

Leadership in Volunteer Organizations

by

Edward S. “Tex” Collins

Copyright 2015

All Rights Reserved

Preface

There are many documents that are talked about, discussed, and critiqued, but they are never read. The Bible is a good example. People will read a tome about what that document says, but they will not read the actual document. It is my hope that this book will not be that type of a book.

This book is intended to guide the person who is, or wants to be, a leader in a volunteer organization. This is not an expose'. Rather, the intention is to keep the leader "on the fairways" and out of the "sand traps." It will tell you things to do, and things not to do.

This book was generated from my personal observations and experiences. If it is successful, it will diminish the number of bad commanders and increase the number of good ones.

The quality of this book is a direct result of my many friends who took their time to edit it. Thank you for your

Preface

help and your editing. This book is intended to help anyone, man or woman, who wishes to be a good leader. My sincere hope is that this book will help you achieve that goal, and you will appreciate what is written.

Edward S. “Tex” Collins

9 November 2015

Copyright 2015 by Edward S. Collins, Jr.

ISBN-13:

ISBN-10:

Title ID:

Table of Contents

Preface	i
Table of Contents	iii
Chapter 1: What Is Expected of a Leader	1
Chapter 2: Types of Volunteers	5
Chapter 3: Volunteer Expectations	9
Chapter 4: The Volunteer's Relationship to the Organization	13
Chapter 5: Types of Organizations	17
Chapter 6: Chaplains	19
Chapter 7: Fraud, Waste, and Abuse	23
Chapter 8: Infallibility	29
Chapter 9: Politicians	35
Chapter 10: People on a Power Trip	41
Chapter 11: Perverse Pleasures	45
Chapter 12: Ready, Shoot, Aim	49
Chapter 13: The Check Box Mentality	55
Chapter 14: Encouragement	59

Table of Contents

Chapter 15, Personnel Selection	65
Chapter 16: What To Do With a Problem Individual	69
Chapter 17: Go Back and Start Over	75
Chapter 18: Manners	81
Postscript	87
References	89

What Is Expected of a Leader

In all organizations, whether the organization is a formal one or an informal one, there is some sort of structure. There is a “pecking order.” There is a leadership “chain of command.” Of necessity, there will always be some who are leaders and others who are followers.

In a small group, there will usually be one or two leaders. If there is more than one leader, one is usually the more prominent. In a larger group, there will be several leaders. There will usually be one leader who is most prominent. The other leaders will be under the most prominent leader. There is the leader who is officially appointed. And, there are the “de facto” leaders who are the ones that the others really look to for leadership and guidance.

In principle, the leader has a simple job. The leader must accomplish the mission. He must do that using the people and things (assets) at his command.

The mission is usually a step on the way to accomplishing the goal of the organization. Therefore, it is critical that the leader completely understand the goal and the mission. The mission statement is what is used to “rally the troops.” It is the leader that must explain, in a clear,

Chapter 1 – What is Expected of a Leader

concise, and succinct way, exactly what the mission is, and why it is important.

The really good leader is expected to be able to explain the mission and the goal at any time. Being challenged to explain the goal or the mission is a magnificent opportunity. Not being prepared to do so is a missed opportunity.

One of the really great missed opportunities occurred during the Presidency of Richard Nixon. At a White House concert, one of the singers in the group asked the President when he was going to bring the troops home from Viet Nam. President Nixon stuttered, spluttered, and glared at the young woman. His face had a “how dare you ask me that” look.

What he should have done was to break out into a grin, look the woman in the eye, thank her for asking the question, and then carefully explain what was being done, how it was being done, and why it was being done. Had he done so, it could have been a defining moment in his Presidency. He might have achieved acclaim as a great leader.

The mission is made up of a number of tasks. Some tasks are large, and some are not. Some tasks require lots of assets: people, money,

and time. Some tasks require fewer assets. Not all of the tasks are equally important, but the assets are.

Almost every leadership, management, and business administration teaching says that people are the most important asset. The efforts and influence of the people in the organization extend far past what would normally be anticipated or expected. The volunteers are unbelievably important!

A good leader in any organization (military, business, or volunteer) will be judged by how well he or she accomplished the mission with the people that he or she had working with him or her. To get the mission done, the leader needs to be trusted and respected. The leader should be reliable and consistent. But, it is most important to understand that people will not respect, nor will they follow, a leader who has little or no integrity.

Integrity, honor, and honesty are more important than reliability and consistency. People will gladly and enthusiastically follow a leader who is known to be one who does the right thing. They rarely expend much effort for a leader who is not trusted. The worst epithet for a leader is to be described as “being trusted to do the wrong thing.”

Chapter 1 – What is Expected of a Leader

A leader who has the reputation of doing the wrong thing will be the object of laughter. No one will want to serve under his or her command. He or she will be known for “snatching defeat from the jaws of victory.”

Types of Volunteers

There are many types of people who volunteer. And, there are many different reasons that people choose to volunteer. Some of the reasons are quite laudable and some are not.

Some people join to be a part of a group of people with whom they want to be associated. Some join to be a part of a group to acquire standing in the social arena. They joined because of the others who are volunteers. In some cases, people volunteer because it is a family expectation.

Sometimes there is a social pressure to join. Membership in the social clique requires being a member of the socially acceptable organization. Not joining causes the risk of being excluded.

Business contacts can be a strong incentive to some for joining. There are many business-oriented groups that have volunteers on the staff. One can learn much and make powerful friendships as a volunteer.

Then, there are those who join to make friends who have the potential of becoming romantic interests. What better way to meet socially eligible contacts than at a socially acceptable event. The expense

of the event is a charitable deduction. And, the attendees are the “upper crust.”

Then, there are those organizations that one must join to keep from looking bad to others. There may even be some “pressure” to join, for the sake of appearances. One has to be a member to maintain his or her proper standing.

There are those organizations that one joins because the other members all have the same opinions. They are “like minded folks” who congregate as a group. The group may only agree on one issue, but there is agreement on that issue.

There are those who join because they have extraordinarily strong feelings about something. They translate their passion into membership and into action. These people can be either strongly quiet or openly vocal, but, their depth of passion is undeniable.

These joiners are there for the membership because of a desire to contribute. Some have only their time, and some have specialized skills and talents. These volunteers really want to help. There is an emotional drive that spurs the giving of their talents, skills, time, and money. They see a need that really “ought to be filled,” and they pitch right in.

There are those who join because it is an opportunity to work with young people. They want to help the youths. They are “paying it forward.” They are “good hearted.”

Some are the parents of the youths. They are there to support their children and to protect them. A leader should always welcome them. Their help is invaluable.

Unfortunately, there are those who use their volunteerism to create or inflate their self importance. There are the volunteers in a para-military organization who are labeled “wannabees.” They were not in the military, but now wish they had been. They want to be impressive. They want the boost for their ego. They want to be important.

Even more unfortunate for the organization are those who would be predators upon the other members. These are individuals who can damage the organization beyond repair.

Some volunteers join to do good things to make up for not doing good things when they were younger. The ones who join on their own accord often turn out to be excellent volunteers. Then ones who join because of a judicially ordered “community service” requirement, may

Chapter 2 – Types of Volunteers

sometimes actually be good members. But, that is the exception rather than the rule.

Some of the volunteers join to share their knowledge in their jobs or their past service. Current and past policemen, firemen, and military all have special skills to impart. They help prepare the youth for the future.

Some people volunteer to improve themselves. They want to avail themselves of the opportunities in education, experiences, and training that can often not be acquired anywhere else. They have a strong desire to make themselves better.

A good leader is, by definition, a good teacher! It is up to the leader to help each volunteer achieve his goals, as long as those goals do not conflict or negatively impact the organization. The leader must exhibit caring for the volunteers with whom he works. These are not “underlings” but rather they are people to encourage and assist.

The volunteers that are in the organization can contribute their time, talents, and treasure wherever they choose. A good leader makes the experience of the volunteer fun. The good leader helps the volunteer up the ladder, and prevents the volunteer from being hurt.

Volunteer Expectations

When an individual joins an organization, there is the expectation that he or she will be welcomed and wanted as a member. There is the expectation that he or she will be able to contribute their time and their talents. There is the expectation that to join will take a contribution of actual cash or expenses.

There is the expectation that he or she will be allowed to take part. There is a natural expectation that if special training is required, then there will be a way to get that training. There is an expectation that there will be opportunities to learn.

There is an expectation that his or her treatment will be fair. There is an expectation that there will not be unjust requirements or restrictions. There is an expectation of honesty and integrity from the organization. There is also the expectation that there will be opportunities to advance in the organization.

These are reasonable and normal expectations held by anyone who volunteers and joins an organization. These are the things that most organizations claim to provide. And, for the most part, these are the things that most volunteers receive.

