

Providing insight and encouragement to educational leaders.

MAY 2016

THE ENCOURAGING LEADER

“My Pleasure”

Endless roads. Hour after hour we drive. A college women’s basketball team and myself. “Are we there yet?” “How much longer?” The questions are endless. Then the big-one...The question to end all questions...The grand-daddy of them all...“Coach, where are we eating”? What am I gonna do? What do I say? All of my years of experience and training now must come into play. I try to remember what they like and don’t like. Where did we eat last time? Yikes. My head is spinning. Then I see it. The girls see it. The day has been saved. A billboard with cows. Chick-fil-A is at the next exit! Good food, a playground and service with a smile. More importantly, they love it as much as their coach.

First of all, I am not sponsored by Chick-fil-A. I am not like Bobby Knight when he coached at Texas Tech and wore a coaching vest with an O’Reilly’s Auto Parts logo on his chest...no logo for me. I just want to point out a business that has chosen to do things the right way.

I have taken teams to hundreds of restaurant in my coaching career, so I fancy myself a bit of an eating expert. Chick-fil-A may not have a dollar menu but they are consistently the fastest at taking our orders and getting us our food while always doing it with a smile and making us feel special no matter how crowded the store might be.

In reading founder Truett Cathy’s books, I discovered his major business principles:

- Climb w/care & confidence
- Create a “Loyalty Effect”
- Never lose a customer
- Put principles & people ahead of profits
- Closed on Sundays

Demonstrating that his philosophies are not just limited to his business, Mr. Cathy, through his WinShape Foundation, operates foster homes, sponsors highly attended summer camps and provides college scholarships for restaurant employees.



Closed on Sundays, Chick-fil-A still ranks as the nation’s 2nd largest quick-service chicken restaurant chain with over \$3 billion in sales.

Oh yeah, I almost forgot...now they have free cheerios to go along with a nifty disposable placemat that sticks to the table. Jaylen, my 18-month-old ball of energy, loves the idea of eating off the table. It might be their “pleasure” to refill my sweet tea, but I am the one truly pleased that someone out there puts people first. Do you do things right or just worry about the bottom line?

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Autobiography in Five Short Chapters (by Portia Nelson)

Chapter I

I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I fall in.
I am lost... I am hopeless.
It isn't my fault.
It takes forever to find a way out.

Chapter II

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.

I pretend I don't see it.
I fall in again.
I can't believe I am in this same place.
But it isn't my fault.
It still takes a long time to get out.

Chapter III

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it there.
I still fall in... it's a habit... but,
my eyes are open.

I know where I am.
It is my fault.
I get out immediately.

Chapter IV

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.

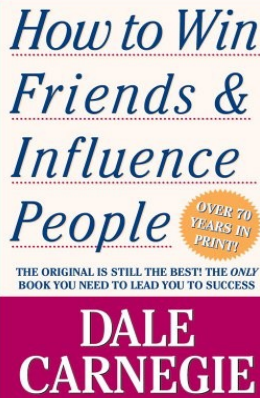
Chapter V

I walk down another street.

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CLIFF NOTES



- When talking about the confederates during the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln would say, “Don’t criticize them; they are just what we would be under similar circumstances.”

- John Dewey says that the deepest urge in human nature is “the desire to be important.”

- Dale Carnegie always said, “I go fishing up in Maine every summer. Personally, I am very fond of strawberries and cream; but I find that for some strange reason fish prefer worms. So when I go fishing, I don’t think about what I

want. I think about what they want. I don’t bait the hook with strawberries and cream. Rather, I dangle a worm or a grasshopper in front of the fish and say: ‘Wouldn’t you like to have that?’”

- Thousands of salesmen are pounding the pavements today, tired, discouraged, and underpaid. Why? Because they are always thinking only of what they want. They don’t realize that neither you nor I want to buy anything. If we did, we would go out and buy it. But both of us are eternally interested in solving our problems. And if a salesman can show us how his services or his merchandise will help us solve our problems, he won’t need to sell us. We’ll buy. And a customer likes to feel that he is buying—not being sold.

