

WE CAN ALL BE LEADERS

BY: DOUGLAS CAIN



This is the final installment about leadership and I felt it important to give some insight on how I honestly believe that anyone/everyone can be a leader, no matter if they are pushing a broom or signing the checks. Leadership is an honor afforded to every individual in the company or in the home.

I have read a number of books regarding leadership over the last six months. Some were dry and formulaic, others were interesting, but I could never find the hook but one book was actually a 'fable' as it were and I enjoyed it immensely. "The Leader Who Had No Title" really took over a couple of months ago as one of my favorite pieces of 'leadership reference materials', as I like to call it, and was written by leadership consultant, Robin Sharma.

One of the reasons we can all be leaders is that we all have natural powers endowed upon us... we must choose to use them. We all have the daily opportunity to express the absolute best within ourselves. Half measures almost never result in positive outcomes. We all have the power to inspire, influence and elevate everyone we meet and show that great example of leadership, daily.

Why would you go through even an hour of a single day not inspiring people? We all have the power within us to drive positive change in the face of an otherwise negative world. I always want to be looked upon as the person

that people gravitate to when the world goes to hell in a hand basket.

Finally, we all have the ability to be living examples of leadership to all the stakeholders in our lives. We can treat all with respect, appreciation and kindness and in doing so raise the culture of our organization to what we refer to as 'Best In Class'. And folks, you do not

need a title to do any of the above four things. It is a choice, friends, which you can do on an hourly basis or not do at all.

I have also had the opportunity to think about the concepts of success and failure. Again, this easy to read book gave me points of view that I had never considered regarding these subjects.

'Success is created through the performance of few small daily disciplines that stack up over time to produce achievements far beyond anything you could have planned for.' This made my number one 'Dougism' really pop in my mind: Integrity is very expensive

on Monday and doesn't even start paying off until Friday. It's that last part that really hit me recently. All my integrity of 30 years, the being broke for a quarter of a century, the 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and no vacations is finally paying off.

As pointed out by our CFO Jess Stephens, "It has just started being Friday." It was the daily application of integrity that separated me from the rest and kept me in business when my competitors were dropping like flies in the multiple recessions during that 30-year span.

And the flip side of that coin, failure? 'Failure, on the other hand, is just as easy to slip into. Failure is nothing more than the inevitable outcome of a few small acts of daily neglect performed consistently over time so that they take you past the point of no return.' Did you like those last five words? Stop and think of those people that wasted a 30-year working career and now so late in life, there is nothing to do about it. But now think about the first part. I hated sales calls...but I did them every day. Oh Lord, how I hated to pick up that phone. Do the things you do not like to do first, and do them with the same gusto that you have when you do the things you love to do. That is what leaders do.

Now, in case you are wondering if I ever had my own 'Leaders Without a Title,' I can assure you I did. They were Isiah Butler, Franklin Davis, the Rev. Owens and Mr. Bass. As a 13-year-old boy my father gave me my first Lake Truck Lines uniform and sent me with

"NO INSTITUTION CAN POSSIBLY SURVIVE IF IT NEEDS GENIUSES OR SUPERMEN TO MANAGE IT. IT MUST BE ORGANIZED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO BE ABLE TO GET ALONG UNDER A LEADERSHIP COMPOSED OF AVERAGE HUMAN BEINGS."

— PETER DRUCKER

those four fine men to learn about hard work, attention to detail, critical thinking, honesty and making your life's work the most fun thing you do. To those four men who raised me from 13 to 21, I owe you a debt of gratitude I can never repay, thank you.

You don't need to have the title President after your name to be a leader... you can be a leader without a title. Until next time...

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