When a volunteer is not treated fairly, or justly, or honorably, then the expectation for those things is not met. A very wise friend, Dr. Dietrich P. Whisennand ¹, said that, “Anger is the result of unmet expectations.” Any normal member will experience anger if treated improperly.

The anger will be experienced in stages. First, there will be hurt at the injustice and unfairness that was received. If the problem is not rectified immediately, then the hurt will progress to a sullen attitude and demeanor. If the problem is still not handled, then there will be a determined attitude of “I’ll show you. I’ll succeed in spite of you.” By this point, the problem has begun to fester. If steps are not taken to remedy the situation, then there will be a withdrawal. There will be a disdainful attitude of “I’ve got better things to do.” At this point, if there is not intervention and correction, then there is every potential for revenge.

The leader, who does not fix the problem, may be lulled into thinking that the problem has gone away. The problem did not disappear, it went underground. Other observers will see that the problem continues.

The continued existence of the problem will color everyone's view of the leader and the organization.

Over time, the poison from the problem slowly corrodes and destroys the organization. What once was a valuable individual is lost. The affection that the individual had for the organization will be lost. Then, the individual will cease to aid in recruiting and retaining members. The individual will cease his or her support financially for the organization, and, the individual will cease to provide his or her services.

Worse, the individual will transfer his or her allegiance to a competing organization. The individual will become an example to be used by the competing organization. The individual may even proselytize for the competing organization. The individual may eventually remove his or her membership from under the commander, and possibly from the organization.

This will have many detrimental effects. Some of the effects will not be immediately obvious. Other effects will be readily apparent.

After World War I, the U. S. Army sought to muzzle the young aviation visionary, Gen. Billy Mitchell. When he would not be silenced, they U. S. Army brought him up on charges and convicted him in a court

martial. Unfortunately for the U. S. Army, time and circumstances proved Gen. Mitchell was right.²

Just as the U. S. Army never fully recovered from the disastrous court martial of Billy Mitchell, the organization will never fully recover from this problem. Had the U. S. Army returned Billy Mitchell to service and admitted its error, there might have been a full recovery.³ If the organization publicly admits its error and restores the volunteer to membership, it may recover. If it doesn't, it won't.

What will happen will be a steady hemorrhage of the members from the organization. There will be a loss of skills, knowledge, and organizational capability. The organization will experience a slow “death by a thousand cuts.”

There will also be a loss of public respect and trust. Eventually, this will lead to a diminishment of the status of the organization. With the reduction in the status of the organization, there will be a curtailment or loss of support by legal and governmental institutions. The organization will become a shell of its former self. Eventually, it will usually be disbanded or merged into another organization.

The Volunteer's Relationship to the Organization

The relationship of a volunteer to an organization is similar to the relationship of a person to someone that he or she cares for a lot. There are distinct stages in the relationship. The relationship can also be thought of like a road. It has forks. It has diversions. It has exits.⁴

The first stage in the relationship has the organization in the position as a mentor or guru to the volunteer. There is so much to learn. There are wondrous avenues to explore. It is a time of learning and growing.

The next stage in the relationship is infatuation. The organization is wonderful. It can do no wrong. The leaders are all wise and all knowing. Where has this organization been before the volunteer discovered it? This organization is the answer to what the volunteer needs!

The next stage in the relationship is love. The volunteer loves what the organization does and what the volunteer is doing in the organization. To be sure, there are minor faults, but overall this organization is the best at meeting the needs that the volunteer has.

The next stage is disillusionment. Something has happened. The volunteer can't believe that the organization did what it did! The volunteer is heart broken. The organization is not the great thing that the volunteer thought it to be.

The next stage depends upon what happens in the organization. Either the event or action has been dealt with so that the volunteer is getting over the angst of what happened, or the volunteer is deeply disappointed with the organization. Either the volunteer will strengthen his or her commitment, or the volunteer will be profoundly disappointed.

If the volunteer is re-building his or her love for the organization, then there is a renewed devotion and affection for the organization and its members. Otherwise, there is a growing disaffection and alienation. This organization is not the panacea that the volunteer thought that it was.

Word of mouth is the greatest form of advertising. The members are the greatest form of advertising for an organization. The volunteer who has been wronged is also advertising. One disaffected volunteer is like one unhappy customer. Stanley Marcus (the son of the founder and later CEO of the Neiman Marcus store) ⁵ said that one unhappy customer

will undo all of the good comments of ten happy customers. The same is true for volunteers to an organization.

If the event was triggered by an action or response to an external situation, it is reasonable for the volunteer to resolve his or her feelings and the warm relationship with the organization will be restored. On the other hand, if the event was engineered by animosity from other members towards the volunteer, the problem must be solved. If the problem is not resolved and the animosities handled, then things usually will go downhill.

The loss of a volunteer to an organization is often similar to a divorce in a marriage. The volunteer will always have that residual hurt at what was done and at what was lost. Sometimes the volunteer is able to move past the separation and shed the anger and the hurt, but, usually that is not the case. Usually, there will always remain a small portion of bitterness.

Leader

Asst. Leaders

Subordinates and Workers

The Pyramidal Structure

How Organizations Are Structured

In a civilian organization the leader might be called the president. Some sororities call their leader the matron. Some fraternities may call the leader the master. The leader may have one or more vice presidents and committee chairpersons.

The Federal Government has a standard organizational system for dealing with emergencies and other incidents. It is called the Incident Command System (ICS). The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which is part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), has courses on ICS.⁶ Most of them are available on-line. The Federal Government has mandated that all agencies, Federal and otherwise, will use the ICS structure for all emergencies and incidents.

The ICS structure was developed to handle the necessity of having an organizational structure to use for emergencies and incidents. The ICS structure was developed from the experience gained in handling forest fires and other cross-agency emergencies. The ICS structure refers to the number of subordinates directly under a leader or supervisor as the Span of Control. It was found that a commander or supervisor should not be directly over more than seven (7) subordinates. More than seven

subordinates and command becomes unwieldy. This applies in other organizations as well.

A para-military organization is a civilian organization that is modeled on the military structure. The Air Force and the Coast Guard have civilian volunteer para-military organizations which are called auxiliaries. The auxiliary for the U. S. Air Force is called the Civil Air Patrol.⁷ The U. S. Coast Guard has the U. S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.⁸

There are other volunteer para-military organizations. There are the Young Marines, the Boy Scouts, the Sea Scouts, etc. Some of these organizations have a loose affiliation with a branch of the military service. Nearly all organizations have structures that trace their design back to a military style of organization.

When the organizational structure for most organizations is drawn as a diagram, the shape of the diagram resembles a pyramid. The point is at the top, and that is the place designated for the boss or leader. The base is at the bottom. That is where the lowest level of workers or volunteers are shown on the diagram. Because of the shape of the diagram, the organizational structure is called pyramidal.

Chaplains

In most military and paramilitary organizations, the chaplain of the unit answers directly to the commander or leader of the unit. The theory is that the chaplain is the spiritual and ethical advisor to the leader. Also, the chaplain is supposed to inspire the members of the unit and monitor the spiritual and moral health of the unit.

In actual practice, the chaplain is “window dressing.” If the leader is a good, moral individual, then the chaplain supplies confirmation of the leader’s actions. And, the chaplain can be a valued advisor.

If the leader is not moral or ethical, then all the chaplain can do is console the people who are hurt by the leader. An unethical or immoral leader usually will pay lip service to the chaplain while otherwise ignoring the chaplain completely. In that case, the chaplain is merely a slot that has been filled.

The chaplain is left with essentially two choices. The chaplain can do whatever he can to console and comfort the members of the unit, or the chaplain can retreat into his own shell. The chaplain can also devoutly pray for a replacement of the current leader.

Some unscrupulous chaplains try to curry favor with the leader by sharing things about individual members that should be held in confidence. The unscrupulous leader will encourage such actions. Of course, such a leader would NEVER trust a chaplain who would violate a confidence. Such a chaplain is only to be used and then discarded.

Other chaplains will do everything that they can not to “make waves.” They never speak out against wrongs or injustices. They work at going along with whatever leaders are in power in order to get along with those powers. For them the most important issue is to not be controversial. They are neither hot nor cold; they are tepid.

When it comes to chaplains, as in the religious world, there are two types of people. There are those for whom religion is a business. Often, these individuals will find ingenious ways to make the business profitable. This author refers to these people as clerics.

Clerics are sometimes narcissistic. The author once had the experience of being in close proximity to a televangelist. The televangelist had been to a hair stylist to have his hair styled using a permanent curling process. Both the televangelist and his wife were too

self absorbed to notice anyone else in the room, except for their “executive assistants” to whom they were issuing orders.

Then, there are those who feel that their God has called them to be His representative. Often, they did not want to be ministers, preachers, etc. However, they were “called into God’s service.” For these people, religion is not a business, but a way of life.

