

Turbo Leadership Systems™

The **TURBO** **Charger**

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To our clients and friends

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Put Your Heart Into It



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*Discretionary
effort ~ the
measure of
success*

Sunday night we watched the first in a 2-part series of “Birdsong” on OPB’s Masterpiece Classic. This is an adaptation of Sebastian Faulk’s best-selling novel about lovers torn apart by war, a tense drama set in the beginning of the twentieth century, the Industrial Revolution and First World War. The main character, Stephen Wraysford, is a British Army captain commanding his troops in the trenches of France’s No Man’s Land between the British and German lines. He has flashbacks, remembering his affair with the wife of the owner of a French manufacturing company in whose home he had been a guest.




As he walks through the trenches early one morning, he finds the private on guard duty asleep at his post. The captain admonishes the private, reminding him this is a court marshal offense. As he walks away he tells the private to pick up the letter he has dropped in the mud. In the next scene, the private is squaring away his cap and uniform before he reports to the captain’s quarters to hear his sentence and punishment. The captain asks him to tap on the top of a well worn deck of playing cards. The private responded, “I am not a gambling man.” The captain says, “Tap on the top card.” He does, the captain turns the card over, and it’s the ace of spades. The captain says, “This is your lucky day. The punishment for falling asleep could be standing before a firing squad.” The private relaxes and, “It’s funny how our heads are here,” (he’s a gold mine engineer and has been orchestrating the digging of tunnels across No Man’s Land and underneath the German lines on the other side of No Man’s

Land), “and our hearts are there.” He asks the captain if he has children, and tells the captain about the letter from his wife. She is worrying about their son who may be dying from tuberculosis.

This is an extreme case of heart and head displacement, and yet it’s the same challenge all managers face every day – team members who have stress in their personal lives which keeps them from putting their hearts (H3) into their jobs. This stress may keep them awake at night so that they can’t even put all of their their heads (H2) into their job. They may be able to carry out their basic tasks by rote with their hands (H1), but they certainly aren’t bringing a great deal of innovation, creativity or extra effort to those tasks. They bring no discretionary effort to the job. You could say they are asleep at their post.

This is the challenge of management, this is the challenge of empowering leadership – to help each team member bring discretionary effort to the job - more than their hands and heads; bring their hearts. This is how you create a competitive advantage; this is how you move beyond continuous improvement, how create order of magnitude breakthroughs. This is how you win in the 21st century.

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