

# Am I too Busy to LEAD?

by Steve Parker

Steve Parker is Director of Sandow Generation, a lignite plant in south central Texas, a part of Luminant Fossil Generation. Sandow has an operating capacity of 1,137 MW, enough to power about 570,000 homes in normal conditions. Steve has been on a journey of leadership development and shares the benefits of finding times for intentional leadership with his people at the plant in this recent letter to Ann.

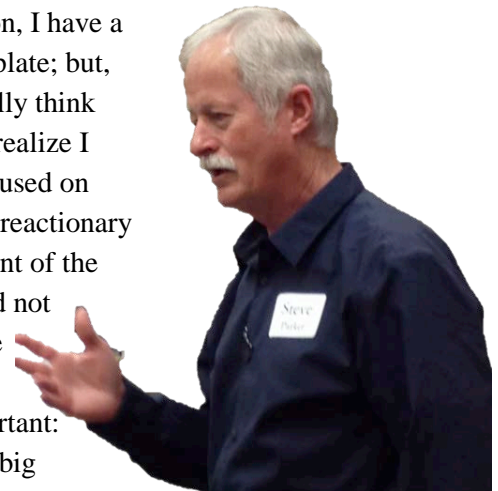
During a coaching session with Ann McGee-Cooper, I mentioned that I was pondering the question “**Am I too busy to lead?**” This question struck me as I realized the message I am unintentionally sending in my day-to-day rush to keep up with unit status, reading and responding to e-mails, preparing for meetings, and attending meetings. Many people must quietly think “Steve is too busy to hear or consider what I have to say.” What a loss of opportunity when words and thoughts are never shared.

No question, I have a lot on my plate; but, when I really think about it, I realize I am too focused on short term reactionary management of the facility and not taking care of what is most important: what pays big dividends for everyone “**being the servant-leader I want to be.**”

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I must do my day-to-day management job but most importantly I must focus the majority of my time on leading. *Leading* is a whole lot more enjoyable and rewarding than managing and I actually get more done through others when I choose to lead rather than do.



## Am I too Busy to Lead?

It is a fulfilling day when I take time to roam the halls, have lunch with employees, get to know individuals as people in a relaxed mode and get an opportunity to *understand their concerns*. I focus on thinking a week ahead, who I want to spend time with the following week, who I want to get to know and grow. I am doing a better job of controlling my calendar and allotting time to lead. I am trying to do a better job of spending time with my wife and taking better care of myself. I have found that leading brings me energy allowing me to be more effective and accomplish more.

I have an agreement with my team that they can call me out just as I call them out. It is working beautifully as we have trust and respect as our common bond. We care about each other first, we take care of each other and we know we can count on each other.

I offer the following to help explain the trials and rewards I see day-to-day as I focus on being a leader first, serving those around me by showing interest in them as human beings, getting to know them, and understanding their ideas and barriers. I have learned my bandwidth multiplies when I take the opportunity to truly listen, communicate, understand, and work with the team to build a common purpose.

I get more done through others by leading, engaging, coaching, and growing those around me. It feels good to see team success and see individuals swell with pride when they achieve success. I have to be mindful to ask questions and encourage dialog rather than direct how, when and where, my fall back when I am in a hurry. I find sharing stories about personal successes and failures help me to convey

potential land mines for those I am talking to. I am building trust and confidence every time I take the time to slow down enough to invest in people.

I am learning just how important it is to smile and take the time needed, in a relaxed frame of mind, to delegate, to clearly define the goal, define the ditches, the feedback I expect, and time frame for feedback. I have learned the hard way the importance of taking time for dialog to ensure effective communication.

When I am relaxed, my team is relaxed. Just as HPI tools slow us down to do the right things the right way, leading rather than managing allows us to get it right the first time and we then don't have to go back and clean up mistakes. The more time I spend conveying principles, goals, and what is important, the less I have to engage in the day-to-day issues allowing me more time to look forward.

I have always worked very hard to treat people as I would want to be treated, and I have always been active in listening to leadership books. What I haven't done is slow down enough to relax, take time to smile, and enjoy the people I work with. Servant Leadership is helping me to be a better leader and is very rewarding.

Thanks to Luminant for providing Servant Leadership Training.

Servant leadership is inspiring me to be the leader I have always wanted to be.

Thanks,  
Steve

Seminars and additional resources are available from Ann McGee-Cooper and Associates, Inc. 214 357-8550 or visit us at [AMCA.com](http://AMCA.com)