

THE INSURANCE COACH

Part 3 of 5: Personal Responsibility

Use Dynamic Leadership Principles Drive Business Forward!

“Success is not something you pursue. Success is something you attract.” (Jim Rohn)

Part 3 of the five principles of Dynamic Leadership acknowledges that as leaders, we lead by example - whether we want to or not! It also highlights the importance of having high Personal Integrity. Let's spend some time discussing each of these issues and their implications.

LEADERSHIP BY EXAMPLE

All leadership is leadership by example. Both prospects and policyholders will make note of how you act. To be dynamic, a leader must practice self-discipline, be a perpetual student, become efficient, prioritize tasks well, determine materiality, and practice delayed gratification.

Self-Discipline: It's rare that a person's responsibilities consist only of tasks that are enjoyable. Inevitably, we must do what's necessary in order to accomplish our goals - whether fun or not. Being in alignment with one's values and purpose makes it much easier to overcome procrastination and focus on the matters at hand that will best propel you towards the achievement of your goals. Ask yourself, *"Which pain is greater? The pain of working on the uninteresting, the repetitive, the uncomfortable? or The pain of not achieving your goals and dreams?"*

Perpetual Learning: We live in the information age. Developments seem to occur at an ever-increasing pace. The leaders that embrace knowledge win. Period. Work on your personal development. Read every day. It's often been said that leaders are readers. Learn new success principles, develop new perspectives, and gain new insights into yourself. Read. Listen to tapes. Lead the pack.

Efficiency: Working hard is sometimes called for. Working smart is always called for. Working smart is a key to finding a balance between work and life. When the mind has an opportunity to rest, it regains its creativity. That's why vacations were introduced. Haven't you ever struggled with the solution to a problem, only to give up, go to bed, and have the answer come to you just as you're dozing off? Frequently, working harder is not the best way to make progress. In fact, we sometimes find that we're pushing ahead in the wrong direction. People look to you for insight, vision, and energy. When you're efficient with the tasks at hand, you create opportunities to become innovative, creative, gain insight, clarify your vision, and recharge.

Prioritization: I often find that using lists is a great way to stay on track and get things accomplished. A problem can arise because often an easily completed task is relatively unimportant. If we don't have a clear picture of what's important, we can spend the good part of our day "crossing off", and find ourselves at the end of the day with a short list consisting of the most important items. Of course by that time, we're a little too tired to give those tasks the attention they deserve. So... we postpone them until the next day. Work on the things that matter most when you're sharpest. Get the meaningful things out of the way first.

Materiality: The concept of materiality is related to prioritizing, but has other implications as well. Ever find yourself focusing on things that don't really make a difference, maybe because you just find them easier to do? Dynamic leaders work on the things that matter most. Learn to discern what's important/urgent and what a task that can be delegated is. Becoming clear on what matters most allows you to delegate effectively - assigning tasks to the resources that can best get the job done. Even if *you* can do it better, *does it matter?*

Delayed Gratification: Goal-setting is a powerful mechanism for achieving meaningful success. A properly stated goal is stated in positive terms, in the present tense, is measurable (you can tell when you've achieved it), and has a deadline. Rewarding yourself for a job well-done is important, but don't reward yourself until you've either reached your goal or reached a milestone on your way there. Don't get distracted by rewarding yourself prematurely. A well-earned reward is much sweeter than one that's ill-gotten. Set the example. Accomplish what you set out to do. Then reward yourself for a job well-done. People admire those who show self-discipline.

HIGH PERSONAL INTEGRITY

Personal Integrity goes beyond being honest. That's a given...

In many ways, practicing personal integrity ties together many of the keys we've already discussed. It reflects an understanding of leadership by example and demonstrates our appreciation of the eight universal wants/needs of others (Sense of Accomplishment, Sense of Belonging, Sense of Empowerment, Respect, Recognition, Direction, Sense of Significance, and Sense of Purpose).

Personal integrity can be summed up as "***Do What You Say You're Going To Do.***"

Be a person that others can depend on. Create a sense of trust. Set the example as a leader.

- When you tell someone you'll take care of something (a task, project, issue, thing), you do - every time, at work or at home
- When you say you'll be somewhere, you are. And you're on time, regardless of whether the other people are or not
- When someone leaves you a voice- or e-mail message, you return it - every time, every person (my only exception is a solicitor who doesn't ask for a call back)
- When someone helps you solve a problem or develops a new, better method, you give *them* the credit - every time
- When you've caused a problem, or allowed a problem to arise, you take responsibility for it - every time, at work or at home

In my experience, the leaders I've worked with who are strong and looked up to, always seem to act this way. Neither their position nor busy schedule will keep them from living in integrity. I've had phone calls returned from the busiest, most well-known business leaders in the state (Colorado).

As you go through the upcoming weeks, be mindful of old habits that don't reflect the person you want to be or want to be known as. Work to change the habits that don't support the direction you want to move in. Understand that every time we interact with others, we send a message - good or bad. Strive to send the right message. Avoid a message sent by default - that is, one without intent. This coming week, make an effort to return all phone calls and e-mails, and notice the impact it makes on others. Use your own experience as your best example. Aren't you a bit surprised (and pleased) when someone actually returns your voicemail message? Be that kind of person. Make a positive impact on those around you.

By taking Personal Responsibility for your actions, you increase your "attractiveness" and cause the people around you to think of you more often.

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