



THE REVIEW

Central Arizona Fire and Medical - 8603 E. Eastridge Dr., Prescott Valley, AZ 86314 – Oct 23, 2020

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“Culture is the one thing that we cannot deliberately aim at. It is the product of more or less HARMONIOUS activities, each pursued for its own sake.”

T.S. Elliot, Notes Towards The Definitions of Culture, (1948)



The Chief's Desk

So you want to promote. Why? That is an important question to answer before diving into the process and putting forth the effort and sacrifice it takes to prepare. The reality is that if you desire to promote, you should have already been preparing. In fact, you should have been preparing each and every day since your first day on the job. Having prepared throughout your career makes the lead up to testing much easier and much less stressful.

Remember this; time at work is not the same as your body of work. What do I mean by this? Some believe time on the job should be the deciding factor as it relates to promotion. I am not going to argue that time does not play a role because I believe it does. In fact, I wrote just a couple of weeks ago regarding the importance of experience in building your slide show. That said, time is not a deciding factor, it is what you have done with the time that matters. The question we need to ask is this – do you have 15 years of experience or one year of experience 15 times?

What are you doing with your time? Are you investing in your professional development in your off time as well as at work? Are you seeking additional training and experience within our organization as well as outside our organization? Have you taken time to teach others what you have learned? The great thing about teaching is that it is a really good learning opportunity. If you think because you are standing in front of the room that you know more than everyone sitting in the room, you are sadly mistaken.

Each time I have had the opportunity to teach or present whether while serving at a university, speaking at a conference or other training venue I have learned something new. Sometimes what I have learned came from students, and other times I have learned something new through preparation for the class. If you want to find out how much you do not know, prepare to teach a program. As the saying goes, you don't know what you don't know until you don't know. This means you have to challenge yourself and set stretch goals as we have discussed before.

Back to the *why*. It is no secret that we are going to ask you why you want to promote. If you want to promote because you believe you should have power, authority, fame and fortune, you are not someone who should be promoted. Wanting to promote is not about you. Let that one sink in. No matter if you are promoting in the private sector or within a governmental entity, promoting for your own self-aggrandizement is not a reason to promote. In fact, your employer should not promote you, if that is your true *why*.

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Upcoming Events:

Oct 26 – Andie Smith-Rorick
Flag Raising Admin, Assistant
Fire Marshal Interview, Board
meeting, Conference call with
Mesa FD
Oct 27 – BC Meeting, Possible
recording of Podcast, Prep
Naval Post Graduate School
Oct 28 – Flag Raise CARTA Bliss,
Meeting with Ring, Prep Naval
Post Graduate School
Oct 29 – Flag lowering Bliss
CARTA, Yavapai County Chiefs
Oct 30 – Flag Raise Sims Station
54
Oct 31 – Flag Lowering Sims
Station 54

Board Meetings:

October 26
CAFMA – 1700-1830

How To Make Sure You Are Living Up to Your Potential

By: Lolly Daskal

No matter how well you're doing and how many skills you've acquired, you may not be fully living up to your leadership potential.

If you suspect that you have untapped potential but you're not sure how to reach it, start by working to discover what's standing in your way so you can put yourself back on track to being the leader you know you can be.

If you don't know yourself: Self-understanding is critical to leadership. If you want to understand, motivate and inspire others, you have to begin with yourself. Hire a coach or find a mentor who can help you define your strengths, your gaps, and your style of leadership. All of us have gold hidden within, but we have to dig to get it out.

If you're self-centered: Top leaders spend much of their time thinking of others and finding ways to support them, coach them, mentor them and develop them. Great leadership consists largely of believing in others and helping them become great. If you aren't already doing that, you need to take the focus off yourself. Start cultivating your empathy and devoting more of your time and energy to those around you.

lollydaskal.com

Practicing Empathy – The Five L's

By: Kevin Eikenberry

Empathy – understanding the feeling and emotions someone is feeling as a way to provide solace and support while building understanding and trust – is a critical leadership skill. I've written and recorded several messages about empathy in the past few months, because this practice is more important than ever. In the past, I've tried to convince you of the importance, and provided you with some tactical skills to help. Today, I want to give you ways to practice empathy as a part of how you lead and live every day.

I call them the Five L's of Practicing Empathy.

Lean in

You can't be empathetic at an emotional distance. Lean in physically and come closer emotionally too. Creating physical (when possible) and emotional closeness creates the possibility for empathy. Leaning in creates a sense of closeness, togetherness and intimacy that will help people feel safe enough to share.

Listen

You can't be empathetic without listening, but you are listening for more than their situation, but for how they are feeling in response to and as a result of the situation. Remember that different people will respond to any situation differently. Knowing the facts doesn't create empathy. Listen to understand how people feel now and what they are seeing in their future.

blog.kevineikenberry.com

Chief's Desk Continued

On the other hand, if you are promoting because you think you can make things better for those you work with, for the community, and for the organization, you are absolutely on the right track. Promoting does not bring with it fame, fortune, or wealth at least not typically in the fire service. Ask Chief Feddema and Chief Rose. Both promoted to senior chief level positions, and both took significant pay cuts. They did not promote for themselves, they promoted because they believe that they can help to move our organization forward improving it for all of us as well as our community. They were promoted because we believe in their ability not only to continue our forward progress as an organization, but we also feel their presence as part of senior staff will make Chief Tharp and me better. It is about continuous improvement no matter the position you hold.

Here is the problem with promoting for selfish reasons – yes, you are promoting to a new rank or title, but what you are really promoting to is an increased level of responsibility. People who promote for selfish reasons do not understand or live up to the new level of responsibility. If not held accountable for their actions or non-actions, the mission of the organization becomes lost.

With each step you take in your career comes an ever increasing level of responsibility. Rather than the analogy of climbing a ladder to the top, I prefer to think of it as climbing a pyramid that begins to tilt with each promotion. By the time you reach the peak or pinnacle, the entire pyramid has turned upside down with you now at the bottom. You are responsible for everyone and everything every day. That is a significant load that some refer to as the burden of leadership. Some ascend to the peak never realizing that the pyramid is actually upside down. They do not understand that their duty is to serve everyone else in the organization as well as the community.

Yes, unfortunately some promote for selfish reasons and continue to rise to their highest level of incompetence. Once they expose themselves for who they are, they move on and somehow find another place to land. There are those who promote for the right reasons but somehow lose their way.

For some the positional authority or power becomes intoxicating. Beware of the allure. Remember, it is not the authority or power you are promoting to, you are promoting to a new level of responsibility that includes serving others.

Here is another tip for you just in case you think you can BS your way through a promotional process. If you have been with an organization for any length of time, your superiors know who and what you are. When we ask why you want to be promoted, we typically already have a good idea of the answer. No, we do not need a crystal ball because we have your body of work. That is right, we know you through your words and actions demonstrated over the years so we know what you really represent.

If you are someone that seeks to hide from work, or complains constantly without offering solutions - we know it. If you are someone that looks for the fastest route to completing a task without considering the quality of the final product – we know it. If you lack emotional intelligence or the ability to exercise self-control – we know it. As you have witnessed within our organization, you will not be promoted just because you pass the test. We are looking at you in your entirety and considering what your body of work says about you. Does that mean you will never promote? Absolutely not. It does mean that you may need to take a good hard look at who you are and how you conduct yourself both inside and outside the work environment. Our goal is to help you achieve your goal, but you have to understand and live up to our expectations as an organization.

If your goal in life and your career is to promote, you need to define your why, and you need to consider that your actions, words, and behavior are on display every day inside and outside the work place. When you work for the fire department everybody knows it whether you are in operations or you are in non-operations. Working for a fire service agency is, well, it is just cool and we are proud of what we do. It is absolutely something to be proud of, but being proud also means respecting the organization by adhering to our values no matter the time of day or day of the week. I would go so far as to say that the same is true in any profession.

We have a lot of change on the horizon in a very short period of time within the Arizona Fire Service as well as within our own organization. Scottsdale Fire is looking at a nearly 50% turnover of their personnel in the next four to five years. As I have mentioned before, we have 12 guaranteed retirements in the next five years with 44 possible. Many of my peers in the state are already in the drop or are looking to drop in the next couple of years.

The Arizona Fire Chiefs Association, Arizona Fire Districts Association, Professional Firefighters of Arizona, as well as CAFMA recognize that we need to prepare the next generation of fire service leaders. We also recognize that if we fail to prepare, we will end up with the wrong people in the wrong seats. It does not take long to derail the train if you have the wrong conductor. To that end, it is important that we develop programs and people for the future. That also means that you need to take the initiative to prepare. No short cuts, no delusions of grandeur. You have to put in the time and effort to build your knowledge, skills, ability, and reputation.

If you read any of this and thought to yourself that I was talking about you, then you may need to do one of two things. If you are doing the work and your goal is to improve the environment for the greater

good, keep doing what you're doing – don't stop. If you think I was calling you out for being a selfish slacker or someone who lacks emotional maturity, then you better take a good hard look at yourself and start making changes. No one can do it for you.

One last note because I think we could all use a reminder, especially in today's environment. Try to be a better human being today than you were yesterday. If we all work towards that simple goal, we will make things better, at least within our respective sphere of influence.