

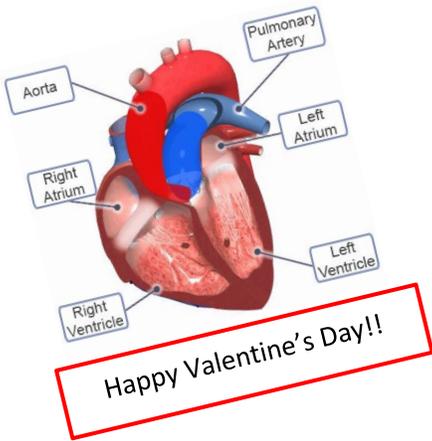
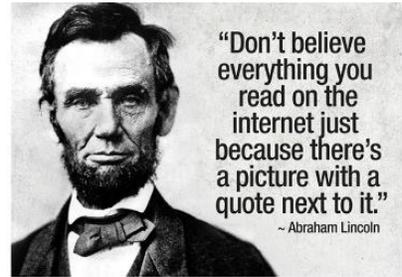


THE REVIEW

Central Arizona Fire and Medical - 8603 E. Eastridge Dr., Prescott Valley, AZ 86314 – February 14, 2020

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CAFMA Needs You!

That's right; we need our CAFMA folks to volunteer to assist with Fire Ops 101:

Friday April 3rd (A) from 17:00 – 21:00
 Saturday April 4th (B) from 07:00 – 14:00

Please contact Captain Burch as soon as possible, if you are available

The Chief's Desk

Wow, this is kind of a tough one given the viral nature of the topic and the passionate “reactions” from fire service personnel from around the country. I’ve wrestled with whether or not to even broach the topic, but I’m generally not one to shy away from potential controversy. So, here we go....

I’m sure you’ve heard the old adage “never judge a book by its cover.” Actually, this version of the saying is newer. The original phrase was written in a 1944 publication as “You can’t judge a book by its binding.” I’m not actually sure how we would update the phrase today to match the nature of information perpetuated by means of social media, Google, blogs, etc. Maybe, don’t be too quick to judge based on a sound bite or headline. Or, never judge a social media post by its content.

As human beings we are by nature judgmental. We may judge a new person at work based on something someone else said about them, or simply by their appearance e.g. facial expressions, demeanor, general appearance, etc. The funny thing is that usually once you take the time to actually dig deeper and get to know someone your opinion will change. Sometimes for the better and other times not.

The interesting thing about the internet is anyone can post anything about anything they want, it doesn’t have to be accurate. Unfortunately, we’ve become enamored with headlines, sound bites, and interesting pieces of “fact” that fit our ideology or narrative. I find it nauseating just trying to figure out from the news what actually happened at the end of any given day. Journalism as a profession has for all intents and purposes perished.

So, to the point, Atlanta Fire Captain Daniel Dwyer has been suspended for four days from the fire department for actions on the scene of a residential structure fire. We know he entered a building and pulled a woman from the structure. These are verifiable facts. Outside of that, all we really know is the headline, which is certainly attention grabbing. We do not know much about events leading up to him entering the building, and we know very little after the fact.

I have a good friend who is an Assistant Chief with the Atlanta Fire Department. I reached out to him Wednesday and left a message hoping to visit prior to this writing, but I have not heard back yet.

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Upcoming Events:

Feb 17 – Meeting, work on AFG Grant proposal
Feb 18 – Senior Leadership Academy
Feb 19 – Senior Leadership Academy
Feb 18-22 – Chief out of town on vacation

Board Meeting:

Feb 24th Chino
All Boards in a work study – 1600-1700
CAFMA – 1700-1830



20 Years After Cold Storage Fire, Residents Recall The Fallen Worcester Six

By: Simon Rios

A crowd of people lined up on one end of Worcester's Union Station one recent Sunday morning. They were there to see a special exhibit commemorating the Worcester Six.

"I guess 20 years is the time to break all this stuff out again and show the people. And the people still support us," said Angelo Bongovio, a Worcester firefighter from 1983 to 2011.

"We'll never forget these guys."

Bongovio was on duty at the Worcester Historical Fire Society's exhibit to greet visitors and answer their questions. The room is filled with posters made by school kids thanking the department, patches and caps sent in from firefighters around the country, and memorabilia salvaged from the burnt ruins of the Worcester Cold Storage & Warehouse Co. building.

He walked toward an old pair of firefighter gloves used in the blaze, framed with the pictures of the six who gave their lives: Thomas Spencer, Paul Brotherton, Timothy Jackson, Jeremiah Lucey, James Lyons, and Joseph McGuirk.

wbur.org

Does Your Team Have an Accountability Problem?

By: Melissa Raffoni

"We need to hold people more accountable." How many times have you said this in the past year? When things aren't going well — maybe your numbers are down, you haven't met your goals, or your pipeline is dry — it's easy to turn to this familiar mantra. But when you say it, what your team members actually hear is: "You are letting me down," or, "We are failing." Instead of lighting an inspired fire under people, you can end up deflating them.

