

Bridges: Our Thoroughfares To The Future

Navigational Proficiencies

Bridges To Build

Building bridges creates new opportunities that enable us to venture out and conquer new territory. It also opens up a pathway for others to gain access to us. In a new endeavor there are three foundational qualities to set as stakes in the ground. Why? To create a secure base to lead from. In doing so, you are setting up the possibility of doing something spectacular with the new assignment/venture.

Character:

This word receives a great deal of attention in business and in life. Being a person of character is at the top of attributes most look for in leaders and those we admire. But what is character and where does it come from?

Character comes from a Greek word meaning chisel, or the mark left by a chisel. The chisel is also used for stripping away waste materials, stuff that might get in the way of essentials—what really matters in life. You have to chisel your character out of the raw material of yourself, just like a sculptor creates a statue. The raw material is always there; and **everything that happens to you, good or bad, is an opportunity for you to build or chisel out your personal character.**

Character is the person you are after you have chiseled and chiseled and have moved past all of the unnecessary qualities to what is important deep down. People of character are usually well-loved by everyone around them. But they make it clear that their own first love is for the truth, even if it hurts.

Character is the result of hundreds and hundreds of choices you may make that gradually turn who you are at any given moment into who you want to be.

- Being someone known as doing the right thing consistently.
- Honoring those on your watch when they aren't in the room.
- Thinking primarily of your responsibilities to people and process.
- Being a lamplighter who leaves a glow in the lives of others they've led.
- Their destiny is tied to making things better by delivering fortunes of service.

Competency:

The most competent people I know have a mental model they abide by as it relates to the work that they do. It's called the **One-Day Contract**. This contract isn't imposed on them, but rather enacted by them. Why? As a means of delivering excellence. In other words, you are playing for a one-day contract. You are afforded today to perform and then learn whether that opportunity will be granted again tomorrow. A one-day contract person is quite different than most. They are fully focused and in charge of their performance throughout the day. Their construct is as follows:

- They fully prepare in advance for the upcoming one day and are fully ready to go.
- They bring a deep focus and determined mindset to all opportunities on the agenda.
- Execution is done in a manner driven by an internal desire to contribute.
- Collaboration takes place with stakeholders in order to be of service and add ongoing value.
- Reflection ends the day by conducting an after-action review of what took place and was delivered. Learning absorbed and wisdom acquired.

Qualities include active listening, the wearing a great attitude, building an ongoing bond with stakeholders, drawing out greatness in others, making the day your best day, displaying enthusiasm for what is upon you, and operating with a PhD-passionate, hungry, and driven. Lastly, they build a bridge by developing others who will help them win. Do these things and your competence will win the day wherever you go.

Connection:

The care and manner in which you build optimal working relationships will ultimately define your effectiveness as a leader. **Relationships drive results.** It is absolutely essential to look at everyone we influence as a work in process that we get to play a part in sculpting. Some consistently develop winners. Others lead turnover machines with a focus on results only and people don't matter beyond their ability to perform. **To be in tremendous demand wherever you may head, it is mission critical to be someone who finds the good in others and guides them to higher ground.** It's easy to enforce rules. It's quite different to be someone who cultivates potential.

To win during a time of change, be someone who consistently and throughout every exchange, no matter the challenge, makes people feel valued. There won't always be agreement, but there can always be caring candor.

"Leadership is communicating to people their worth and potential so clearly that they come to see it in themselves"