**The Key to Sustaining Momentum In The Long Term**

[August 5, 2019](https://maninthemirror.org/2019/08/05/the-key-to-sustaining-momentum-in-the-long-term/) in [Equipping Men Blog](https://maninthemirror.org/category/equipping-men/)

From the big momentum building men’s event, to the next step, to…what, exactly? Once you get your men and your men’s ministry [off the roller coaster](https://maninthemirror.org/2019/07/01/are-you-on-the-mens-ministry-roller-coaster/), how do you sustain spiritual progress? If you don’t do anything, spiritual excitement will turn into little more than good intentions. One thing’s for sure: Men won’t make it on their own. But together, they can become authentic disciples who can change the world.

To sustain momentum with men, get them into **real relationships with other men who are seeking Christ**. You can’t sustain without small groups or one-on-one relationships. Why is this so important?

****

1. You want to help men ***maintain the spiritual progress*** they have made. This is particularly important for men early on the [‘Wide’ side of the continuum](https://maninthemirror.org/2019/04/01/is-the-reach-of-your-mens-ministry-wide-and-deep/) who are early in their spiritual journey—those who *need Christ* and *cultural Christians*.
2. You want to get men into ***regular prayer and the study of scripture***. This is a particular focus for men who are on the ‘Deep’ side of the continuum— *Biblical Christians* and *leaders*, or those who want to be.

Authentic relationships will help you meet both of these objectives.

**Keeping Captured Ground**

If you read military history, you will hear soldiers griping about giving up ground they shed their blood to gain. “Take that hill!” they are told. “It is an integral part of our strategy!” And they do it, fighting valiantly to defeat the enemy and capture the ground—only to abandon it when the strategic winds shift in the command center. Pretty soon, the soldier loses confidence that that there is any strategy at all. The cost is too high, the reward too fleeting.

Every effort you make that draws a man forward in his spiritual journey has a cost of its own: the time, energy and focus of the leaders that planned and participated; the opportunity cost of men choosing to participate in this activity instead of some other priority in their life. If you work so hard to gain ground in the battle for men’s time and attention, and then don’t find ways to sustain that effort, you’ll just find yourself starting over. And the men themselves will begin to lose heart, feeling that nothing ever changes. As leaders, we must apply consistent effort since progress in a man’s spiritual journey is usually measured in small steps over a long period of time.

**A Long-Term Perspective**

A ministry to men has to be more than just events; it must be about helping men to become mature in Christ.  It takes a long time to make a disciple. Almost always, discipleship takes place over a period of years in the context of significant relationships with other men.

We learned from our friend Chris White the importance of taking a “long term, low pressure” approach. There is no such thing as systematic, rapid spiritual growth. We must give men permission to stand around the rim of what we are doing and observe.  Give them permission to buy in at their own pace, and let them come on board at their own level of involvement.

If you want to help other men grow in Christ, you will often feel that you want men to be successful more than they want it themselves. It would be easy for us to become impatient with new men who are not as mature as we might wish. Don’t make men feel guilty because they are not becoming as spiritual as you want them to.

This is one of the biggest problems we see in men’s ministry leaders—they are frustrated, angry, and even bitter with their men because they are not as committed as the leader would like. We spoke at a retreat one time when the leader of the men’s missions trip stood up to make an announcement. “The mission trip is less than a month away and we only have four men signed up. I know in a church this large there are a lot of men who could go on this trip. Don’t you know how fortunate you are? The people we are going to serve don’t have anything. Frankly, I wonder whether some of you ought to seriously consider the level of your commitment to Christ.”

After a few more minutes of his harangue, we felt like standing up in the back and saying, “Look, I’ll go on the mission trip—as long as you stay home. As angry as you are I don’t want to go anywhere for a week with you.”

Men can sense your anger and frustration and they won’t want any part of it. Our job is not to produce results—it’s simply to be faithful.

**The Big Idea:** To sustain momentum over the long term you must get men into authentic relationships with other men and the regular study of God’s Word.

Copyright © 1986-2019 [Man in the Mirror](http://maninthemirror.org)