An honorable and smart leader will always seek out a chaplain who is “called” to the ministry. From that type of chaplain, the leader can expect honesty, integrity, and one who will speak truth to power. Machiavelli⁹ said that you judge a [leader] by the brains around him.

The Eleventh Commandment

Thou shalt do nothing dumb!

**The Alternate Eleventh
Commandment**

Thou shalt not get caught!

Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

Nearly all organizations have rules and regulations against fraud, waste, and abuse. And, nearly all organizations apply the rules and regulations to material assets. But, do the regulations apply to people as well?

Is it wrong to waste things, but alright to waste the talents, the time, and the abilities of people? Is it alright to squander the time and abilities of an employee (or a volunteer) by having that individual do a task that is not needed, or a task that can be done a better way than that ordered? Is it alright not to use the skills of an employee (or volunteer) because of a desire to punish that individual, or a dislike for that individual? Is there a responsibility to the organization to get the best use of each of the subordinates, employees or volunteers?

A volunteer or an employee wants to feel his or her time is being put to good use. Being assigned to do busywork just so the leader can say all of my people are busy is not just irritating to the subordinate, it is wrong. It is wasting or squandering the time of that person. It rarely serves any useful purpose. The time that the volunteer donates to the

organization must be used wisely, or the leader is wasting the volunteer's time and his own.

If the volunteer had been assigned to do something useful, it might have freed the leader to do something really important. It might have made the organization, and the leader, look really good. It might have improved the organization.

What happens when a manager or leader squanders or wastes the abilities of a subordinate, employee or volunteer? If the subordinate is an employee, then the manager or leader is wasting the organization's money by not getting good value for the money being expended. If the subordinate is a volunteer, then the manager or leader is not only wasting the abilities of the volunteer, but the manager or leader is sowing the seeds of dissatisfaction, resentment, and anger. Eventually, if this continues, the volunteer will feel misused and ill treated. The volunteer will quit being available to the organization. And, the volunteer will tell others of his ill treatment and how he was misused.

A decision was made by a state leader of the auxiliary of one of the military services to force a long time member and committee chairman out of his position. The member's wife dropped her membership

permanently, and the member curtailed his work for the organization. The organization lost the services of two brilliant, talented, and knowledgeable leaders. And, the organization lost the firsthand historical knowledge that the couple had accrued.¹⁰ In some cases, that husband and wife were the very ones who had made the history.

In one Masonic Lodge, an older, long-time, secretary was unceremoniously pushed aside by the incoming officers who wanted to do things their way (even though it was contrary to the rules and regulations). That ex-secretary and his wife had never been blessed with children. They had accumulated a rather large nest egg for retirement. When the wife of the ex-secretary died, none of the officers of the Lodge telephoned or even sent a sympathy card. The ex-secretary called an attorney and revised his will. After the man died, an attorney told me that the estate had been divided between the Shrine Burn Center in Galveston, and the Scottish Rite Hospital for Crippled Children in Dallas. The Lodge did not get anything.¹¹

What happens when a manager, or leader, lets their personal feelings influence the treatment of a subordinate, employee or volunteer?

Will the resulting action be anything other than an injustice? Can damages not occur?

No leader or manager makes good decisions all of the time. He or she is human. Humans make mistakes. A good leader or manager learns that personal feelings should not be used in decision making.

A decision was made by a state leader of the auxiliary of one of the military services who was unhappy with a long time member. The leader listened to the falsehoods of two other members and chose to suspend the member's emergency services teaching credentials. The leader did not check to see if the accusations were correct, but rushed into action. Thus, the leader deprived the organization of the experience and expertise of the long time member.

It did not take long for almost all of the other members in the state to find out what had happened. The action of the leader combined with other imperious actions caused many other members to reduce their participation or to cease their participation altogether. The actions of that leader damaged the organization and soured many members. There was a quiet loss of membership and a reduction in recruiting. No one will ever

know how many members quietly left. Nor will anyone ever know how many people who were potential members decided not to join.

Another decision made by that same leader was to use the services of a member whose ethics were not the best. That member did whatever the leader ordered, whether it was right or not. When the member was asked to explain the actions taken, the member's response was that "they had to follow the orders" from the leader. (During the War Crimes Trials at Nuremberg, Germany at the end of World War II, nearly all of the Nazi defendants cited in their defense the "only following orders" excuse. This came to be known as the "Nuremberg Defense.")¹² The member became widely known to be lacking in ethics, and the leader became even less well regarded.

A certain member in one organization was secretly angry at the organization. Under the guise of improving the organization and the qualifications of the members, he persuaded a gullible leader to implement "reforms." What happened was that the amount of paperwork went up. Unnecessary difficulties were added to the qualification process. It quit being fun to participate. It became a burden. The leader lost credibility

and prestige. The membership decreased. A fine organization lost the luster that it had once enjoyed.

Misuse and mistreatment of members will always eventually become widely known. Members will quietly reduce or end their participation. The member who wants to be of service can always find some other place to give of his time and talents.

There is a lot of wisdom floating around in messages sent on the internet. Someone sent out a slogan titled, “Lessons Learned in Life.” The slogan said, “Never push a loyal person to the point where they no longer care.”

Infallibility

There was a sign in the office of an electronics sales organization that read, “Rule No. 1: The boss is always right!. Rule No. 2: If the boss is wrong, see Rule No. 1.”¹³ The delusion of the infallibility of the leader can best be summed up by the old adage, “He may not be right, but he’s the boss.” Unfortunately, leaders who have such delusions do not walk on water, they pass it. The amount of damage that they cause is incalculable.

Good leaders listen to the ideas and opinions of their subordinates. They ask lots of questions. They ask for suggestions. They ask for opinions. They ask for information. They ask for improvements. They rarely give orders. When they do give an order, it is based on all of the available information that they have received. As a result, they rarely give a bad order.

During the “Dessert Storm” conflict, Pat Robertson on his television show, *the 700 Club*, asked a retired U. S. Army Colonel about the thinking behind the decision to take certain actions in the field. The Colonel replied, “Brains are not issued with rank.” Many leaders start to think that their position and their rank make them impervious to errors.

A good leader knows better. A good leader knows that the best ideas do not come from the top down. They come from the bottom up!

It is traditional in the military services that when asking for opinions, the lowest ranked person present is queried first. By doing it bottom rank first, the lowest ranked person is not intimidated or influenced by the ranks above. This encourages the lowest rank to give his opinion unreservedly.

To be a good leader, requires good advisors or counselors. Bad advice will result in problems that are similar to the delusion of infallibility. If one of the advisors is a previous leader, there is every possibility of repeating and amplifying on the past mistakes.

Any time that the advisors to a leader are in complete agreement, be especially wary. Either this is a “no brainer,” or this is a “mine field.” Unanimous agreement should always be suspect. This is especially true when the agreement is with the position of the leader. When there is total agreement among the advisors, the chances for bad advice are multiplied. The action being contemplated could be completely wrong, and it could well “blow up” in the face of the leader and the others.

Picking advisors is especially difficult. The best advisors are often irritating and abrasive. They are not “yes” men. They will not tell you what you want to hear. They will not “sugar coat” their opinions. But, they will tell you the truth.

A good leader wants to hear the truth. A good leader does not want confirmation from the advisors. The good leader wants counsel. If the advisor is telling the leader what the leader wants to hear, the advisor is doing a disservice. If the leader just wants “yes men,” then that leader is a fool.

Good advisors are supposed to be a source of information on what is going on in the organization. That information has to be supplemented by direct contact with the members. If the leader remains isolated and unapproachable, his or her only source of information is what his or her advisors say. This opens the possibility of manipulation and control of the leader by the advisors.

A really good leader does not punish members who honestly say what they think. Rather, the good leader rewards such behavior. Members and volunteers have to be encouraged to speak up when things are not right.

No really good leader gets offended when contradictory advice is received. Nor, does a good leader let arrogance or pride block his or her reception. A leader should never let personal feelings prevent receiving a contradictory report. If the leader finds that the person giving information causes anger, then the leader should make sure that personal feelings are not interfering with the leader's judgment. The leader should remember what Confucius said, "He whom the Gods would destroy, they first make mad."

A sure sign that the leader has infallibility issues is when the leader wants to "kill the messenger." A bad leader does not want to hear anything that contradicts his or her feelings and opinions. A bad leader wants complete and total agreement with his or her views. It is easy to get along with a bad leader, just agree with him or her all of the time.

Sooner or later, every leader has to deal with a misdeed, an infraction, or a problem. This is where there will be a strong temptation to use feelings and opinion in place of facts. Regardless of whether you think you know the whole story, or not, get all of the facts.

A leader had to deal with an unauthorized disclosure to the news media. The leader and his staff were sure that the leak came from the

flight crew. They never considered that there were others besides the flight crew who had the information and could have been the leak. They never considered that the individual assigned to be the incident commander for that mission was a proven enemy of one of the members of the flight crew. They knew the identity of the culprit. They just could not prove it.

