



# THE REVIEW

Central Arizona Fire and Medical - 8603 E. Eastridge Dr., Prescott Valley, AZ 86314 – September 28, 2018

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### Quote of the Week

"Failure is an opportunity to begin again, this time more intelligently."

Henry Ford



The Findlay Automotive Group is helping raise money for the Honor Guard and Pipes & Drums.

Throughout the month of October they will be donating a portion of the proceeds from cars sold to the group.

We will have a presence at their auto complex every Saturday through October from 1000-1400 culminating with a big event on October 27<sup>th</sup>.

I have talked with Chief Light, since the dealerships are in The City of Prescott, and he has given his support.



## The Chief's Desk

The following is an article written in support of a program Chief Randy Karrer and I are developing and have submitted to Fire Rescue International. It will also be part of the Senior Leadership Academy, and we are hoping to present it at the AFCA Summer Leadership Conference next July.

### Leading a Fire Department beyond the Operations Level



Do you want to be the Fire Chief? Absolutely! For some, the answer goes from absolutely to absolutely not once promoted to the position and they're exposed to the realities of the job. In the fire service we are well versed in preparing people to promote through the ranks all the way to Battalion Chief, and then..... it stops.



Managing in an administrative environment is quite different than managing in a fire station. For senior level chief officers, the internal and external politics are for more complex than in lower level positions. As firefighters we are accustomed to working with other strong personalities in a fire station.

Everyone is in a uniform; we eat together, train together and enjoy time together on days off. Outside of emergency services and the military, not many other professions realize comradery at this level.

Once we accept a promotion into an administrative environment, the comradery we once enjoyed as well as the station culture is gone. We find ourselves working with other professionals who are more individualized in their approach to work, and who may not truly understand "fire service" culture. One thing we find very quickly is that many administrative and/ or support services professionals do not understand how firefighters think or why they act the way they do. Likewise, firefighters do not seem to understand how administrative and support services professionals think or why they act the way they do. If you take a moment to think back to the station kitchen table, you will realize that at some point during each day there was a discussion about how administration was requiring something that was absolutely ludicrous. Surprise! Administration is having the same conversation about the firefighters.

On the floor, our job is to mitigate emergencies in a citizen's darkest hour; in the office, we have to figure out how to balance purchasing toilet paper and fire trucks. We are in an environment where data and statistical analysis rule the day as opposed to a hearty discussion around the kitchen table. In short, our lives, environment and the culture within which we work have changed. And, FYI, you are now one of the administrators causing all the headaches for those in the stations. It's possible, according to personnel on the floor, that you have had a lobotomy. To some, your sole existence is to make firefighters lives difficult. Continued Page 3

### Upcoming Events:

Oct 1 - 4 – Chief on Vacation  
Oct 1 – Senior Staff Meeting  
Oct 2 – L/M Meeting, Photo Op with YCCA  
Oct 3 – Office, PV Town Council  
Oct 4 – AFDA meeting in Phoenix  
Oct 5 – AFCA Executive Board Meeting

### Board Meeting:

October 22<sup>nd</sup> Chino Town Hall

CVFD – 1600-1630  
CAFMA – 1630 -1730  
CYFD – 1730-1800



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# How to Accept, Process and Learn from Failure

By: Chris Myers from Forbes.com



Take a close enough look at any life of note, and you'll quickly discover a legacy of failure.

However, it's important to distinguish between failed experiments and failure in the Platonic ideal sense of the word.

Experimental failure happens when you try something, and it doesn't work the way you intended.

We've all experienced this brand of failure before. Perhaps you once worked up the courage to ask someone out, and you were turned down. Or, maybe you launched a new product on the market only to be met with utter silence.

Regardless of the form it takes, this kind of experimental failure hurts, but it still has a silver lining. These experiences enable us to learn from our mistakes, find new solutions, and grow as individuals.

True failure, in the Platonic sense of the word, isn't something that happens to us. Instead, it's something we choose for ourselves, occurring when we allow the pain of our experimental failures to change our hearts and our minds for the worse.

[More](#)

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## Chief's Desk Continued

The people we work with in the office and in support services divisions have different educational backgrounds as well as different professional norms. Their culture, inner office politics, and the challenges that have to be addressed are different than those in the fire station. For some newly promoted senior level chiefs, going from a largely male dominated fire station environment to a largely female dominated office environment can be a challenge. In general terms, you cannot address professionals in an office environment in the same way you might address a firefighter in a fire station. Different people and professions respond differently to what and how you say things.

Recruiting and hiring for administrative or support services positions is not the same as testing for a firefighter. Hiring firefighters is in our wheel house given we are generally considered experts in the field. However, as a senior level chief you are now required to hire human resource professionals,

finance professionals, mechanics, information technology specialists, etc. These are not our areas of expertise which means we have to rely heavily on other professionals who know and understand those skill sets to assist in the process.



Not only do our surroundings change, but our view changes as well. The view from the front seat of the fire engine or BC vehicle allows for only a snippet of what an agency truly has to address. Emergency response along with coaching and mentoring employees is a small portion of what the fire department does. As a senior level chief you still have to

address emergency response, and training, however you are now responsible for data analysis, organizational development, a greater level of politics along with community engagement, as well as being responsible for everything anyone in the organization does. For Fire District Chiefs, especially in larger agencies, the job can be considered similar to that of a City/Town Manager.

