

FOCUS ON THE MISSION

As an English major in college and with a love for great writing, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 – 1882) was among my favorite essayists and poets. He disseminated his thoughts through dozens of published essays and more than 1,500 public lectures across the United States.

His work greatly influenced the thinkers, writers and poets who followed him. “In all my lectures,” he wrote, “I have taught one doctrine, namely, the infinitude of the private man.” Emerson was also a mentor and friend of Henry David Thoreau, a fellow transcendentalist and best known for his book *Walden*, a reflection upon simple living in natural surroundings.

Emerson observed: “Concentration is the secret of strength in politics, in war, in trade, in short, in all management of human affairs.”

Where should you focus that concentration? On the mission, proclaims John C. Maxwell, author and expert on leadership development.

“And when you make a mistake, don’t chase after it,” he said. “Don’t try to defend it. Don’t throw good money after it. Just refocus your attention on the mission and then move on. You must always keep your eye on what it is you desire to do. I have yet to meet a person focused on yesterday who had a better tomorrow.”

John Foster Dulles, secretary of state in the Eisenhower administration, observed: “The measure of success is not whether you have a tough problem to deal with, but whether it is the same problem you had last year.”

A problem solved is a springboard to future success, to bigger and better things.

“The key is to focus on what you are learning, not on what you are losing,” Maxwell said. “If you do that, then you will open the door to future possibilities.”

A positive attitude can help you do that. It can help you learn from the present and look to the future. Norman Vincent Peale, author and pastor of Marble Collegiate Church in New York, said, “Positive thinking is how you *think* about a problem. Enthusiasm is how you *feel* about a problem. The two together determine what you do about a problem.”

And in Life Care and Century Park, we understand that’s what really matters in the end.

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter