

5. Most Important Leadership Principles (5:14)

CREDIBILITY #1 - Honesty, of course, is absolutely necessary in everything you do. Doesn't make any difference whether it's on the job or something related to the job. You're just basically honest so you're known to be honest so when you tell somebody something they don't have to wonder now - is he talking to me today like he really means it? Will you mean it all the time? Then they have it accepted. If you want the job to be done only deal in honesty. Once you tell a fib, when do they know ever to believe you again?

So I would say, if you want to be a good leader you're basically enthusiastic but you're an honest guy. Everybody knows when they talk to you they get your opinion. My bosses got the same thing. If they were senior to me, didn't make any difference. I just gave him what I thought the truth was. The Coast Guard hired me to help the Coast Guard. If they needed to be told something, I told them. So being honest is really important.

MISSION #2 - How can you lead people into stuff when you don't even know what you want? Now, if you don't know what you want, there's nothing wrong with that because lots of people get there. That's what you have the troops for. You tell them that. You say, "We are going to develop the best air station in the United States Coast Guard. We don't know exactly how to do that but that's what we're going to do. I'm counting on every one of you guys, every one of you, to be upfront with productive ideas because almost any idea may save us time."

Take care of their needs and then pretty soon they're all involved in building the air station. It isn't just me the project officer. It's everybody's and then of course when we built the air station it wasn't my air station. It was their air station because they were involved in almost every one of the things we did.

As a leader, you really should know yourself and know what you want to do. You should know your goal and you should be enthusiastic about it.

COMMUNICATIONS #3 - You may notice I speak a little bit loud. I never want my troops to not hear me or they couldn't do the order because they didn't hear me. That seems so wrong. First it's inefficient. Secondly it's wrong. They don't know exactly what to do cuz they didn't hear you. That's wrong.

Remember yesterday? I told you to stop and I looked at you? - YES - I told you when I talk to people I want to look at them one-on-one. I want to look at them to see how they're accepting what I'm saying. You can tell almost immediately from looking at people whether they're buying what you're saying or not. How much they're buying it. How much they're with you. There's a lot of things you can read.

If you don't listen to your people, you're sitting there talking blah blah blah blah, you're not getting half the communications you should have. I believe you should talk with your people and really to your people and that's just another one of my idiosyncrasies. You make sure that when you pass the word to your troops that you give it to them in a language that

they understand - so they can understand the goal and probably what you expect of them because you told them. You people are going to do the job. This is what I expect you to do.

So, what would your fourth most important leadership principle be?

RECOGNITION #4 - What would it be - my fourth one? Probably my fourth one would be make sure the people know how important they are to you. When stationed at a station that I was in command of, the people really belong to Carol and me. They were our responsibility. Carol said it over and over again and I said it over and over again. They're our responsibility. We need to take care of them. If they need to be trained, we train them. If they need to be disciplined, we discipline them. If they need to be discharged, we discharge them.

To me they're almost, well they're like my kids in the sense that we felt responsible for them. We loved our troops and I used to have just one good group of people after another because they knew that Carol and I felt that way about them. And then finally from your conversations with them and guidance they got to understand that you believe in them. You believe in their capability; you believe they can do it - now go do it and do it to the best of your ability and we will have a good program because of you; because your people are dedicated to the job and when we get done, it won't be something for me - it'll be for the Coast Guard and for those people that need it.

Related Primary Leadership Principles

Effective Use of Resources	Feedback
Responsibility	Field Presence
Discipline	High Energy
Team-Building	Expectations
Training	Mission
Attitudes	Capacity to Care
Credibility	Recognition