

How is your Ferrari slowing you down?

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Robin Sharma wrote a best-selling book called *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari*. It famously suggested that whatever ceases to serve our interests or desired outcomes can be removed from our lives.

A portion of the book's readers became part of a movement that supported the ideology of Sharma, yet chose not to sell their own Ferrari, metaphorically speaking.

"Ferraris" come in different makes and colours – your Ferrari may be material possessions that are sapping your monthly salary dry, a boss who is misaligned with your beliefs or a job that simply gives a great title yet provides no opportunity to work with an inner drive, to name but a few.

So how can one leadership guru cause so much disruption and raw excitement with readers who then simply choose to maintain equilibrium in their corporate life, accepting the status quo? What would it take to achieve the corporate life we truly seek?

Feel the heat

Heat makes us react and move away from its source. So perhaps the reason those who did not create the change they so dearly wanted was that the heat was not turned up high enough.

Picture a high stage or platform that you are standing on, barefoot. An important decision awaits you. If you jump into the deep, dark ravine below the platform, who knows what your feet may be destined to land on?

"Don't do it," says the desire for equilibrium, the safety of the known. "It's safer up here, even though a little warm." You continue to persevere with no decision at all. Things get hotter and less comfortable until a decision is unavoidable.

Do I paint my parameters with my boss? Do I regain my time as my own? Do I choose to leave the job? The ravine is what might happen when I do draw the line or leave the job – it is an unknown opening to any possibility except one: staying in the same rut that has kept energy, focus and commitment low.

We will only jump once the pain of staying where we are is worse than the pain of making the move. How hot is too hot for you? Have you ever thought about turning up the heat yourself?

Decide what matters most

Compromise is a great word, allowing a trade-off for another gain that in the beholder's eye brings greater value.

A famous experiment spotlighted the idea of delayed gratification as a form of compromise, in which a child could eat one marshmallow immediately or wait just 15 minutes and then be given two. Imagine yourself in such an experiment. What matters most to you – right here and now? Are you living life for today or for tomorrow?

In corporate life, many leaders are in a state of constant trade-off. When values or priorities are compromised, the emotional bank account finds itself in the red. Even a trader on the stock exchange floor needs a rest from relentless trading, balancing risks against circumstances.

The trick is to identify what is non-negotiable and surround it with clear parameters. These may have built-in flexibility, but should an external force such as a job, a boss, a project or timelines break through the barriers, how clear are you on your response? What deserves flexibility and what does not?

Without clarity in your own template of what matters most, decisions will not be possible and the Ferrari will continue to have control over you.

Responsibility versus entitlement

The world around us has changed. One day not so long ago, we could put out our hand and expect to receive, yet now that trend has reversed. Promotions, recognition and accolades need to be earned by accepting responsibility. Entitlement has had its day.

If your preferred environment is not your current workplace, move away from the blame and shame and into accepting responsibility for finding a way out of it. If the boss is not recognising your efforts, find a way to ensure what he sees will catch his attention.

When life is not dishing out what you'd like at work, what could you be doing about that? Would selling the Ferrari help?

Ferraris do have a hold over us. We worry about the tiniest scratch, we seethe if they hit a speed hump or we concern ourselves with how to get more mileage out of the attraction the car brings. Each Ferrari has the ability to control our lives – what needs to be on your non-negotiable list to allow for balance and true satisfaction with your future corporate life?

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