Often, what the leader thinks that they know is incomplete or wrong. Add personal feelings to the situation, and the leader has the opportunity to make a disastrous decision. Add a leader with an ego problem and delusions of infallibility, and there will be permanent damage to the whole organization.

To repair the damage from something like this is extremely hard. It will take a lot of time, energy, and effort. It rarely can be done successfully. It is far easier, and less of a mess, to avoid the “sink hole” than to climb out of it.

Politicians

Unfortunately, some leaders are not really leaders but are politicians. A comedian said that, “A politician is one who, when he sees the light at the end of the tunnel, goes out and buys more tunnel.” A comedian said that the word politician comes from the Greek word “poly” (which means much) and the Greek word “tico” (which means talk). Politicians don’t want solutions, they want insoluble problems. A politician is in the business of talking about problems.

If a problem is solved, then the politician must find something else about which to stir up the people. The classic political expression is best exemplified in the show “The Music Man,”¹⁴ by Professor Harold Hill, “Well my friends, you’ve got trouble! Right here in River City!”

The politician’s creed is the Latin phrase, “Festina lente,” which means to make haste slowly. The political way of doing things is to wait until the last minute, and then to do just as little as possible to just barely solve the problem. No politician ever wants the job done right the first time. A good problem can be “milked” over and over again. A good politician will definitely do so.

In fact, the best type of problem is a crisis. The political boss Rahm Emanuel ¹⁵ admitted, “You never want to let a serious crisis go to waste.” A good crisis is an excuse for more rhetoric, more taxes, and more ineffectual work. Harry Hopkins, the aide to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, said, “We’re going to tax and tax, spend and spend, elect and elect.” ¹⁶

A politician makes money by controlling government spending. The contracts go to entities controlled by those favored by the politicians. The favored ones contribute to the causes, etc., favored or controlled by the politicians. A politician in California said that money is the grease that lubricates the wheels of politics.

Politicians hate being told an outright falsehood or lie. Why? It is because politicians rarely lie. What they do is spin the truth. They shade the truth, They fudge the truth. They bend the truth. They stretch the truth. They mangle the truth. They also change their minds. And, they forget the details. However, they don’t really lie. In this regard, politicians are like fishermen describing the size of the catch that got away!

In the peculiar logic of lawyers and politicians, if any part of a statement is false, then the entire statement is false. Of course, for politicians, a word means only what the politician wants it to mean. The definition or meaning of a word is not what the dictionary says it is. This can lead to the politician redefining the meaning of the most simple of words. A national politician, Bill Clinton,¹⁷ actually asked his questioner what the definition of “is” is.

Politicians carefully parse their pronouncements. Every utterance has a modifier to negate or nullify the statement. So, the politician did not lie.

What politicians do is deceive. They give the impression that they will do something, when they will not. They give the impression that they are for something, when they are not. They give the impression that they are fighting against something, when they are actually helping it. They give the impression that they are doing something, when they are doing nothing.

Politicians love to have meetings where they listen to people complain. They grandly and sagely nod their agreement with the constituent who is complaining. Then, they promise that they will “look

into this.” The problem is delegated to an underling who is told to add it to the stack of things that he is to do. In a week or three, a reply will be received by the constituent from the politician’s assistant that says that the problem cannot be solved at this time without legislation. The politician is working on writing legislation to be introduced into the legislature to solve the issue.

The worst thing that can happen to a politician is to be caught reneging on a promise. If the promise was to a constituent, the slang designation for such an action is to call it a “Stinker.” If the reneging is to another politician, it can be explained away by saying his constituents demanded the action that was taken. If the media gets involved, then the politician was quoted “out of context.”

Really nasty politicians are in the extortion business. They demand contributions and gifts as tribute to prevent the passage of legislation that is harmful to you. They also demand contributions and gifts to prevent investigations by the Legislature of you and your business. Not only do politicians extort money, they extort favors of all kinds. They extort anything and everything that they can. My dad ¹⁸ said that “the

only thing lower than a politician is whale manure,” because it is at the bottom of the ocean.

Politicians love to be admired. They love “photo” opportunities. They love to give “sound bites” to the press. They love to give the impression that they are up on a pedestal. They love to be in the spotlight. They just don’t want to be put “on the spot.”

Rule No. 1:

The boss is always right!

Rule No. 2:

**If the boss is wrong,
see Rule No. 1.**

People on a Power Trip

Power hungry individuals are often of the opinion that they are above the rules. The rules are there for the underlings, but not for the leader. The leader, or commander, has the intuition and superior intelligence to do what is best without being bound by the regulations. Often they will refer to the rulebook as a “living document” that is subject to interpretation.

The “living document” viewpoint allows the interpretation to be adjusted to fit the viewpoint of the interpreter. This results in the improper application of the rules or regulations. This viewpoint also allows the over enforcement, or under enforcement of the rules and regulations.

When the “living document” viewpoint is used, it is usually used to suppress one or more individuals. This approach becomes harassment and hazing. This is the “if you cross me, I’m going to teach you a lesson” game. This is not leadership. This is childishness. Thomas Edward Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) wrote about such idiocy by leaders in his book, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*.¹⁹

Often the leaders who espouse the “living document” viewpoint eventually resort to illegal or immoral actions. Then, there comes the

justifications, followed by the attempts to cover up the action. There are attempts to silence or remove the people who were wronged or who were witnesses. Of course, the leader did not do wrong! There were extenuating circumstances!

Such leaders often resort to vendettas. They create an “enemies list.” The “I’ll teach you a lesson” action never works over the long haul. Sooner or later, such actions unravel. Then, the leader is removed with the inevitable denials, counter accusations, and excuses.

Power hungry leaders are usually victimized by individuals who are behind the scene manipulators and operators. Nathaniel Hawthorne described such an individual, Roger Chillingworth, in his book *The Scarlet Letter*.²⁰ He moved in with the Reverend and slowly destroyed him.

The behind the scenes “string puller” and the back room manipulator are usually interested in power without any responsibility. They are advancing their own agenda. They are usually Machiavellian, mendacious, and mercenary.

A leader who tries to minimize his responsibility by delegating everything, becomes the victim to the manipulator. The leader who

delegates everything becomes isolated from what is happening and ignorant of the things being done. That leader will end up taking the blame for all of the wrong things instigated by the manipulator and his subordinates.

Ayn Rand, in her book *Atlas Shrugged*, accurately described two types of leaders who were on “power trips.” She described the martinet who was “going to have order” no matter what. And, she described the deal maker who suborned everyone by making deals with them. The deals were of the “you scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours” variety.²¹

Of course, such deals were illegal, immoral, or unethical. The deal maker always seduced his victims into deals with a hidden trap or “gotcha.” How can you make a valid deal with a liar? That kind of leader is a cannibal, and the person making a deal with him or her is meat on his or her table.

A leader can delegate authority, but not responsibility. The leader has to maintain oversight of the organization and the subordinates. No organization will function properly on “autopilot.”

A leader who tries to operate by delegating everything will find that the subordinates are doing things that they should not be doing. The

temptation by individuals to exercise their power for their own advantage is almost irresistible. Lord Acton summed it up, “Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts, absolutely.”²²

The sad truth is that the subordinates will reflect, to a great extent, the ethics and values of the leader. There are obligations that go along with leadership. When the leaders were the nobility, the phrase was “noblesse oblige.” The Merriam-Webster dictionary gives the definition of noblesse oblige as “the obligation of honorable, generous, and responsible behavior associated with high rank or birth.”

It is the responsibility of each leader to make sure his subordinates act honorably and responsibly. Failure to provide oversight of all of the subordinates will result in dishonorable and irresponsible actions. Those actions will reflect back upon the leader. The “bad-guys” under a leader make the leader look like a “bad-guy.”

Perverse Pleasures

The book *Games People Play* by Dr. Eric Berne²³ detailed a number of psychologically sick games that people play on one another. All of the games have a meanness and cruelty to them, and all of them are things that are all too familiar. Dr. Berne did not invent the games. He just cataloged them.

One game that really cruel leaders like to play is one that I call, “I pull the rug out from under you.” (This game is played in businesses, too.) The leader identifies a strong desire in you. The leader promises to help you achieve that desire. Then, the leader yanks the rug out from under you by announcing that you are not qualified, or someone else is more qualified, or you are not worthy. Then, the leader sticks the knife in deeper by falsely consoling you and promising that you’ll get your desire the next time.

Another game that is played is “You are not yet ready.” The leader refuses an award, a promotion, or a qualification. The leader uses as the reason for the denial the statement, “You are not quite ready, yet.” The leader then strings you along for however long he or she can.

There are other games that are played by cruel and unscrupulous leaders. Dr. Berne's book is just the starting place for describing games. Games can be combined for even more devastation to the volunteer.