While there will undoubtedly be times when your team could put in a more focused effort, in my experience, a "lack of accountability" is rarely intentional. More often, it's the result of an underlying issue, such as unclear roles and responsibilities, limited resources, a poor strategy, or unrealistic goals. This is why leaders who default to a plea for accountability often end up hitting a wall and feeling even more frustrated.

Further, verbalizing that there is "a lack of accountability" on your team can easily come off as threatening or condescending to people on the receiving end. This is hardly productive when you are trying to inspire change, and more importantly, it doesn't help you get to the root of the problem.

When you need to push those around you to get better results (that's really what you are looking for, right?), a better approach is to tackle the issue with a leadership mindset. Use the following steps to

guide yourself on how to start the conversation, identify the real issue at hand, and execute a plan that will help you solve it.

HBR.org

Chief's Desk Continued

In 2016, the San Antonio Fire Chief was eviscerated on social media and in news reports for terminating 6 cadets for drinking on duty. As is the case with most disciplinary actions, the facts of the incidents leading to termination were not released. The cadets, their supporters, and even their representative group took to social media and other channels decrying the short sighted and unfair decision of the fire chief. Again, the headlines were certainly attention grabbing. Eventually, the Chief was able to release the entire file related to the terminations. Low and behold, the hype perpetuated about the terminations was in fact that – nothing but hype. The story quickly faded from the headlines and social media as it was clear that the punishment fit the infraction.

Let's be clear, I'm not saying the punishment i.e. 4 day suspension without pay fits the infraction. I have no way of knowing if it does or not, because I am not privy to all of the information surrounding this incident. In fact, I can't say if Captain Dwyer's actions were heroic or reckless, because I don't know the circumstances. What I can say is that there are a lot of missing pieces to the story – as there should be because I am not involved in personnel issues for the Atlanta Fire Department. I work for CAFMA and only know personnel issues related to our organization.

There are certainly questions based on the multiple pieces of information found in trade publications, and internet snippets. For example, how is it the Captain was geared up and ready to go upon arrival, but his crew was not? Generally, at least in my experience, the crew is getting dialed on the way to the call while the company officer is gathering information from the computer and radio traffic while at the same time providing an additional set of eyes for the engineer. This is along with a multitude of other mental tasks.

What was the radio traffic? What orders were given to him and his crew? What were the conditions of the structure upon arrival? Were they first in, second in, fifth? Question after question for which I do not have an answer.

The headline is certainly attention getting Atlanta fire captain suspended for going into house alone to rescue woman. On the surface it seems a heroic act has been demonized by unknowing and uncaring upper echelon who are more concerned for policies than people. I've read countless statements from current or former firefighters stating that we've lost sight of who and what is important. Along with, we've lost our "aggressiveness" as a profession. Side note, aggressive in our profession is good, recklessness is not. I'm not saying Captain Dwyer was aggressive or reckless because I was not there and am in absolutely no position to judge.

One of the more disturbing things I've read is from people saying "I would do the exact same thing." It's a great sound bite, and bold statement, but extremely short sighted. If you do not know all of the facts surrounding the incident, how can you possibly say you would do the "exact" same thing? Sounds brave, but could also be very reckless – you don't know.

In 1999 six firefighters were killed in the Worcester Cold Storage and Warehouse fire. At one point the incident commander blocked the entrance of the building – no more were going to be lost. Yes, continuing to go into the building would have been heroic and each additional casket would have been adorned with the American Flag as the fire service and families paid homage for their sacrifice. But how many firefighters would have to be lost before someone said – no more. Since that fateful event, most have come to realize that the IC's actions saved the lives of countless other firefighters who would have entered to search for their brothers only to be lost themselves.

I had the privilege of visiting this past summer with Chief John Sullivan from Brookline, Massachusetts. At the time of the cold storage fire, John was Lt. John Sullivan of the Worcester Fire department who arrived with a crew of five and left with a crew of three. He has made it his life's work to take the lessons from that night and use them to train others.

I respect that our profession comes with inherent dangers and requires us to take risks. We have to make split second decisions that are life or death for citizens and well as for ourselves and our crews. However, we also recognize the difference between recklessness and courage.

I'm not going to judge Captain Dwyer, and I'm not going to judge the leadership of the Atlanta Fire Department. As I've matured in my career, I've learned that I truly cannot judge a book by its cover. I especially cannot judge anything by an attention grabbing headline. Personally, I find myself a bit skeptical these days requiring more information before passing judgement.

My intent in broaching this subject is to get us thinking outside of the hype and headlines. Making a bold public statement on social media about doing the same thing as Captain Dwyer certainly sounds brave. But, given the lack of details, is it smart? Folks, don't take headlines at face value and get caught up in the emotion. Use your critical thinking skills and ask some additional and important questions. There will certainly be lessons that could be learned from this situation, but only if we have all of the facts.