



Corsini's Point of the Week™

APRIL 5, 2010

Have Character ... Don't Be One

Part 3 of 3

Over the last couple of weeks, we've been exploring the leadership difference between those people with character and others we'll simply call "characters." **I believe most people in business want to be known as people of character.** They want this as part of their legacy. Unfortunately, for some people that's impossible. For some, their vision and desire to be a person of character gets sidetracked by ego, pride, lust and any (or all) of the other seven deadly sins.

This week, I want to conclude our character/characters discussion with a few points about keeping your word. When it comes to leadership, this trait is huge! **In the long run, it makes or breaks a leader.** You might be able to get away with being disingenuous and not keeping your word for a while—especially if you have someone at the top looking out for you or maybe if you're in a highly charged political situation, but it will eventually catch up with you. Guaranteed. And there will be fallout. **Insincerity (and outright lies) will have a significant impact, in one way or another, on everyone who comes in contact with you.**

In almost 20 years as a business coach, **I've coached businesspeople whose word was as good as gold. When they told you that they would do something, you knew they'd do it.** If they told you that they appreciated you, you absolutely knew they did. And if they told you that you hadn't done something right, you might not like hearing that, but you knew they were being authentic and not out to undermine you.

On the other hand, **we've all known people whose word didn't mean much.** They might or might not do what they said they'd do. They were known to give false praise, and rarely was their feedback genuine. If, during a review, one of these people told you that, "no one got a raise this year," you would have little (if any) confidence in the validity of what they were saying.

So why is this such a big deal? Here's why: **Leadership is about getting people to follow you.** If people don't believe that you are being authentic with them, they won't buy in—especially if you are asking them to make sacrifices, go the extra mile or take a risk for you.

Recently, I met with a well-known and highly respected executive; I wanted insights into his leadership style, and I wanted to better understand his philosophies on success. **He said he thought of his employees in terms of "saving accounts." He told me he was always investing in them so that one day, when he needed something from them, they would gladly let him make a "withdrawal."** They would be willing to help him. Remember this: You can't make a withdrawal if people don't trust you or believe you are being authentic with them. This leader had great clarity on

Quote of the Week

"One good thing you can give away and still keep: your word."

— Unknown

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CORSINI'S POINT

Years ago, one of my clients told me all he really had in life was his reputation. He made sure that every day he was polishing his reputation—not tarnishing it. One of the best ways to keep your own reputation polished is to be a person of character. Be true to your word. Do what you say you'll do. Nothing speaks more to your character than following through with what you say. We all are constantly tested on our words—nearly each time we open our mouths. We are graded on keeping our word every day by everyone. Ultimately, other people have the final word on how well you keep your own word. And you have my word on that.



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