



## **You got an itch?**

By Steven L. Anderson, Ph.D., MBA

Ever wonder why your skin sometimes itches for no apparent reason? If you stop and sit still for a while you will see that it does not take very long before some part of your body starts itching and you have to scratch it. Did you ever wonder why that is? What useful purpose might it serve that suddenly a part of your body needs to be scratched?

In case you are interested the reason a part of your body starts to itch is because that patch of skin is not getting enough circulation. There are pressure receptors in your blood vessels located all over your body. If these receptors start to sense that an area is not getting enough circulation these receptors send signals to your brain to urge you to get circulation to that area. By scratching or massaging the surface of your skin you stimulate blood flow to that area so that those cells get the required food, oxygen and waste removal they need to survive. Another way to think of it is that if you don't scratch that itch a part of you starts to die.

I think that itch is a pretty good metaphor for what it takes to be a leader. But in this case, it's our gut that's giving us the itch. The itch might be to speak up in a meeting, tell someone we love them, pay someone a compliment, go for a promotion, or even start a new company. I am suggesting to you that if your instinct is giving you an itch to take a risk, you owe it to yourself to scratch it. Because just like our skin, every time we ignore our inner desires to actualize our potential a little part of us dies. Conversely, when we heed that inner call of the itch to be our deepest selves and make a contribution everyday life becomes an incredibly exciting adventure where we positively influence and inspire those around us.

So, I want to conclude this short article by issuing you a challenge. Is there an inner itch you need to scratch? Is there a part of yourself you need to push to be great today? I challenge you not to ignore that itch. Don't let that part of you die. Scratch that itch! You and everyone around you will benefit from your courage and leadership.