Some members of volunteer groups realize what has happened to them the first time this is done to them. Others may take longer and many experiences to understand what has happened. Some will endure the pain even though they know what has been done because they really believe in the organization and its purposes.

All games have the "down side" that the member who feels victimized gets angry. The member may leave, or the member may start plotting revenge. Neither result is good for the organization.

Unfortunately, most volunteer organizations will try to hide such events and sweep them under the rug. The false belief (and sincere hope) is that this will not happen again. The leader gets the idea that this behavior can be contained, and thus it can be continued. The leader may get the idea that more care must be taken to cover up what is being done. Or, the leader will get the idea that the actions can be continued with impunity.

Once in a great while, the number of victims becomes large enough that the leader gets exposed. The leader may be humiliated, or demoted, or expelled, or all of the above. Of course, it is the fault of the leader. The Leader was a bad leader. The bad leader got caught! Everyone heaps shame upon the bad old leader. The bad old leader should have been more careful.

Then, the rest of the organization does a collective hand wringing dance and piously proclaims that it will never happen again. Then, the organization will continue on as though nothing happened. So, sooner or later, another game playing leader starts playing the games.



Ready, Shoot, Aim!

A very shrewd Lt. Col. ²⁴ in the Civil Air Patrol (the USAF Auxiliary) said it right. He said that too often, people follow the approach of, “Ready, Shoot, Aim!” They cobble together a plan after they start.

People do not plan to fail, they fail to plan. While a bad plan is better than no plan, a plan thought out before needed has a far better chance of success. They also ignore one of the principal tenets of a the Masonic fraternity that states that one “should commence no important undertaking without first invoking the blessing of deity.” ²⁵ Without prayer, the moral compass can become unreadable. Integrity will become soiled. Decisions will become poor and incorrect.

Getting ready is not difficult, but it is daunting. It is easy to let someone else do the task. It is easy to let someone else carry the load.

Leaders have to be made of sterner stuff. They have to be willing to do the drudge work that puts things together. They have to be willing to do that “one more thing that has to be done.”

A leader can always solicit help, but the leader will be responsible for getting the job done. If the job was delegated to helpers, then give them all of the credit. You were responsible for getting them to do it. You

made it happen. You don't have to take the credit. Everyone will know that you made it happen.

Someone said that sergeants get things done. Officers see that the right things get done. A good leader makes sure that the right things are done. The really good leader takes the time to explain why that thing is the right thing to be done.

Poor leaders follow the adage that, "Having lost sight of our objective, we re-doubled our efforts in all directions." Good leaders don't waste time with things that are not essential. Good leaders attack the tasks in order of importance. Good leaders cause the most important of the right things to be done first.

The most important job of the leader is to identify the things that need to be done, and then determine the order in which they need to be done. The sequence of the things to be done is not determined by the ease or difficulty. Getting the correct sequence is rather like working a puzzle.

The starting point for the analysis is determined by the overall goal. The next step in the analysis is the determination of what part of the overall goal is the objective to be achieved. Then, there must be a determination of what steps must be taken to achieve the objective. Most

of the steps have a sequence. Usually the steps to be done will require a previous step to be accomplished first. Sometimes there are steps that can be undertaken at the same time that other steps are being done.

It is the leader who determines the sequence of the steps. Wise leaders always include the subordinates in the determination and planning process. By including “the troops” in the determination process, everybody comes to an understanding and agrees.

Really smart leaders know that no plan survives contact with reality intact. A plan has to have flexibility. Also, a plan has to accommodate things that go wrong. My dad called the plan for when things go very wrong, the “world turns brown” plan. This is the plan for when things get dirty. And, there has to be a plan for disaster. Dad called that plan the “world turns black” plan. These are the alternate plans. The leader hopes to never have to use them. But, the leader must have them ready, just in case they are needed.

To make good plans and to make good decisions requires good information. The Air Force Squadron Officer School ²⁶ taught that communications are for the commander to receive information from his subordinates, and for the commander to issue orders to his subordinates.

Usually, the majority of the communications from a leader to his or her subordinates will be requests for information.

The greatest mistake a leader can make is to make decisions based on pre-conceptions. Information has to be verified. Information has to be understood in the proper context. Information has to be relevant. And, information has to be without personal feelings.

More than one leader has allowed their anger at a subordinate to color their decisions. A good leader knows that decisions made in anger will usually be wrong. The accuracy and veracity of the information received is not changed by the feelings of the leader receiving the information.

If the leader allows feelings to intrude on the decision process, then the leader will be guilty of having made up his or her mind and not wanting to be confused with the facts. Such a leader will find that the information that conforms to his or her viewpoint will be alluring and attractive. Such information is usually flawed and false. That type of information is called the “seductive lie.” It sounds good. It fits with the feelings. It agrees with what the leader wants to believe. And, it is wrong.

“It just felt right,” is the excuse given by leaders who fall for the seductive lie. Such a leader used emotion instead of hard information to make a decision. Such leaders become known for making their decisions on feelings instead of facts. They are disparaged with the epithet that, “they never let a fact get in the way of a good feeling.”

There are individuals and entities who want the leader to fail or the organization to fail. These people and groups will try to use the leader’s feelings against him or her . They will try to use the “seductive lie” to deceive him. Their goal is to sucker the leader into making bad and incorrect decisions. They want to get the leader to do the wrong thing.

Also, they will try to destroy the esteem that a leader has for a talented subordinate. The goal is to get the leader to discard his own assets. They try to convince the unwary leader that his friends are really his enemies, and his enemies are really his friends. Thus, they weaken the leader.

The leader who is duped in this way will see the respect of his subordinates, his peers, and his superiors evaporate. That leader will have become an object of derision and disgust. That leader will have lost all

Chapter 12 – Ready, Shoot, Aim!

respect. That leader will have succumbed to the mentality of “Ready, Shoot, Aim,” He will have shot off his own foot.

Good leaders repair the gate when the horses get out of the barn. They don’t worry about who let the gate get broken, or who left the gate open, until later. First, fix the gate. Then, recover the horses. The dealing with the miscreant is last.

The Check Box Mentality

“I don’t care if you need this, or not! Everybody has to have this box checked.” Military organizations (and paramilitary organizations) are big on having everything, and everybody, be just alike. They call it uniformity. It is the old “everybody look, act, and be just alike” idea. The reasoning is to make the organization look “more professional.”

Of course, this only makes the organization look good on paper. In actual practice, the people who know what they are doing regard such edicts as “just for show.” They regard the competence of the people who espouse such ideas as marginal.

There are times when uniformity is actually a good idea. However, usually it is not. This is usually illustrated by the idiocy of asking people who have a demonstrated competence in a subject to take an introductory course because it is required of everybody.

The uniformity concept is only useful when there is an “escape clause” or “loophole” that can be used to circumvent the “everybody clause.” The “escape clause” is the lifesaver when the demand is a bad idea, or just plain wrong. The “escape clause” is often called a “grandfather clause.”

Sometimes, an “escape clause” becomes illogical. The clause becomes disconnected from reality. Joseph Heller wrote of such events and named his book after such a clause. He called the book *Catch 22*.²⁷

Illogical “escape clauses” demean and diminish the regulation. They do the same to the organization. They hold the organization up to ridicule. They cause the volunteers and members to say, “There is a right way, a wrong way, and this organization’s way.”

People who write regulations without an escape clause are showing their lack of experience and lack of knowledge. Usually, these are the same people who are afraid to admit a mistake. They are afraid such an admission would make them look like a fool. In reality, admitting a mistake makes them look honorable.

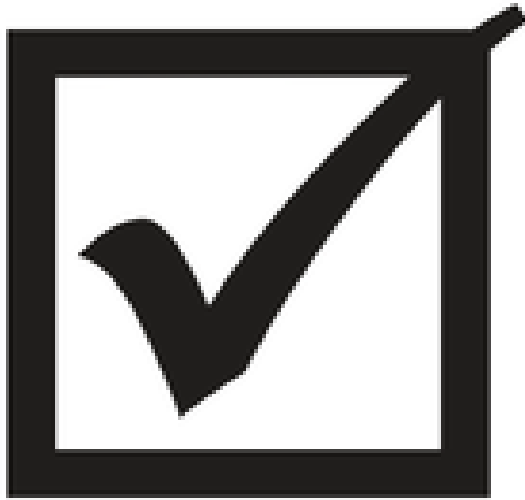
The writing of a regulation is an art. It is not enough to write a regulation so that it can be easily understood. A properly written regulation has to be written in such a way that it is almost impossible to be misunderstood.

Also, a properly written regulation is short, sweet, and to the point. There is no excess verbiage. The proper word to describe such a piece of writing is laconic. When Julius Caesar conquered the town of Laconia (in

France) he sent back to the Senate a message of three Latin words, “*Veni. Vedi. Vici.*” The message translates as, “I Came. I Saw. I Conquered.”²⁸

The leader who admits making a mistake, is rarely regarded as foolish. Instead, that leader is regarded as “down to earth” and “intellectually honest.” That leader is seen as being quite smart.

