

37. My Disciplinary Approach (2:56)

If people are not doing something according to the rules, you've got to tell them and punish them in some way if nothing other than a lecture. But you do, like all corrections, if anybody does something wrong, they have to know that it's wrong, they have to be caught doing it and then you have to get their attention by some kind of punishment whether it's verbal or actual.

If you don't have a meaningful punishment, that doesn't mean anything either. To fine General Motors \$1,000 for something doesn't mean anything to them. So whatever ...if you're going to correct something that is being done wrong, you have to catch it, you have to change it and then you have to make sure you got their attention.

Well, there's several things about punishment. If you got ...let's just take a normal organization - you got two or three percent or whatever that are truly criminal. They probably aren't correctable. Then you got about 5 percent maybe are fence sitters. They will be perfectly correct if you straighten them out. Once you got the attention of the fence sitters, all the rest of people are pretty good. They'll never have any problem.

So when somebody does something wrong you may have to make an example out of them. You don't have to punish all 5 percent. Punish two or three so they have meaningful punishment so it's well known. Then they don't do it. Then all the fence sitters get over on the good side.

Now the actual criminal type you may not ever be able to change. You get rid of them. You get rid of them. That's right and that's the nice thing about the military. If you have a person that is absolutely irresponsible, that does not follow the rules ever and that sort of thing, you can get rid of them. And we do. And that's when you got a small organization like the Coast Guard, you got to have good people.

So discipline is a very important facet of a good military program. Not harsh discipline. Just known positive, consistent, fair. You do all those things, the people will soon learn let's get on the right side.

I was a very firm, positive officer but I was very fair. But if they knew if they did something wrong I was probably going to correct them. And the degree of which they did it had to do with how tough I was with the punishment

Related Primary Leadership Principles

Accountability	Continual Learning	Followership
Active Listening	Credibility	Recognition
Capacity to Care	Decision-Making	Responsibility
Character	Discipline	Team-Building