



EXCERPT



Nailing It!

Why Successful Leadership Demands Suffering and Surrender

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In this transformative resource for leaders of all ages, Nicole Massie Martin leads us through seven areas of traditional leadership that need to be reframed: power, ego, speed, performance, perfection, loyalty, and scale.

Crucifying Speed

If we move fast enough and go hard enough, we just might reach the ridiculous goals we've set for ourselves. But just as New Coke didn't win by getting out there fast and Jesus didn't try to get there first, we won't win with speed or haste if we are not anchored in values that go beyond time. Crucifying speed allows us to relinquish our addiction to the fast-paced life in pursuit of a reset of time altogether. More than speed or slowness, God invites us to reframe the way we think about time; not ours but his, not according to the market but according to eternity, not keeping up with competition but staying in step with the Spirit. The story of Lazarus can become a divine incentive that reminds us to wait on God to get what we really want. Jesus gives us permission to trade in haste for attentiveness and speed for divine deliberation. This does not mean we won't go fast, but it does mean we will go at the pace of God's word and commit to move only when God speaks.

As audacious as this may sound, waiting on God's "go" gives us confidence to lead teams that need to swim against the competitive tides. Spending time with God to authentically hear from him gives us authority to point organizations in a direction that is littered with grace and cluttered with mercy. Like Harriett Tubman, who was known to stop those following her on the underground railroad to literally hear from God, Christian leaders can develop the disciplines to hear both the direction and the pace of God's promises that can lead to the fruit we desperately want to produce. It is true that there are plenty of leaders who believed they were actively listening for God and took a wrong turn. There are many more employees and staff members who have experienced leaders who called themselves listening and still went on warp speed, leaving their teams and followers to languish in the dust. But the purpose of crucifying speed is so that God's grace-filled timing may be resurrected. We cannot control every outcome, but we can purposefully set our intentions on God's timing and embrace the grace and mercy that comes in our human attempts to join his pace. As you reset your own sense of time, I invite you to consider these reflections with your team:

Make room for collective discernment—As a key element to minimize harm, making room for trusted individuals to discern the pace together can keep people from feeling left behind. Setting the pace together helps leaders to cultivate trust that will lead to speed at just the right time.

Seek impact over impulse—Beyond the appeal of impact can be a thirst for lasting effect that can overcome the impulses of the day. While acting on an urge can get you there fast, acting with a view toward longer-term impact will help you stay. Impulses tend to fade while impact tends to last.

Put the right drivers in the seat—What people, problems, or pressures are driving the need for speed? We often don't realize that we are being driven by false realities until it's too late. Take the time to assess who or what is driving your pace and make sure that the driver can be trusted to take you in the direction of God's calling.



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Nicole Massie Martin (DMin, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary) is the chief impact officer at Christianity Today and the founder of Soulfire International Ministries. She is the author of *Made to Lead* and *Leaning In, Letting Go*. She serves on the executive council of the National Association of Evangelicals, the board of trustees for Fuller Theological Seminary, and the national advisory board for the Salvation Army.

Reclaim the sacramental slow—With ever-increasing pressures to be fast, leaders will have to be intentional about instituting slower rhythms. This can be as simple as blocking “think days” on the calendar to step off the moving treadmill, building checks and balances into decision making that take time to ensure that every decision isn’t rushed, or even pausing after each meeting or gathering to return space to God and reflect on what is next. Slow can be exercised like a sacrament when it is intentionally engaged in partnership with God.

Embrace loss—Following God’s pace might lead to a few missed opportunities, deadlines, or rewards. But God never promised that we would not experience loss, only that our losses would be minimized in light of what we gain with him. We may lose elements in the world, but when we follow his timing, we will gain the eternal value of our souls (Matthew 16:26).

Life is fast and getting faster. Leadership is filled with pressure to speed to the finish and to be the first in the field. But the invitation to forsake the pace of the world in exchange for the pace of God’s timing will give us more peace than we could ever imagine in this world. With this non-anxious pace of leadership, God can bring the kind of healing through us that our teams and employees so desperately need.

—Adapted from chapter five, “Crucifying Speed: From Deliberately Fast to Delightfully Slow”



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BIO



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Reverend Doctor Nicole Massie Martin

Reverend Doctor Nicole Massie Martin was born and educated in Baltimore, Maryland. She graduated magna cum laude from Vanderbilt University with a triple major in human and organizational development, educational studies, and French.

Martin received her Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary where she was the recipient of the Jones Prize in Music and the Swink Prize in Preaching. She earned a Doctor of Ministry at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary with an emphasis on African American redemptive leadership.

Martin is the adjunct professor of ministry and leadership development at Gordon-Conwell in Charlotte. She also serves as the executive director of trauma healing at American Bible Society where she oversees the ministry of Bible-based healing groups domestically and abroad. She is active in ministry as the Discipleship Lead at Kingdom Fellowship AME Church in Maryland and formerly served as the executive minister at The Park Church in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Martin is the author of *Made to Lead: Empowering Women for Ministry* and *Leaning In, Letting Go*, a best-selling Lenten devotional with Chalice Press. Her articles have been featured in *USA Today*, *Christianity Today*, *The Christian Post*, and *The Charlotte Observer*. She was named one of the "Top 40 Under 40 for 2017" by the *Charlotte Business Journal* and has been inducted into the prestigious Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Board of Preachers at Morehouse College.

Martin serves as chief impact officer for Christianity Today. She is the founder of Soulfire International Ministries, which focuses on empowering others to reach their fullest potential in Christ.

Martin is married to her best friend, Dr. Mark Martin, and they have two beautiful daughters, Addison and Josephine. Above all, she has a passion for God, a contagious excitement for the Gospel, and an insatiable desire that God be glorified in her life and in the world.



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