When admitting a mistake, don’t skimp and don’t weasel. When admitting a mistake, go all the way. If you have to eat crow, don’t nibble.



Encouragement

There are basically two ways to motivate people. You can deride them and make fun of them. Or, you can encourage them.

When at work, an employee may have to endure a derisive boss. In a volunteer organization, even a paramilitary volunteer organization, the volunteer does not have to endure a derisive superior. In any organization, when the dissatisfaction level reaches the tipping point, the individual finds a way to leave.

The tipping point is not always at the same place for different individuals. In fact, it is nearly always at a different point for each individual, even when the circumstances are the same. With some individuals, it is easy to tell when they are getting close to their tipping point. Their body language, their verbiage, and their attitude all combine to radiate their feelings.

With other people, there is no indication that they are getting close to their tipping point. With those people, there is no attitude, there is no verbiage, there is no body language, and in fact, there is no precursor of the looming tipping point. When the tipping point is reached for the

people who do not show an indication of the impending tipping point, they leave or they give vent to their anger.

The volcanic eruption can sometimes be quelled. “Oil can be poured upon the waters.” There is a chance to calm things down, fix the problem, and make things better.

With the silent departure, there is no going back. There is no repair. There is no retention. The well has been irrevocably poisoned. The individual has forever been “left with a sour taste in his mouth” towards the organization and its people.

Encouragement not only can prevent a tipping point situation, it can often alleviate it. Encouragement builds up the individual and the group. Derision tears down the individual and the group.

Napoleon was not the first leader to observe how the dispensing of certificates, ribbons, and awards acted as incentives to all of the troops. All great leaders know this. Commendations, certificates, and awards not only ensure the good performance of the recipient, they spur on the others as well. Don’t be stingy with praise, rewards, or commendations.

The presentation of awards, ribbons, medals, promotions, and qualifications must all be done on a timely basis. These presentations, not

only encourage the member, but they encourage all of the other members. Delays in the presentations hurt the morale. Shakespeare said, “Then ‘twere well it were done quickly.”²⁹

Awards, etc. are like raises in pay at a job. A normal volunteer in an organization should receive some reward every year. No one would continue working for a firm without a bonus or pay raise after a year. No volunteer will last much longer than a year if there are no rewards.

Some organizations have traditions or rules that prevent promotions and sometimes awards if the volunteer asks for them. This is supposed to foster an attitude of working for the good of the organization and not for personal recognition. But, what it really does is foster an insider system where the “good old boy” network rewards its buddies and fellow insiders.

Eventually, the unrewarded volunteer worker becomes disillusioned. That volunteer perceives being an outsider. That perception leads to discouragement. That volunteer will usually reduce the efforts and time being expended. If nothing is done to rectify the situation, that volunteer may diminish all efforts expended to the point of becoming dormant, or that volunteer may quit.

Thus, the organization will lose a volunteer simply for the lack of encouragement, recognition, and rewards. Other volunteers, who see what has happened, will reduce their efforts as well. The organization never reaps the benefits of many working for the good of the organization, because many of the volunteers went where they would be rewarded.

Encouragement is not always verbal. Non-verbal gestures count as encouragement. Most importantly, spending time with the “troops” counts as encouragement. Taking the time to help someone who is lagging or not understanding is encouragement.

The members of the organization see what the leader does. They see that the leader spends time with them. They see that the leader encourages them. They learn that the leader actually cares about them. They admire and respect such a leader.

When a leader, a commander, or a boss builds up an individual by encouraging that person, the person feels good about himself. The person tells others what was said and done. Others are attracted to the group.

The group grows. The group has the people to get things done, and done right. People with talent will move to the group. The group

becomes a subject of conversation and admiration. The group becomes a sum that is greater than its parts.



Personnel Selection

It is perfectly normal to gravitate to the groups or cliques of people that we feel are most like we are. This began in childhood and continues with adulthood. People go to the groups that they feel are the most like themselves.

Unfortunately, when it comes to selecting people for tasks in a volunteer organization, picking close friends is not a good way to make selections. In fact, it is rarely optimal, and it is usually only good enough to be slightly above marginal. Machiavelli ⁹ said that a [leader] should always reward excellence, because he will get what he rewards. If the person making the selections rewards friendship, that is what he will get. While it is comfortable to have friends doing various jobs, it is rare that the friends are the best ones suited for the jobs.

Once in a while, when making a selection for a particular job, the person making the selections will have the luxury of having access to a database of membership information. That person making the selection will be able to discover the capabilities and qualifications of all the members. If the person making the selection is extraordinarily wise, they will seek out the extremely qualified individual members and ask them to

apply. Or, request an extremely qualified member to take the job that needs to be filled.

Sometimes the person most qualified is someone who is not very likable. When this is the case, it is well to remember that a good leader does not have to like the people that are doing the jobs. But, he does have to respect them and treat them decently, honorably, and fairly. Sometimes, the unlikable member will become likable with time.

People with special skills, abilities, or traits are assets. To identify a volunteer who is an asset, one has to be completely objective. One has to put one's personal feelings aside. A person's capabilities are what makes them an asset. One capability to especially seek out is the ability to make things happen. This is a rare capability.

When Tom Landry was the head coach of the Dallas Cowboys football team, he made sure that his team always tried to draft the best possible players. Their choices were made strictly on the basis of capability. Feelings and personalities had no part of the selection process. In fact, he used a computer ranking system devised by Gil Brandt.

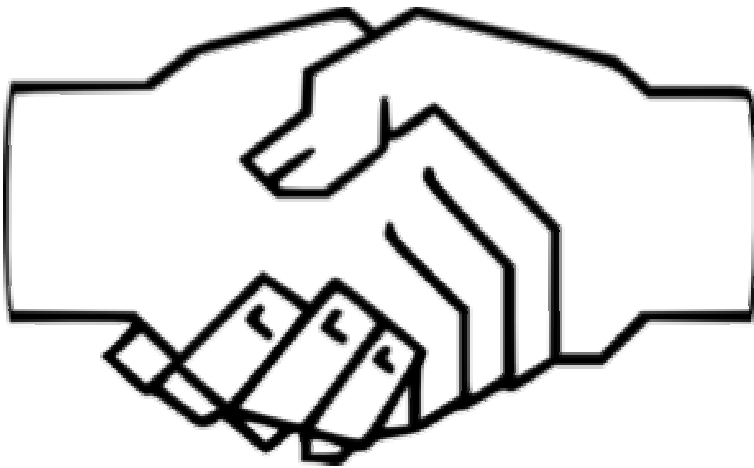
In selecting a member to handle a specific job, it is necessary to make sure that the job is one the member likes doing. There is nothing

worse than selecting a member who does not like to do the job assigned. It is important to ascertain the things that the member likes to do and the things that the member hates to do. It is critical, then, to make sure that the member is never assigned as a duty any of the jobs that the member hates, only jobs that he likes. This is called “The Type-Casting Theory of Duty Assignment.”

Also, since people normally change with the passage of time, periodically check to see if the member still wants to do the job. Make sure that the member does not get tired of the job or “burn out.” Be sure to communicate to the member that when that member wants to quit doing the job, that member can do so without any problems or recriminations. Be sure that the member knows that you value the member’s service to the organization. Be sure that the member knows the leader and the organization, understand that the member’s work is a gift to the organization, and that it is not a duty.

If the leader selects really capable people for the positions to be filled, the leader gains the aura of wisdom and competence. The leader is only as good as the subordinates. Great subordinates make the leader look great.

The greatest praise a leader can give is to entrust the subordinate with a position of responsibility and authority. This is a form of respect that builds up the subordinate. Good subordinates make a leader look really good.



What To Do With a Problem Individual

Problem Individuals can be put into three categories. The first category is the non-malicious bumbler. The second category is the borderline enemy. And, the third category is the outright enemy.

The non-malicious bumbler is not an enemy. This type of individual is just not educated and not thoughtful. The bumbler may well exhibit some amount of autistic behavior. The bumbler is usually quite opinionated. The bumbler is prone to go off on tangents and needs constant supervision. The bumbler needs a checklist or a “to do” list.

This type of individual is not hateful or vengeful. The bumbler is just not thoughtful. He or she may have difficulty understanding the consequences of certain actions.

Oddly, the bumbler can be extraordinarily competent at certain tasks. To deal with this type of individual, identify an individual that the bumbler type really likes. Use that individual to supervise the bumbler. Only assign one task at a time to the bumbler, and assign the person that the bumbler likes to “do the paperwork that is required” (supervise the bumbler). The supervisor becomes the handler for the bumbler.

The bumbler is usually not socially or politically astute. Let the supervisor take care of that. Just be sure that the supervisor is alerted to keep a close watch over the bumbler in order to avert social and political problems.