As Fire Chiefs of today, we can no longer live in silos without windows and with a mote surrounding our agency. We must approach our jobs with a global view from atop the silo which now has windows, bridges and communications with the outside world. We have to welcome other influences and promote peer to peer support as well as a sharing of ideas. And finally, we have to be involved in our community, our region and within our State.

It is imperative that we learn to balance the internal and external pressures put on us. We cannot give our firefighters everything they want just as we are unable to give the community everything they want. When financial times are good, life is good. When financial times are a challenge, we are questioned both internally and externally about every decision we make. You can't make everyone happy – understand it and learn to embrace the reality.

Your job as the Chief can feel like the game of whack a mole some days - you just never know what will pop-up where or when. One minute you are meeting with the union about the upcoming budget cycle, the next you're mitigating a debate about appropriate office attire, and the next you're dealing with a community member complaining that the smoke from a fire is polluting the air.



It's important that you understand the dynamics and politics of the position in advance of raising your right hand. Once you do, you are now the biggest target in the organization for better or worse. Too many chiefs live short professional lives as the Chief, or lose family and friends because the job keeps them from finding a work life balance. You must make the conscious effort to seek balance, or suffer the consequences.

The stakes for a Chief are high, and everything we do is looked at under 1000's of microscopes by those who believe they know a better way to do what we're doing. Our decisions are heavily scrutinized and our behavior both on and off-duty is constantly monitored. We can't be everyone's friend, and we

certainly do not want to be enemies. The fact is we have to make the right decisions, not always the popular ones.



So what do we need to know? When you move into the office environment you are entering a completely different culture. You must recognize that you cannot treat administrators, support personnel and others as firefighters – they will not respond. You will soon find yourself dealing with a multitude of problems, anything from pants to personalities to budget issues. This means you must be flexible, able to think on your feet and have a wide breadth of knowledge. You are in a new political

arena. I've seen a well-respected union president become an Assistant Chief only to be told he doesn't know what it's like to be on the floor anymore. He'd only been in administration 18 months!!

You must learn to be politically astute, practice high ethical standards and engage with the community as well as in the stations. Those community connections can pay huge dividends when political winds begin to shift. Recognize you can't be all things to all people, nor can you be all knowing. Surround yourself with good people in an effort to build a solid team relying on their expertise as well as your own. It can be a struggle as many chiefs think they have to be an expert in every area – FYI, you do not, nor can you. The sooner you learn this lesson, the better off you will be.

Find balance, be engaged, and be kind to people. Always hold yourself to high ethical and moral standards. Practice courage in all you do. It is vital to have those crucial conversations and to hold people accountable, including yourself. If you make a mistake, own it! Remember, you are human too. If you do these things, you will likely be successful. All the while, get above the forest and look over the trees at the future. That is where you are headed.

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## Stuff That's Happening

As you are all aware by now, the board approved moving forward with the SAFER Grant at Monday's meeting. Patty has already posted the announcement and set a closing date. We will be testing the end of October. I was asked if we would waive the requirement to have FF I and II along with CPAT prior to testing. The answer was/is no. I understand that the college has a current class that will graduate prior to our February Academy Class. However, straying from our standard sets us up for potential issues in the future whether related to new hires or promotions e.g. I don't have my degree right now, but I'll have it in X months so just let me test now. In my opinion, it's better to remain as consistent as possible. The graduates of the current academy will have an opportunity to test next October. I hear good things about the class, so we should have some quality candidates coming through when they are eligible.

Some have heard rumors that "significant" changes are coming to the wildland program. Answer, no. Are we assessing some things to ensure we are balancing today's internal demands with the extended

wildland season? Yes. That said we are working with Todd, Labor and Senior Staff to assess what, if any, adjustments should be made. As the Chief, I am 100% committed to our wildland program and realize the tangible benefits we gain as CAFMA from our participation. However, as the wildland season has extended to nearly year around, we do have to seek some level of balance.

We have had to discontinue sponsoring retiree's off-district as of the end of this season. I have personally talked with Dean; Chief Bliss and I visited with Brian Cole today. We are working with them on connecting with PNF or the State to ensure they can still respond next season. Groom Creek is discontinuing their sponsorship program at the end of this season as well. This was a difficult decision, and even more difficult to sit with each person to let them know. However, both Dean and Brian more than understood and look forward to new and continued opportunities with CAFMA.

In addition, we are reclassifying our Support Reserve Program. Conceptually, we are moving to an Operations Volunteer Program. Dean and Brian will be instrumental in developing the program beyond where we are today. It is important to our organization that we keep our retirees involved as much as they want to be within the limits we are dealt by State and Federal Regulations. Hopefully, if Joe Kelley is reading this, he will take part as well.

Live Fire Training has been going well. I've been able to participate on two nights so far, and had a blast. October is presenting a problem given my evening meeting schedule, however I will be there next Monday night with my Dad so he can see how things run. I also plan to stop by the extreme auto extrication class Sunday.

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