- Andrew Carnegie’s sister-in-law was worried sick over her two boys. They were at Yale, and they were so busy with their own affairs that they neglected to write home and paid no attention whatever to their mother’s frantic letters. Then Carnegie offered to wager a hundred dollars that he could get an answer by return mail, without even asking for it. Someone called his bet; so he wrote his nephews a chatty letter, mentioning casually in a postscript that he was sending each one a five-dollar bill. He neglected, however, to enclose the money. Back came replies by return mail thanking “Dear Uncle Andrew” for his kind note and –you can finish the sentence yourself.

- In talking with people, don’t begin by discussing the things on which you differ. Begin by emphasizing—and keep on emphasizing –the things on which you agree. Keep emphasizing—if possible—that you are both striving for the same end and your only difference is one of method and not of purpose.

- Don’t care about the credit—Care about the results.

- “If you want to gather honey, don’t kick over the bee hive.”

- If there is any one secret of success, it lies in the ability to get the other person’s point of view and see things from his angle as well as from your own.

“A great man shows his greatness by the way he treats little men.”

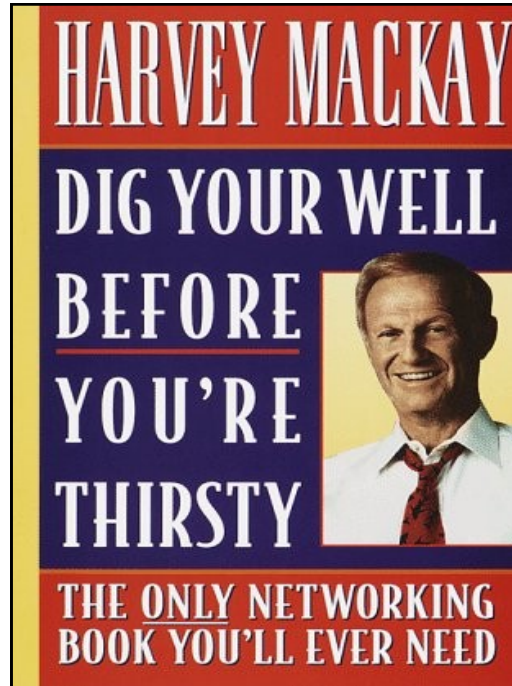
Thomas Carlyle

Setting an Example is Par for the Course

Before Tiger Woods, Jack Nicklaus, and Arnold Palmer, there was Bobby Jones. He won 13 major golf tournaments. Early in Bobby Jones’ amateur career, he was in the final playoff of the 1925 U.S. Open at the Worcester Country Club. During the match, his ball ended up in the rough just off the fairway, and as he was setting up to play his shot, his iron caused a slight movement of the ball. He immediately got angry with himself, turned to the marshals, and called a penalty on himself. The marshals discussed among themselves and questioned some of the gallery whether they had seen Jones’s ball move. Their decision was that neither they nor anyone else had witnessed any incident, so the decision was left to Jones. Bobby Jones called the one-stroke penalty on himself, not knowing that he would lose the tournament by one stroke. When he was praised for his gesture, Jones replied, “You may as well praise a man for not robbing a bank.” The United States Golf Association (USGA)’s sportsmanship award is named the Bob Jones Award in his honor.