The borderline enemy can be turned into an opportunity or a stumbling block. Often, it is possible to end the enmity and turn this individual into a friend. If this is done, this type of individual will become a valued ally and friend.

The borderline enemy is quite often right, but quite undiplomatic in the way that he or she makes his or her case. Truth is truth, whether it is presented in a palatable way, or not. The better part of wisdom is discerning the truth.

The Latin phrase "Teneo tuos amicitia cludo ac tuos inimico propior" (keep your friends close and your enemies closer) applies here. Putting a borderline enemy into a responsible position and converting the enemy into a friend is the correct thing to do. This converts the enemy into less of an enemy, or even into a friend.

If this is not done, this type of individual will turn into a detriment and a full fledged enemy. This type of individual, if turned into an enemy, will damage the leader, and worse, permanently damage the organization.

The worst possible scenario is for this type of individual to become alienated, and then to quietly leave. That alienated individual will damn the leader and the organization with faint praise. They will support rival organizations, and, they will steer support and supporters away from the organization.

The leader who loses such an individual will usually become the “poster child” for why to avoid the organization and support a different organization. The loss of this type of individual causes the organization to risk becoming an object of ridicule, or worse, an object of derision. The organization will lose credibility, stature, and support. It is far better to convert this type of individual into an ardent supporter! Turn this type into an asset.

The outright enemy is the hardest individual with whom a leader will have to deal. This type of individual may have a specific issue with the leader. The issue may be a festering wound from a previous leader.

The issue may be an ideological conflict. It may seem to be politically expedient to have others see the individual as an enemy.

However, political expediency never stands the test of time. Eventually, the truth comes out. The good guys are exalted, and the bad guys are disgraced. The politically correct leaders are exposed as being mere politicians. Few politicians ever rise to the level of statesmanship. So, politicians are universally despised.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers.”³⁰ The first step to making peace is to not antagonize the other person. Basically, leave them alone.

If you have to deal with a transgression, if at all possible, educate them and give them a chance to correct the error. This is always preferable to punishment.

If punishment has to be done, it should never be done in anger. The “I’m going to teach them a lesson” approach rarely works as intended. What it usually does is start a “blood feud.” A feud usually leaves permanent damage to the organization, and it is never forgotten.

It is far better to exploit every opportunity to make peace.

Publicize the areas where you and the individual are in agreement. This will pave the way for future discussions.

Put your personal feelings aside. A leader has to rise above his personal likes and dislikes. Feelings are often things that change with the way the wind is blowing.

That is not to say that the leader should ever alter his core principles. Core values should be constant. Rarely is there a reason to change a core value. When there is, it is a momentous reason.

Seek out ways to discuss individual issues with the individual. The leader must keep the discussion on the issue being discussed. Do not allow the discussion to wander into other areas. My dad often quoted the Bible passage from Isaiah ³¹ that says, “Come let us reason together.”

Limit the number of issues to be discussed. Whittle down the number of issues where there is not agreement. Eventually, the issues where there is agreement outnumber the issues of disagreement.

When the number of issues of disagreement becomes small, it is easier to convert the enemy into a friend. A good leader should never

neglect the chance to convert an enemy into an ally. An ally can then easily become a friend.

An enemy who is converted into a friend will often turn out to be the strongest possible support to the leader. That friendship has every possibility of becoming a pillar. One can never have too many friends or supporters.



Go Back and Start Over

There are basically two kinds of mistakes. There are ones that are not too large and are easily fixed. Then, there are the ones that are egregiously large and are hard to fix.

Rather than admit that a mistake has been made, most organizations try to cover up the error and keep pressing forward. So the error is not fixed and the problems caused begin to fester and impede the organization. Eventually, either the organization fades away, is merged into another organization, or is massively restructured. The restructuring is in order to repair the faults and cover up the errors.

If the mistake is not too large, then a correction or chastisement of the subordinate will suffice. The good leader will do this quietly and in private. When a member has to be corrected, the good leader makes sure it is not adversarial. It has to be quietly respectful and caringly firm. The good leader is in the business of building his people up, not tearing them down. The subordinate is helped to correct the mistake and things go on.

If the subordinate who made the mistake admits to the mistake and wants to fix it, then that is an attitude that should be rewarded. With that

attitude, there is an opportunity for the subordinate to correct the mistake.

This is a learning opportunity for the subordinate.

This is a chance to learn how to fix a mistake. The good leader will query the subordinate as to whether a plan to fix things has been developed. If so, then the good leader needs to help the subordinate to improve it. If not, then the good leader needs to assist the subordinate in developing a plan to fix the mistake.

Once the plan to fix the mistake has been made and approved, then the subordinate needs to be allowed to implement the plan. The good leader will make sure to be available to assist the subordinate, if needed, in fixing the problem. When the mistake is fixed, the good leader will publicly announce what was done.

By allowing the subordinate to fix the mistake, the subordinate will be seen to have earned redemption for the mistake. The subordinate will learn a number of valuable lessons. Thus, the subordinate will be much better in the future.

If the mistake is massive and destructive, the temptation to say nothing and to quietly fix the problem is enormous. In the litigious society that we have today, the fear of legal entanglements is great.

However, no fix will be cheap. To paraphrase my dad, “It only costs a little more to do it right the first time.”

While the monetary costs may be higher, these are offset by the incalculable respect and the good will that are generated by proper handling. A cover-up always generates disdain and destroys respect. People will say of a cover-up that it was “business as usual.” On the other hand, when things are done right, people will sit up and take notice.

What has to be done is to first acknowledge publicly that a mistake has been made. Tell briefly why the mistake was made. If it was bad information or false information, then say so. Be sure to say from where the incorrect information came. Then, announce the correction that is being made. If possible, send this announcement to every possible media outlet that can be contacted. This will earn the admiration and respect of the membership and everyone else who hears this.

The quiet restoration of the person wronged does not keep peace. It leaves the membership with a grudging view that what was done was only just what absolutely had to be done. Most members will secretly feel that what was done was just to cover the protrusions of the powers that be.

The good leader will always praise all of the members of the group in public. The good leader will make such praise loudly. The good leader will make no secret of any praiseworthy event. The good leader will not take the credit himself, but will give the credit to the members.

The good leader never holds grudges. The good leader has to provide consequences for actions, but not anger or punitive penalization. The good leader teaches his people.

If the restoration requires the removal of a bad leader, it is necessary to make a public announcement. The public announcement should be sent to every possible media outlet. The announcement must state that the individual is being removed. It must also state specifically why the individual has been removed. The announcement should be completely factual. In the statement, nothing should be held back.

The undisclosed indiscretions of a bad leader allow the bad leader to continue doing the bad things that were done, only in a different organization. The quiet dismissal also leaves a black eye on the organization expelling the bad leader. The public will always wonder about the departure of the bad leader if the reasons are not publicized.

My cousin, who was a substitute teacher at the time, told of a Southeast Texas school who hired a new principal who then had an affair with one of the teachers. During the process to remove him, the school board learned that he had done the same thing at his previous school. The school district, where he had previously worked, had fired him for this and kept it a secret! ³²

If a bad leader has to be removed, be sure to see if the bad leader has infected the organization with subordinates of a like mind. If this has happened, others may need to be removed as well. The followers of the bad leader will need to be carefully scrutinized. There is every possibility that a number of the followers may need to be removed as well. This should be done at the same time as the removal of the bad leader.

Always, a full list of the wrong actions and policies must be publicized and disavowed by the organization. This prevents the bad leader from quietly restarting his indiscretions in a new group or organization. It also puts the followers of the bad leader that remain in the organization on notice that the bad actions will no longer be tolerated.

Any removal action should be done quickly. Delaying the removal is not prudent. Delaying a removal action damages the organization and allows destructive speculation to occur.

Time never lessens the damages of a mistake. Rather, the wound caused by a mistake will grow and fester. Delay on correcting a mistake just gives the bad leader, and his followers, the impression that the bad decisions and actions have been accepted and tacitly approved. The respect and admiration for the organization will erode. Erosion always starts in a small way, but it grows and accelerates with the passage of time. As the problem grows, the difficulty of fixing the problem grows as well. The old saying that “a stitch in time saves nine” applies here.

Manners and Attitude

Good manners are a necessity for a good leader. Good manners are an indicator of self confidence and self assurance. Good manners show maturity and good judgement.

Good manners are the combination of politeness, proper etiquette, and consideration for others. Another name for proper etiquette is protocol. Consideration for others is a result of respect for others. No one can not have respect for others without having self respect.

Respect for others means communication with others. A good leader communicates. A good leader initiates phone calls, e-mails, and text messages, and he or she returns or answers them. A good leader who is really savvy knows that if text message is not answered, there is no assurance that the text message was received.

