

## **Why You're Leading But Nobody is Following** by Donald Miller

A few years ago, I attended a poetry reading from America's former poet laureate, Billy Collins. Billy teaches poetry at Lehman College at City University of New York, and during the interview portion of the program, he was asked what one thing he emphasized to his students the most. Collins answered confidently: clarity.

He said many of his students naively felt it was beneath them to be clear, as though their poem would be perceived as more sophisticated if its meaning was elusive.

He jokingly asked his interviewer what he thought his poem *Fishing on The Susquehanna* in July was about, and the interviewer shrugged his shoulders as though he didn't know. It's about fishing on the Susquehanna in July, Collins laughed.

Collins challenged the audience to dare to be clear.

I'll never forget it. He wasn't just giving advice about writing poetry, he was giving advice about life.

Dare to be clear.

How can any of us get what we want in life if we don't communicate what we want clearly? Billy Collins might as well have been echoing the words of Jesus:

"Ask and it will be given to you."

Amateurs are vague but professionals communicate clearly.

Everybody kind of knows what they want, but few people have taken the time to reflect so they can communicate in such a way people understand. Most leaders kind of know where they want to take people but revolutionary leaders say it clearly.

This is especially important for leaders.

The reality of leadership is this: The world is standing before you, curious, asking where you'd like to take them.

If you kind of have an answer, they'll follow somebody else.

If you want to be a leader, communicate clearly because that's the only way anybody can know whether or not they want to join you.

In my own life, when I've not communicated clearly where I've wanted to take people, it's because of one of two reasons — either I didn't know myself, or I was too afraid to risk rejection.

Either reason disqualifies me from leadership.

Know where you want to take people and ask them to come with you. Then, confidently take them there.