- Digging a well is no easy task. It takes careful planning and constant up keep. The same holds true with establishing your professional and personal network. Many people assume a solid network just happens or can only be built by extroverts. Your best network will develop from what you do best.
- People aren't strangers if you've already met them. The trick is to meet them before you need their help.
- Keeping a Rolodex is a lot like getting dressed in the morning. It doesn't matter so much how you do it, it just matters that you do it.
- When two people exchange dollar bills, each has only one dollar. When two people exchange networks, they each have two networks.
- One reason that people are afraid to network is that they don't want to hear the word, "No." But "no" is the second best answer there is. At least you know where you stand.
- What do you have to offer that makes you memorable? What connects you with the person you most want to be remembered by?
- Networking is not a numbers game. The idea is not to see how many people you can meet. The idea is to compile a list of people you can count on.
- Out of sight doesn't have to mean out of mind. People drop out of sight for reasons, usually the wrong reasons—job loss, illness, divorce. Don't let them get too far away.
- In a world where information, jobs, and even whole companies are transient, only your network is permanent. Safeguard it.
- Your network is the best, most emphatic and most credible reflection of your success and your talents.
- The old 80/20 Rule still holds true. Twenty percent of your network probably provides 80 percent of the value. What have you done for them lately?
- You're never too old to start networking. And you're never too young, either.



- I don't know what I'll be doing a year from now, but whatever it is undoubtedly will be based on the contacts I made today.
- In a world where information, jobs, and even whole companies are transient, only your network is permanent. Safeguard it.
- Your network is the best, most emphatic and most credible reflection of your success and your talents.
- Many times people are reluctant to devote energy to maintaining their network. Surprisingly, they overlook the fact that their day-to-day interaction with customers, colleagues, suppliers/vendors, and neighbors is the foundation of their network. They have already begun to dig their well.
- What's the worst mistake a manager can make? Make a bad hire. The individuals employed by an organization are its lifeline. Without qualified, competent, enthusiastic individuals, an organization cannot remain competitive.
- It's not the people you fire who make your life miserable...It's the people you don't fire who make your life miserable.
- If you can afford to buy your way out of a problem...you don't have a problem.
- You can take any amount of pain as long as you know it's going to end.
- No one ever kicks a dead dog.
- I don't care how many pails of milk I lose, as long as I don't lose the cow.
- The single biggest tool in any negotiation...is the ability to get up and walk away from the table without a deal!
- Rotten wood cannot be carved.
- If you can't win...make the person ahead of you break the record.
- If you want to keep someone in the gutter...you have to get down in the gutter and hold 'em.
- Cream doesn't rise to the top...it works its way up!



When we talk about coaching, athletics immediately comes to mind. Yet coaching occurs in nearly every organizational venue – school, work, home, church, etc. A great coach tells you what you may not want to hear, helps you see what you could not see, and takes you beyond what you ever thought you could be. Did you get that? – with a great coach, you can go beyond your dreams, to reach your fullest potential.

The ultimate goal of a coach is to lead others to succeed because they believe that every person has the potential to grow. Daniel Harkavy, CEO of Building Champions, found that those who are

involved in coaching others have learned that they can enjoy personal success by focusing on the success of others. Harkavy refers to these coaches as “coaching leaders”. Coaching leaders have made the success of others their own personal mission.

Coaching is seldom about how the coach would do it. Good coaches help teammates to identify for themselves what needs to be done to reach their full potential. Raymond Gleason identified five ways that a coaching leader helps others – a coaching leader will encourage you to...

1. **Define your current reality.** Ask questions like, What is my present situation? Where am I headed?
2. **Clarify your vision and goals.** Many people continually react to their current reality rather than living by purpose. A coach first leads you to define what success looks like so you can set goals toward achieving it.
3. **Identify roadblocks to your vision.** This requires that you acknowledge and address areas of comfort and familiarity

that are commonly overlooked as barriers to your success.

4. **Test your thinking, opinions, conclusions, and behavior.** It's easy to get stuck in a rut – doing the same things and thinking the same way while expecting different results.

5. **Establish accountability.** Ask yourself, Am I making progress? Am I growing? Am I accomplishing my vision? Many get off track because they confuse intent or busyness with progress.

Who are you allowing to coach you – to speak truth into your life on a regular basis?

Leadership is about helping people work together to accomplish more together than they could accomplish separately. Is your entire team working together? Are you coaching your team to grow personally? If you do, they'll know you believe in them, appreciate them, and value them. And your life and work will be filled with purpose and meaning.