A leader who only returns messages when he or she wants something soon finds a marked loss of respect. One leader was so bad at returning phone calls that his subordinates joked that he had injured himself and could not dial the phone or type. He received several nicknames including “broken finger.”

A good leader answers the telephone in a proper manner. The proper manner to answer a telephone is to immediately identify yourself. If the phone belongs to the organization, then the name of the organization should be added. After that, a polite greeting may be included.

The choice of an e-mail name is also important. The e-mail name is the first impression one gets of the e-mail address holder. “Party_girl” and “nose_picker” are not e-mail addresses that indicate someone to be respected, much less a good leader.

Respect for others means providing the image that is expected. Subordinates want to be able to respect and admire their leader or commander. They want to have a leader who is worthy of emulation. They want to be proud of their leader. The leader has to be a good example.

Good manners include proper table manners. Holding and using a fork, knife, and spoon correctly is critical. Knowing which utensil to use is also important. One does not talk with food in his or her mouth, and one never puts too much food in his or her mouth.

The good leader makes sure his or her speech is grammatically correct. Words must be pronounced correctly. A good vocabulary is expected. Profanity is avoided as much as possible.

A good leader knows that others will form a first impression based on how he or she is dressed. Proper dress and shined shoes denote someone of value who should be respected. Dressing conservatively is a mark of self respect and self assurance.

A good leader is knowledgeable and well educated. Part of being well educated is having read a wide variety and quantity of books. Books are an important part of learning. A really good leader is always learning. This is because a really good leader knows that it is nearly always the things that are not known that end up causing the hurts.

Well mannered people know that not doing the right thing is as bad as doing the wrong thing. A lack of action is un-mannerly. A good leader knows that things have to be done in a timely manner. A leader that procrastinates will quickly lose respect. One leader who became known for his delays and procrastination acquired the nickname “Foot Drag.”

Manners are a reflection of attitude. Bad manners can indicate a desire to obstruct and to boss others around. Quite often the ill-mannered individuals have the attitude that they are supposed to be “gatekeepers” preventing the advancement of individuals that they deem “un-worthy.”

These “gatekeepers” work at retarding or restricting the progress of people who want to advance and learn.

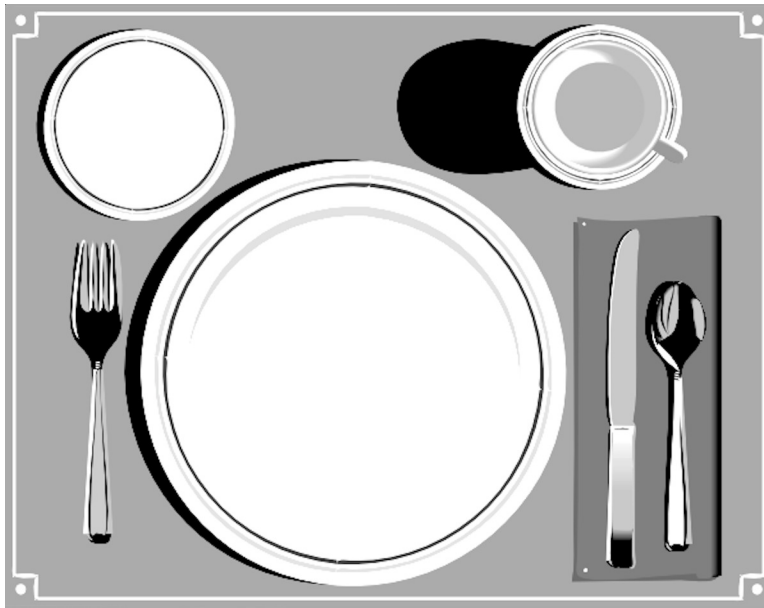
They hoard their knowledge and approvals. They dispense them only to the ones who are their friends. They like being obstructionist. They may not be able to do very well, but they can keep others from doing very well. They get a secret satisfaction in seeing others fail.

Good manners are indicative of a genuine desire to help others and make things work well. Usually, good mannered people want to enable others in their quest to progress and learn. They enjoy teaching. They freely share their knowledge. They get a feeling of satisfaction in seeing other people make progress.

Sooner or later, the subordinates get tired of the bad attitude and the “gatekeeper” mentality. They get tired of being “back-stabbed” by the leader. The subordinates may choose to just leave. Or, they may choose to undermine the leader and cause the downfall of that leader. Unfortunately, no matter which action the subordinates take, the result will be damage to the organization.

Every leader leaves a legacy. The good leader leaves a legacy of good people who grow to be good leaders and a stronger, better organization. The bad leader leaves damaged people and a damaged

organization. When it comes to leadership, a very good commander in the Civil Air Patrol, Lt. Col. Dietrich Whisennand³², summed it up, “It all boils down to attitude.”



Postscript

Like all really good books, this one was born out of trial and adversity. The lessons that I learned, I have sought to pass on to others. Hopefully the readers can learn from what they read here, and not have to experience the lessons firsthand.

This book could not have been written without the support and love of my wife, Carolyn Barron Bitner-Collins. The Bible says in the Proverbs that “a good wife is a gift from the Lord.” In my opinion, that is the most massive understatement in the history of this world.

Finally, to quote from my fraternity, “May the blessings of Deity” rest upon you,

Edward S. “Tex” Collins

10 November 2015

Notes:

References

- ¹ Lt. Col. Dietrich P. Whisennand, CAP, Private Communications, August, 2015
- ² Lt. Col. William Ott, USAF, ["Maj Gen William "Billy" Mitchell: A Pyrrhic Promotion"](#) (Winter 2006). Air and Space Power Journal.
- ³ Ms. Minnie I. Jones (IMCOM), ["William "Billy" Mitchell – 'The father of the United States Air Force' once liv"](#), (Jan. 28, 2010) U. S. Army News Archives Article.
http://www.army.mil/article/33680/William__039_Billy__039_Mitchell_____039_The_father_of_the_United_States_Air_Force__039_once_liv/
- ⁴ Harville Henricks, "Imago Relationship Therapy Conference Notebook,"
- ⁵ Stanley Marcus, *Minding the Store* (Denton, TX, University of North Texas Press, 1997)
- ⁶ DHS FEMA: "FEMA ICS Training," Retrieved from FEMA web site
<http://training.fema.gov/is/crslist.aspx>
- ⁷ Civil Air Patrol: "Civil Air Patrol web site," <https://www.gocivilairpatrol.com>
- ⁸ U. S. Coast Auxiliary: "Coast Guard Auxiliary web site," <http://www.cgaux.org>
- ⁹ Nicollo' Machiavelli, *The Prince*
- ¹⁰ Lt. Col. John C. Samuel, CAP, Private Communication
- ¹¹ Tyson, Roy Knox: Private Communication
- ¹² Adversity.net, "Nuremberg Defense,"
http://adversity.net/Terms_Definitions/TERMS/Nuremberg_Defense.htm

References

- ¹³ Max H. Beasley, Private Communication
- ¹⁴ R. Meredith Willson, “Ya Got Trouble,” “The Music Man,” Broadway Musical, 1957
- ¹⁵ Swift, Jim: “Rahm Emanuel: You never want a serious crisis to go to waste,” YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1yeA_kHHLow
- ¹⁶ BrainyQuote: Harry Hopkins Quotes,
<http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/h/harryhopki200221.html>
- ¹⁷ Yahoo.com, Yahoo Answers,
<https://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20070613104317AA7q47K>
- ¹⁸ Edward S. “Tex” Collins, *A Man Who Made Things Happen: The Biography of Edward S. ‘Rip’ Collins*, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (July 20, 2014)
- ¹⁹ Thomas E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*,
<http://www.wesjones.com/lawrence1.htm>
- ²⁰ Nathaniel Nathaniel, *The Scarlet Letter*, 1850
- ²¹ Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged*, 1957
- ²² Lord Acton, “Power Corrupts,”
<http://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/absolute-power-corrupts-absolutely.html>
- ²³ Dr. Eric Berne, *Games People Play*, 1964

- ²⁴ Lt. Col. Jack Faas, CAP, Private Communication, Civil Air Patrol Texas Wing Conference, April, 2015
- ²⁵ Grand Lodge of Texas A. F. & A. M., Monitor Of The Lodge (Waco, TX: Waco Printing Co.2002), 3
- ²⁶ USAF: "Squadron Officer School," <http://www.au.af.mil/au/soc/>
- ²⁷ Joseph Heller, *Catch 22*, 1961
- ²⁸ Plutarch: [*Life of Caesar*](#) from penelope.uchicago.edu
- ²⁹ William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (Act 1, Scene 7, 1-2)
- ³⁰ Bible: *Matthew* 5:9
- ³¹ Bible: *Isaiah* 1:18
- ³² Ronda Harris, Private Communication, September 22, 2015
- ³³ Lt. Col. Dietrich P. Whisennand, CAP, Private Communication, October 22, 2015

References