



REDLINE

LEADERSHIP L.L.C.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT COACHING FOR PUBLIC SAFETY LEADERS



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Tip o' the Hat

This month's "Tip o' the Hat" goes out to Richard O'Rourke, Brighton Fire Rescue District, for his promotion to Lieutenant! Rich's path to this point in his career is quite storied beginning his career in the conservation corps in 2010 in Nevada before moving into wildland. He continued this path and became a Hotshot for the USFS out of Utah before moving into his first gig in EMS in Arvada (CO). From there he hired with Brighton Fire Rescue, working his way from firefighter to paramedic, on to engineer and now Lieutenant. In all of Rich's roles, he has found his way into leadership roles, demonstrating not only competent skills but compassion for people.



Rich's passion to serve has led him to roles on several teams/projects both inside and outside the organization. He is particularly proud of his work with the Help for Homes Program in Brighton where he coordinated volunteers focused on home repairs for those in need. He has participated in the elementary school fire education program, Kids Academy as an instructor, Truck or Treat and Adams County Fair. I think perhaps he enjoys working with kids!!

Lt. O'Rourke holds an BS in Environmental Science from University of Illinois Urbana/Champaign and is a National Registry Paramedic, earning his certification through the Denver Health Paramedic School.

"U-Turn or Ultimate Success?"

I recently traveled to Colorado to celebrate the Brighton Fire Rescue and Fort Lupton Fire District graduation from the Redline program, affording me an opportunity to gather with a couple of current and retired Fire Chiefs for lunch. I love these opportunities because you never know the "topic du jour" and where the learning opportunity lies. And this lunch was no exception. Let me lay out my most recent discovery, a lesson in mentoring and more importantly, humility.

Before I share the lesson, let me share the players. As usual, Retired Chief Gordie Olson (Thornton CO) was there, along with Chief Brycen Garrison (Brighton CO) and Chief Stephen Kelley (Thornton). Gordie has mentored all of us, contributing to Stephen and Brycen not only successfully attaining the position of Chief of Department, but being successful in the role. I appreciate all of these guys and the lessons they have taught me. It was fun to listen to the talk about their current issues, issues facing the fire service in Colorado and as an industry. And believe me, it is a different environment than when I entered the service "just over 6 months ago."

Near the end of lunch, there was very exciting discussion happening about taxation, funding, alternative resources and such. Now understand, no one gets this better than Chief O. He has always been great at strategizing for budget purposes, identifying funding mechanisms and streams of resources. Chief Garrison and Gordie were deep in conversation about levy and mill rates, keeping me on the edge of my seat. Suddenly, I realized Gordie was awful quiet which caused me to take pause. I noticed he was listening intently to Brycen describe "...legislative measure that altered tax blah, blah, blah...." Yep, on the edge of my seat.

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Tip o' the Hat...(continued)

"Words of Wisdom" from Rich O'Rourke? In his normal "humble Rich" style he said; "I don't know how wise this is, but I have always found that when I am pushing myself to the edge of my abilities, I learn and grow the most. Starting this process can be uncomfortable for me. But typically as I work past that feeling, I end up having a lot of fun and broadening the edge of where my abilities are."

Congratulations, Lieutenant O'Rourke! Job well done!

We concluded lunch, Chief Garrison and Chief Kelley heading off to their next meeting, and Gordie and I heading home before graduation. On our way home, Gordie said, "Brycen does a great job of taking information in, learning it, adapting it and using it. He really understands this taxation stuff." He went on to say, "I recognized today that I was sitting and listening, learning from someone I mentored. The teacher became the student." Holy cow!! That's it! I replied with, "That is the ultimate goal of mentoring; to develop others so they not only succeed, but can develop others." I then pointed out that even more important is that the mentor remain humble enough to take in the lesson offered by the "mentee turned mentor." Without that humility, the former mentor might see themselves as above the lesson, missing valuable perspective.

This adjustment can be intimidating for the mentor. Regularly, in the work I do with the people I mentor, I bump up against someone that I find intimidating because they are so sharp, so educated, so intelligent or can see things so well. When this happens, I remind myself that I still have something to offer even the best of the best; perspective. I have an experience, training, a view they don't and by sharing this, it will help them grow. Often, just by sharing whether a perspective or a bit of information, growth occurs.

My point in this little slice is to remind all of us to constantly work to develop those around us, those that will succeed us while maintaining enough humility to recognize that we can learn from those that we have helped grow. But if your ego is too big, it will get in the way of your own personal growth and then you just simply become a plug that holds everyone else back. I watched it happen in my past but that is a whole different story.

Emotional Intelligence!!

Do you want to:

- Increase the value of what you say?
- Avoid impulsive decisions?
- Avoid passive-aggressive behavior?
- Promote true collaboration and build trust?
- Strengthen your relationships?
- Completely transform the way you view criticism?
- Give yourself a window into the way others perceive you?

Watch for an upcoming opportunity to improve your Emotional Quotient through training!!!



On Track?

INVESTMENT: noun: the investing of money or capital in order to gain profitable returns, as interest, income, or appreciation in value.

Are you *INVESTING* through your words, actions and behaviors?

"I Failed, I'm a Loser!!"

1982-3 The first set of numbers in the column to the left, 1982-2011, are years with the associated number of failures noted after them. 1982-1984 were attempts to get hired. I took 13 tests before I had success, before I was hired by Fire District 26 in Des Moines (WA). 1992-1995 were tests for Lieutenant. It took me 4 times losing out to someone else before I got my bars. 1994-1 2008-2011 were tests for Battalion Chief, where I was obviously passed over for someone else. And most of those people that passed me up were better candidates for the role. 18 attempts where I failed to achieve my desired goal. 18 failures! I'm a loser!

2011-1 The second set of numbers, 1985 to 2012, are the years with the associated number of successes, noted after them. These successes are for positions that I wished to hold and that I competed for. Grand total of 5. Five times I hit the target out of 23 tries!!

1985-1 What does this tell me? Well, first, I am not the sharpest tool in the shed. Beyond that, it taught me that I am going to have a lot more failures than successes on this journey. And just because I was delayed in attaining my position didn't mean I wasn't successful or as successful as others. It taught me to be persistent. Which is way more valuable than easily attaining your goal!! Keep trying....you'll get it!

Total 18

1985-1

1996-1

2006-1

2007-1

2012-1

Total 5

Graduation!!

I had the pleasure of traveling to Colorado to celebrate the commitment and success of the individuals from Brighton Fire Rescue Protection District and Fort Lupton Fire Protection District with graduation ceremonies. It wasn't fancy, but it represents the efforts of all and their willingness to reflect and question themselves in an interest of greater self awareness. Our conversations often reveal vulnerabilities these leaders have as well as areas of opportunity for growth. Congratulations to all and thank you for sharing your journey with me. I am forever grateful for our time together. K-



Brighton Fire Rescue, Left to Right: Owen McKeough, Staughton McCann, Aaron Martinez, Me, LaRae Szafraniec, Logan Alberti, Brycen Garrison. Not pictured: Devin Mellars, Leon Miller, Rich O'Rourke,



Fort Lupton Fire, Left to Right: Marc Steiner, Nick Spendlow, Ryan Pfeiffer, Me, Sam Gambee, Alex Breen, Walt Adams, Chief Phil Tiffany, Evan Wilson. Not pictured: Tanner Alm, Antony Melendez.