DR. MICHAEL NICHOLS has been named as one of Inc.com's Top-100 speakers. Visit his website at www.michaelnichols.org.

Preparation Positions Your Talent

As I have already mentioned, our team is reading "Talent is Never Enough" by John Maxwell. It is an amazing book that is sectioned perfectly to help a player, a coach, a team (and just about anybody else) towards the goal of self-improvement. Chapter 5 is titled "Preparation Positions Your Talent" and it is right around the corner for our team to read. We assign a chapter and then give them a worksheet to ask them questions to provoke thought. Here are some very brief portions of the chapter.

Automaker Henry Ford observed, "Before everything else, getting ready is the secret of success." Ford understood the power of preparation and all the things it can do for someone:

1. Preparation Allows You to Tap into Your Talent: "I've found that every minute spent in preparation saves ten in execution."

2. Preparation Is a Process, Not an Event: Legendary UCLA basketball

coach John Wooden says that the best way to improve your team is to improve yourself. He learned that lesson from his father, Joshua Wooden, who used to tell young John, "Don't try to be better than somebody else, but never cease trying to be the best you can be."

3. Preparation Precedes Opportunity: There's an old saying: "You can claim to be surprised once; after that, you're unprepared."

4. Preparation for Tomorrow Begins with the Right Use of Today: Preparation doesn't begin with what you do. It begins with what you believe. If you believe that your success tomorrow depends on what you do today, then you will treat today differently. What you receive tomorrow depends on what you believe today. If you are *preparing* today, chances are, you will not *repairing* tomorrow.

5. Preparation Requires Continually Good Perspective: Former Boston Celtics coach Tom Heinsohn ob-

served, "The sixth man has to be so stable a player that he can instantly pick up the tempo or reverse it. He has to be able to go in and have an immediate impact. The sixth man has to have the unique ability to be in a ball game while he is sitting on the bench." What makes the sixth man capable of that? Perspective. He has to have both a coach's mind-set as he watches the game from the bench and a player's ability once he steps into it. If he does, then he is prepared to impact the game.

6. Good Preparation Leads to Action: What value has preparation if it never leads to action? Very little. As William Danforth, former chancellor of Washington University in St. Louis noted, "No plan is worth the paper it is printed on unless it starts you going."

BOB STARKEY is an assistant women's basketball coach for Texas A&M. His blog has great insights, not just for basketball but life. Go to www.hoopthoughts.blogspot.com to check out Coach Starkey's excellent website.

MAXWELL MOMENT

When the Crowd Boos

President Harry S. Truman readily took responsibility for his decisions, and he was famous for saying, “The buck stops here.” Though his approval ratings were only 20-30% for much of his presidency, Truman didn’t waver. “I know the public is against me,” he’d say, “but they’ll come around.”

Truman entered the election year of 1948 as a vulnerable incumbent. Yet rather than shying away from thorny issues, he made two bold moves that generated fierce criticism: he backed the creation of the state of Israel and desegregated the military. Despite trailing in nearly every pre-election poll, Truman maintained hope and campaigned tirelessly around the country. On Election Day, newspapers were so certain of the outcome that they published headlines reporting Truman’s defeat. However, when the votes were actually counted, Truman emerged victorious. Historians consider his reelection the greatest upset in the history of the presidency.

The price of leadership is criticism. No one pays much attention to last place finishers, but when you’re in front, everything gets noticed. Since leaders live with criticism it is important to learn to handle it constructively. The following four-step process has helped me, so I wanted to pass it on to you.

1) KNOW YOURSELF

“Criticism is something you can avoid easily—by saying nothing, doing nothing and being nothing.” (Aristotle)

Over the years, people have tried to help me know myself. They often begin with the phrase, “I’m going to tell you something for your own good.” I’ve discovered that when they tell me something for my own good they never seem to have anything good to tell me! Yet, I have also realized that what I need to hear most is what I want to hear least. From those conversations I have learned much about myself.

