

“EMyth Principles Explained”

Following on from a previous article “The EMyth Perspective” inspired by Michael Gerber’s book “The EMyth Manager,” I thought it might be useful to give you the overall context to this perspective and explain all 5 of Gerber’s EMyth principles.

Gerber believes that every manager should treat the organisation (or their part in it) as a small business and think of themselves as small business owners; so these principles apply to leaders and managers in any size organisation, as well as to business owners.

The first core principle is concerned with **your life**. Gerber believes (as do I) that you need to think of your business as a way of getting more from your life. Obviously in order to do that you need to know the purpose of your life, or have a vision of ‘who’ you want to be and the kind of life you want to lead: Gerber describes this as your primary aim.

Once you’ve established this you can then ask yourself whether the organisation’s aim serves your aim, whether the work you’re currently doing allows you to fulfil your aim, whether your company is a place where you can grow and experience yourself becoming the person you want to be.

In other words, as a manager you must do the internal work first, the work on yourself that enables you to answer these questions, otherwise you might fall into the trap of accepting the organisation’s purpose as your own, committing yourself to it, fighting battles for it and progressing well. But you might wake up one day and ask yourself “Who am I?” “Where am I?” “What happened?” If so, you’ll realise you’ve passively relinquished responsibility for creating your own purpose, your own vision, your own life!

Your vision, or primary aim, once created will become your internal benchmark against which you make all decisions concerning life and work.

The second EMyth principle is **objectivisation** or objectivising the business; viewing it as *apart from* rather than *a part of* you. You must see the business as a way of *servicing* your primary aim as opposed to *being* your primary aim.

Obviously, this would be impossible if you’d not worked on the creation of your own vision for your life, which is why the principles are in this order. This principle involves deciding on the purpose of the business, or its strategic objectives.

This means viewing the business as if it was a product sitting on a shelf and competing for the customer’s attention against a whole shelf of competing products (or businesses.) Put another way, this has less to do with what’s done in the business and more to do with how it’s done. The commodity isn’t important – the way it’s delivered is! Your business *is* your product.

You develop your strategic objective by asking yourself the following questions:

- How will my organisation look?
- How will it feel?
- How will it work?
- How will it justify its existence financially?

Then you write your Company Story – the standards and character of your organisation.

Once you've done this the tactical objectives will start to reveal themselves, because once you determine *this* is the kind of organisation, then it'll follow that *that* is what we must do to manifest it. The strategic objectives therefore become the external benchmark by which you can evaluate your role as a leader or manager.

In my next article I'll examine the final three EMyth principles.

© Julie Johnson. Reprints welcome so long as by-line and article are published intact and all links made live.

About The Author:

Julie Johnson, formerly a manager and development specialist, created The Leadership Coaching Company to help managers solve one of their biggest business problems: how to get the most from themselves and their staff. She is now a leadership success specialist and has attracted a loyal following who praise her down to earth yet inspiring approach.

If you liked this article, then you'll LOVE her Leadership Success newsletter with regular intense doses of her personal leadership and success strategies. Visit www.theleadershipcoachingco.com to find out more.