



Corsini's Point of the Week™

MARCH 29, 2010

Characters and Character

Part 2 of 3

Thank you very much for all of the positive comments we received from our *Character and Characters* POTW last week. **We certainly do appreciate the feedback!** Since that struck a chord with so many people, I'm going to keep that theme going for a bit.

Several weeks ago, I attended a leadership event at Samford University where Wes Cantrell, the retired CEO for Lanier Worldwide, Inc., spoke. His presentation was captivating. He was **candid and authentic as he discussed how he successfully incorporated his faith into his leadership at the company.**

One of the most interesting stories he told was **a cautionary tale about a CEO he knew who had taken arrogance and aloofness to a whole new level.** He said this CEO went so far as to have an elevator installed near his office at the company headquarters so he could bypass his employees in the building. Seems he didn't have the time (nor the inclination) to be bothered by them.

The story was attention-grabbing and disturbing at the same time; it illustrated all too well how a leader can go astray if left unchecked.

With responsibility comes ... more responsibility. Some people understand this better than others.

Here's an example of how leaders *should* behave: I visited a large pharmaceutical distribution company years ago. The CEO was gracious enough to lead a tour for a group of us who were in a leadership program. During the tour he showed us a large "bullpen" type of open office with several rows of desks arranged very close together. There were no dividers at all between the desks; everyone in this area could hear everyone else's conversations. **The CEO pointed to a desk in the very center of this open room, and he told us that was where he sat.** This was his office. No mahogany-paneled, assistant-guarded haven for him. **He sat at the center desk in a large room of desks with his employees.**

He went on to explain that if he had a private matter to deal with, he went to one of the small conference rooms that lined one side of the larger room. These smaller rooms had floor-to-ceiling windows so anyone could see right in. He said, **"This allows me to keep my pulse on what is going on, and it lets me know what people are concerned about."**

What it did was keep him connected in a way that someone who uses a personal elevator can never know.

Quote of the Week

"I like to listen.
I have learned
a great deal from
listening carefully.
Most people
never listen."

— Ernest Hemingway

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CORSINI'S POINT

If you are a leader (and we are all leaders in life at some point), make sure you stay connected with your people. Don't build imaginary (or real) walls between you and your employees, vendors or anyone else who is important to your success. Stay connected. Avoid aloofness (and the alienation that will come with it) at all costs.

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