- I am impatient.
- I am unrealistic about time and process.
- I don’t like to give a lot of effort to people’s emotional issues.
- I overestimate the ability of others.
- I assume too much.
- I want to delegate too quickly.

BOO!

2) CHANGE YOURSELF

Aldous Huxley said, “The truth that makes you free is for the most part, the truth we prefer not to hear.”

Here are the questions I ask to determine whether the criticism was constructive or destructive.

a) Who criticized me? Criticism from a wise person is more valuable than the flattery of a fool.

b) How was the criticism given? In my experience, the trustworthiest critics are those who give me the benefit of the doubt, attempting to see from my perspective before passing judgment.

c) Why was the criticism given? This question helps me discern whether the criticism was given out of personal hurt or with the intention to help me grow. Regardless of whether the criticism was legitimate or not, I have discovered that my attitude toward words I do not want to hear determines if I grow from criticism or groan beneath it. Therefore, I have determined to:

- Not be defensive when criticized
- Look for the morsel of truth within every criticism
- Make the necessary changes
- Take the high road.

3) ACCEPT YOURSELF

“Real confidence comes from knowing and accepting yourself—your strengths and limitations—in contrast to depending on affirmation from others.” (Judith Bardwick)

The opposite of courage isn’t fear; it’s conformity. The most exhausting and frustrating thing in life is to live trying to be someone else. If you worry about what people think of you, it’s because you have more confidence in their opinion than you have in your own.

4) FORGET YOURSELF

“Blessed are those who can laugh at themselves. They shall never cease to be entertained.” (Chinese Proverb)

While growing up, we spend a good deal of time worrying about what the world thinks of us. By the time we reach 60, we realize the world wasn’t paying much attention. Secure people forget themselves so they can focus on others. This allows them to be secure enough to take criticism and even to serve their critics.

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MOTHER TERESA'S FEET

Shane Claiborne, who spent a summer in the slums of Calcutta with Mother Teresa, wrote the following about one of his experiences:

People often ask me what Mother Teresa was like. Did she glow in the dark or have a halo? She was short, wrinkled, and precious, maybe even a little ornery—like a beautiful, wise old granny.

But there is one thing I will never forget—her feet were deformed. Each morning during Mass, I would stare at those feet. I wondered if Mother Teresa had leprosy. But I wasn't going to ask, of course.

One day a sister asked us, "Have you noticed Mother's feet?" We nodded, curious. She said, "Her feet are deformed because we get just enough donated shoes for everyone, and Mother does not want anyone to get stuck with the worst pair, so she digs through and finds those. Years of wearing bad shoes have deformed her feet."

That is the kind of love that places our neighbors' needs above our own.

MOTHER TERESA LESSONS

Mother Teresa visited Australia. A new recruit to the Franciscan order in Australia was assigned to be her guide and "gofer" during her stay. "Thrilled and excited at the prospect of being so close to this woman, he dreamed of how much he would learn from her and what they would talk about. But during her visit, he became frustrated. Although he was constantly near her, the friar never had the opportunity to say one word to Mother Teresa. There were always other people for her to meet.

Finally, her tour was over, and she was due to fly to New Guinea. In desperation, the friar spoke to Mother Teresa. "If I pay my own fare to New Guinea, can I sit next to you on the plane so I can talk to you and learn from you?" Mother Teresa looked at him. "You have enough money to pay airfare to New Guinea?" she asked. "Oh, yes," he replied eagerly. "Then give that money to the poor," she said. "You'll learn more from that than anything I can tell you."

It has been 5 years since the first edition of THE ENCOURAGING LEADER newsletter. We have gotten so much positive feedback on the article and tips. We appreciate you reading it and sharing it with others. Remember that leadership is all about influence. We are all leaders because we can influence somebody (including ourselves). Please let us know if we can ever help you in your leadership journey.

Jamy Bechler

MAXWELL MOMENT

Look behind you: What have you learned?

Look around you: What is happening to others?

Look above you: What does God expect of you?

Look besides you: What resources are available to you?

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"Leadership begins with U"

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