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Sandra Wiley • Jun. 15, 2012

In a recent exchange with a partner group, we were discussing how to hold ourselves accountable for goals that were being set by each individual – outside of their compensation model. The word that leapt into my mind was commitment. The word commit comes from the Latin word *committere*, which means to connect, entrust. As leaders in the firm, we make commitments every day to our clients, our partners and our staff.

It might be a good practice to think deeply about what those commitments are and ensure that you are not making them too lightly. Each commitment is important and defines what and who is important to you. The demonstration of commitments is a reflection of your character and ultimately says more about you in action than in the words themselves.

Consider the following concepts as you reflect on the commitments that you make in your life:

Commitment is connection: Consider the connection between the goals that you set during strategic planning and the accomplishment of those goals. The connection between the meeting date you established with your mentee and showing up on time and prepared to have a coaching conversation. The connection between the signing of the partnership agreement and your active participation in the monthly partnership meetings. Commitment is the connection between our values, intentions and our actions. The connections we make generate our commitments, just as our commitments generate more profound connections.

Passion: This is the foundation of commitment! Passion is what some call the burning desire within us – the fire that motivates us to set and make progress in our life goals. When passion is missing, our actions lack meaning and we don't get the results we want. Without passion, our actions are meaningless and flat.

Commitment is built from the passions in our lives. Think about your 2012 goals for

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industry have experienced this commitment in the past few years, and it has served them well.

Commitment is conscious! Commitments should not be made lightly. They require insight and self-awareness, meaning that you must know what your firm's values and ideals are in order to commit to them! Do you know someone in your firm who is a conscientious and productive worker but who's not happy? Such a person frequently lacks insight and self-awareness. Commitment is difficult for an individual or firm if there is no awareness of what is most important. Commitment requires an ability to observe, strategize and make conscious decisions.

Commitment is purposeful. Commitment involves choice – saying yes to our values and to our passions! Commitment is never haphazard or random. While we may lose our perspective from time to time, commitment always involves choice and intent. Commitment enables us to be purposeful. Great leaders in the firms we serve are purposeful in their pursuit of client service excellence, growth of their team's talent and increase in firm profits.

Commitment is self-expression. Self-expression is the culmination of who we are and how we're being. When there's perfect alignment and congruency between who we are and how we're being, we are authentic and fully self-expressed. This is wonderfully fulfilling! If commitment is the ultimate expression of our values and who we are, self-expression is a core ingredient of commitment. Have you heard others say they are just "in the zone" or "in their groove?" This usually is a sign of self-expression and awareness.

Vision brings forth our commitment. Does commitment generate the envisioning process, or does vision generate commitment? Either way, commitment and vision are inexplicably tied together. Expand your vision while you deepen your commitment in order to produce powerful results! I would challenge you to read

through your firm's vision and determine if it promotes vision within your team? If it

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Commitment lives in communication. Communication involves verbal and nonverbal interaction. While commitment lives in the declaration and words, evidence of commitment lives in the actions we take and don't take. Be attentive for evidence of commitment in communication. Our industry has a fairly bad reputation in the area of communication. If this is an area of your personal development that needs some attention, now is the time!

Commitment is surrender. Commitment is the giving of ourselves to what we most believe and want. It is the merging of our ideals and our being. We surrender to our ideals and with commitment, live them. We create what we want when we surrender to our commitment.

When we stand behind our words, we demonstrate commitment. Commitment exists when our actions meet the expectation of our words – when there's a congruency between intent, words and action.

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