**The “Next Step Mindset”**

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*There are two common mistakes that we tend to make after* [*creating value*](https://maninthemirror.org/2019/05/06/overcoming-spiritual-inertia/) *with a man: We do* ***too little****, or we attempt to do* ***too much.***

First, we do too little. How many times have you seen a ministry expend all of their energy planning “the big event,” only to pack up and go home after the closing “amen”?

This is the classic **event-driven** men’s ministry. We hold a men’s retreat or seminar, the man has a “blip.” Next year we invite him…another “blip.” The year after?  “Blip” again. After a few years, we have a lot men leading “blippy” lives, but there’s no ongoing spiritual development.

**If we are not careful, men will think this is what it means to be a good Christian.** Or, they will lose interest because they don’t see any lasting impact in their own lives. [A roller coaster men’s ministry](https://maninthemirror.org/2019/07/01/are-you-on-the-mens-ministry-roller-coaster/) builds a resistance in men to getting involved. Because they know, deep in their hearts, its not really going to lead anywhere, your men (and your pastor) become inoculated against a viable discipleship process.

Second, attempting too much can be just as fruitless. For instance, you invite men to a big Super Bowl BBQ with lots of red meat and a giant screen TV. You encourage men to bring neighbors and friends, and several men who rarely darken the church’s doors come. Then at halftime you get up and offer them an opportunity to join a forty-week study of the book of Revelation in the original Greek. A little over the top, but you see the point.

So how do you walk the line between these two extremes?

**Give Men a *Right* Next Step**

When you plan an event or activity for men, make the follow-up opportunities part of your event planning. In other words, don’t create momentum without a plan for how you will capture it (ever!). We’ll cover each of the keys to successfully capturing momentum in detail, but for now, here’s the list:

* Make the follow-up fit the event.
* Rightsize the commitment you are asking for.
* Always have an ending point.
* Choose good “second gear” material.
* Let everyone play on a level field.
* Help men take the next step – on the spot.

**Make the Follow-up Fit the Event**

As you plan an event, determine the types of men you will be targeting.  You’ll need to consider this as you plan the follow up strategy too.  The type of event you have will help determine what type of capture step to take.  See the following table for some ideas.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Men** | **Type of Event** | **Follow-up Ideas** |
| Men who need Christ | Super Bowl Party | Softball Team Signup, Adventure Trip, new introductory small groups |
| Cultural Christians | Work Project | Information Meeting for Mission Trip, formation of servant ministry teams |
| Biblical Christians | Men’s Seminar or Retreat | Small Groups, Class, Service opportunity |
| Leaders | Lunch to discuss vision | Pray for men; Attend a leaders’ meeting as a guest |

**Rightsize the Commitment You Are Asking For**

Don’t ask men to overreach based on end-of-event enthusiasm.  A man may initially be excited about the intense 40-week Bible Study on Godly manhood. But on Monday his customers start complaining, on Tuesday he remembers he’s 15 days late with his mortgage payment, and by Wednesday his enthusiasm has waned considerably.

You’ve driven a car and accidentally shifted from first to fourth gear.  What happens?  It’s the same when we ask men to do too much too soon.  They bog down.  Most men on the fringe don’t want to do a lot of preparation.  Many men are not going to read a 200-page book.  So the event follow-up needs to scream to the man, “You can do this!!” It must be something he can actually visualize himself doing—with excitement. It has to be a “second gear” idea.

**Always Have an Ending Point**

We also can ask men to do too much by requiring open-ended commitments.  Consider a man who has an experience that inspires him to seek a closer walk with God.  He joins a weekly men’s Bible Study. Soon, either because his life circumstances change or perhaps because of over-commitment, his participation in the group starts to suffer.  He misses a week here and there, then two weeks in a row, then three weeks.  Finally, he just stops coming altogether.  He leaves the group quietly, almost slinking away, feeling guilty that he let the group down, because there was no graceful exit strategy.

Now imagine the same man making a six week commitment to meet with a group of men. If his circumstances change, he knows that he will only have to “tough it out” for a few more weeks to finish what he started. He leaves the group, not in failure, but with a sense of fulfillment and accomplishment.  Which man will be more likely to join a small group at the next opportunity?

To reinforce this concept, you can even celebrate at the end of each cycle. This could be your time to share stories about how God has worked in your lives over the past six weeks, as well as say a formal goodbye to a man whose other commitments will not allow him to continue. Your group might even “commission” him for his new undertaking, making him feel like he is being sent by the group to the next thing, instead of feeling like he has abandoned them.

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You can get everything else right, but if you consistently fail to capture momentum when you create it, you will not build a sustainable ministry.

In every interaction you have with a man, whether it is one-on-one over lunch, a small group kickoff, a men’s retreat or seminar, or any other activity, you should always be thinking, *What is a reasonable next step?* And then constantly communicate these steps to men. **Every leader in your ministry needs to have a capture momentum, “next step” mindset.** Getting men to take a first step and then not showing them what’s next is like leading a man to Christ and then abandoning him to live in the world with no discipleship. If you are not going to follow up, perhaps it would be better for Christ’s Kingdom to not raise men’s expectations in the first place.

Will capturing momentum eliminate peaks and valleys in your ministry to men? No. You will still have men come and go, and you’ll still have events or activities that draw lots of men who drop off. But over time your trend line will be sloping upward, indicating a sustainable ministry that continues to produce passionate disciples.

One of the primary missions of the space shuttle was to put satellites into space. The shuttle blasts into orbit, then an astronaut uses the robotic arm to pick up the satellite and place it in space, where it takes on the speed and trajectory of the shuttle itself. All according to plan.

Remember SkyLab? (All you under-forty-year-olds, check it out on [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skylab).) The SkyLab was a huge satellite work station – a precursor of the International Space Station. The United States put it into orbit in 1973, with plans of going up in the space shuttle in 1979 to boost it into a higher orbit. Unfortunately, the space shuttle wasn’t ready until 1981. SkyLab didn’t have enough momentum to hold its orbit that long, and it crashed to earth in late 1979. (Luckily, the only casualty was an Australian cow).

Be careful not to do this with men in your church.  If you use an event to blast a man into a spiritual experience that draws him closer to God, don’t just hope he can maintain his orbit. When a man crashes to the ground, there is always a lot more to worry about than an Australian cow.

**Big Idea:** Whenever you create momentum, always show men a right next step.

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