a *filling station*.

Okay, so, if you didn't immediately respond with a "Huh?" to that reference, you know that you (like I) are OLD!

For those of you who had no clue, a *filling* (usually pronounced "fillin") *station* is nothing more than a gas station. It got its name because that, my friends, is where folks went to get their gas tanks filled. (Hey, we lived in simpler times back in the day.)

Where am I going with this? I'm glad you asked.

People need to stop occasionally to be refilled too. This is true for folks throughout an organization, but it's especially true for leaders. You see, as leaders, you're typically pouring out -- building into others, planning, working, giving. But, how often do you pause...to *BE* filled? Trust me, failing to do so leaves you running on fumes -- with little for yourself and even less for others.

I've made a personal commitment to prioritize refueling. One way this happens is that, each August, I get to attend the Global Leadership Summit -- to be filled so that I have something to run on, can continue my own growth, and am able to identify new (or reinforced) nuggets to use and to share, especially with leaders.

Well, in this edition of *EA Insights*, let's cover two essential questions for leaders. My hope is that these questions will help you to push "pause" and, in a targeted way, to see yourself and/or your organization a bit more clearly. However, arriving at answers to these questions is merely Step 1; it's like pulling into the station. Please don't stop there. I invite you to continue on to Step 2 and to reach out to us, at Executive Advantage, so that we can help you figure out what to do with what you learn. You see, we're here to help you fill your tank.

So, keep reading, and "Fill 'er up!"

All the best,

June

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2 Essential Questions for Leaders

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You're a leader.

You head a company, a division, a department, a team, or even just yourself. Nonetheless, you have been vested with the responsibility of getting things done. And, that's a hard job!

As a leader, if your life is like many, it's so hectic with meetings or plugging holes or generating the next deliverable - *DOING* -- that you devote little time to THINKING. It's extremely easy to confuse

activity with assessment, much less with accomplishment. However, in order to move from simply being *busy* to being *purposeful*, it's vital for you to step back occasionally and to think strategically about your organization and yourself.

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"Quotes"

"Perhaps it would be a good idea...to muffle every telephone, halt every motor, and stop all activity someday to give people a chance to ponder a few minutes on what it is all about, why they are living, and what they really want."
~James Truslow Adams

"He who desires, but acts not, breeds pestilence."
~William Blake

"I am on sabbatical as of right now, been too busy to think of about my OWN needs as of late."
~Jim Diamond

"Whatever it is your heart desires, please go for it; it's yours to have."
~Gloria Estefan

"[It] was a lot of [activity] with not a lot of breaks. I think a lot of guys had no energy. We just had to wait until the tank filled up, and it's starting to fill up."
~Ken Hitchcock

"To busy oneself with what is futile when one can do something useful...is to strip talent of its dignity."
~Jose Marti

"It's not so much how busy you are, but why you are busy. The bee is praised. The mosquito is swatted."
~Mary O'Connor

"Listen a hundred times, ponder a thousand times, speak once."

To spark your thinking, I offer two essential questions that every leader should pause periodically to ponder. Investing some time here can be invaluable as you continue building the best organization, or the best you, possible.

Step 1: The Questions

Question 1: What are three things you most want that you don't have?

Before you brush this off as fancy, please give it a minute; it's an important question.

- Consider yourself and/or your organization. What pieces are needed most right now?
- Think about what you're trying to accomplish today or where you want to go next. What would help to take you there that you don't already have?
- Or, for a moment, just close your eyes and picture what you most want in life, or in business, that you won't see before you with eyes wide open.

Take a few minutes to let your mind run wild. You're likely to find yourself with a growing list, and that's okay. Don't feel you must limit yourself to three at the start. Give yourself some time; just brainstorm.

As a leader, what do you want that you don't now have?

Once you've generated a list, reinsert the "most" from the original question. Pare down the list to your top three entries. Determine what's *most* important at this point in time to fill a current critical gap, to prepare you for the future, or to fulfill a dream. This is essential information for you as a leader and as a person.

Question 2: What are three things you have but are just tolerating?

Just as there are things that we *want* but don't *have*, there also are things we *have* but don't *want*!

Pull yourself above the fray for a few moments.

- What activities or events have been going on around you that are more trouble than they're worth?
- What practices or traditions have become ingrained for you or your team but don't make sense any more, don't get you anywhere, or don't produce a respectable return on the investment?
- What behaviors or attitudes permeate your culture, or affect you, and keep you from going as far, as fast, or as deep as you desire?

When you take the blinders off, and look realistically at your world, you'll be surprised at what you can see.

What are you simply tolerating because you've not had the focus, the resources, the energy, or the courage to change?

Again, develop as lengthy a list as necessary at the outset. Then, cut it back to your top selections.

Step 2: The Action

Now, look at your two short lists. You have just pinpointed the most significant desires and challenges for you right now.

You may have been very much aware of this list of six. On the other hand, you may be really surprised at what you see there before you.

The critical question is: *What will you do now?*

Knowing what is on these lists is an important first step. Actually determining what to do with your knowledge, and then taking action, is something completely different. You see, you won't begin to experience forward movement until you develop and begin executing a plan for securing what you want and changing what you've been tolerating. Knowledge, without action, is just...nice.

So, you have the knowledge. What will you do with it?

Could you use some help focusing in on what you desire and/or identifying what you've been tolerating? Would it help you to have support to work through the next steps? Why don't you let **Executive Advantage** help you move forward? Contact us today to explore how we can partner with you. We're here to help you build your thriving [career](#) or [business](#).



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"Any time you sincerely want to make a change, the first thing you must do is to raise your standards. *** I wrote down all the things I would no longer accept in my life, all the things I would no longer tolerate, and all the things that I aspired to becoming."
~Tony Robbins

"So many people walk around with a meaningless life. They seem half-asleep, even when they're busy doing things they think are important. This is because they're chasing the wrong things."
~Morrie Schwartz

"I know that if I'm short of ideas, I need to take some time off and let the well fill up[.]"
~Allen Shamblin

"[T]he practical men listen and ponder and bring back the truth and apply it to human life, and progress and growth and higher human ideals come into being and so the world moves ever on."
~Anna Howard Shaw

"Life lived amidst tension and busyness needs leisure. Leisure that recreates and renews. Leisure should be a time to think new thoughts, not ponder old ills."
~Neil Strait

"Happiness happens when you know yourself, your true calling and that you get what you tolerate."
~Unknown

"It takes firm leadership to preside[.] *** It requires leaders who can analyze, synthesize, ponder and decide."
~Lawrence Wilkerson

About Executive Advantage

At **Executive Advantage**, we are committed to providing results-based business and management consulting, leadership development, and coaching support. We partner with business leaders to build healthy, well-functioning organizations, where goals are met and people thrive. We also partner with individuals to create professional (and personal) lives with clearer direction, improved results, and greater balance.

To learn more about **Executive Advantage**, contact us [online](#) or at (301) 280-5950.

