



REDLINE

LEADERSHIP L.L.C.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT COACHING FOR PUBLIC SAFETY LEADERS



Issue 6 – August 2023

Tip o' the Hat...

To Debbie VanWanselee from North Metro Fire Rescue (CO) for simply being awesome. Debbie is the Training Center Coordinator

(TCC), working collaboratively with not only 2 department's training divisions but also with partners from across the region.

On the daily, I was greeted by a wonderful, high energy, positive, compassionate person that was absolutely

the glue for the Training Division. As is true of many "front desk people", she knew more about what we were doing and what was going on than any member of the 2 training divisions working there. She is the consistency when Division staff are rotated, keeping the ship on course.

Debbie wears many hats for her role as the TCC from sandwich orderer to certification tracker to agency scheduler...a "Doer of All."

Did I mention that when she decided she wanted to be better at her job she went back to college and obtained a MBA?! #committed!!

When I asked her for her words of wisdom, she shared 3 thoughts, all which I love:

"Grace. You gotta have grace in this job. People make mistakes."

"Sometimes you have to be that iron fist with a velvet glove. You never know what they are going through."

"Never mistake my kindness for weakness."

Wanna be a leader? Be more like Debbie!!

The Power of Permission

Last month I gave a tip of the hat to Lieutenant Scott Ervin Acknowledging his 37 year career and contributions to the fire service. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the contributions he made to my success.

Scott was assigned to my shift when I was a newly promoted lieutenant. When Scott came to my crew, he came with a warning from his previous officer that he was a bit of an underperformer. My response to that was "I'll do my own evaluation, make my own judgment." As a new member of my crew, I shared my expectations of him with him and we started down our path.

Some period later, we were sitting around the table complaining about something or everything as firefighters often do. One of our topics was the fire prevention program. We all agreed that the program, a one sheet coloring contest, wasn't very robust in that it didn't really teach much and the reward system for participation hit only a couple of students across the entire district. I, as the "designated adult", took our complaint to our monthly officers meeting, explaining our belief that the system could be improved and that we were willing to do the work. I was advised that we had no money for a program but was welcome to give it a shot.

I returned to my crew with the great news that we were welcome to do whatever we wanted but had no money. Scott didn't really see this as a problem and quickly took the lead on the project. Scott, working closely

with his peers, developed a program that was sports themed. The first year was baseball with each participating class divided into 2 teams. Each student was to get a chance at "bat," answering a fire safety related question. Every student got their question correct and had a chance to make a trip around the bases. Coincidentally, every game that we played ended in a tie score so there were no losers. Every student that participated received a gift bag with a 911 information coloring book, ruler, pencils, erasers, and more. The kids loved it!

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The Power of Permission...cont.

You might be thinking that this all sounds great but what about associated cost? Not a problem for Scott and company. He simply partnered with community businesses to provide the resources necessary to develop our playing surface and all of our prizes.

The first year that we went out with our program, we received a lukewarm welcome. We were able to get into between 40 and 50% of the classrooms the first year of our offering. Towards the end of our first year program, we were being contacted by non participating teachers. The second year our theme was basketball and our classroom participation was nearly 100 percent. Amazing work Scott and company! Scott went on to be a great contributor and partner on my crew until the time when we had to part ways because of reassignment and promotions.

At the beginning of this article I mentioned Scott's contribution to my success. You may see this as all Scott's success but I feel like this was A huge learning point in my career that contributed to my success later on. What I learned through this program was what I call the "power of permission."

The "power of permission." While I did my job, taking the issue up the chain of command so that they were aware of the problem and our willingness to overcome it, the real success began when I gave permission to Scott to creatively come up with a solution to our problem. I trusted him and his team to develop a solution to the problem that was all encompassing, that would be a positive reflection on not only ourselves but on the organization as a whole and would have a positive impact on the community. I delegated to them the responsibility for developing a program and identifying a funding source and the authority to make decisions as necessary.

Continued next column

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Link of the Month!!

Follow the link below to an article I found worthy as it challenges our conventional mindset. Let us know what you think!!

"Increase Your KnowledgeNet!"

The Power of Permission...cont.

This is singly some of the most successful work that I have done across my career and I really didn't have to do anything. I learned lessons from this experience that I carry with me to this very day.

By trusting them, they increased their trust and respect for me, which directly made me more successful as a leader then and throughout the rest of my career. For this, I thank you, Scott Ervin.

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On Track?

Gratitude: noun-

The quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and return kindness.

Set time aside specifically to reflect and practice being grateful.

Try "Gratit-Tuesday!"

O.A.Q.: Occasionally Asked Questions.

Based on a recent conversation, I felt we should share a little information about what we do here. Consider this a **BONUS SECTION!!** Feel free to read, share or delete.

What do we do?

“What is Redline Leadership?” was the question posed to me the other day. As I was answering, it occurred to me that we should share what we are doing and the services that we offer so everyone knows. And if you need something that you don’t see described here, hit me up. Together, we can help you become successful in whatever you are trying to do.

Who do we work with?

Our current client list includes people currently employed in public safety, people trying to obtain public safety employment and people that are not employed or interested in working in public safety. Of those already serving the public, we are working with personnel from the rank of firefighter through Chief. Additionally, we are providing services to several agencies in the form of consultation or advising.

What are you doing, what services do you offer?

That is a little tricky to answer as we do a lot of different things, but they are all in the interest of improving service to the community through personal and organizational growth and development. In fact, our tag line is “Professional Growth and Development Coaching for Public Safety Leaders.” To illustrate what we do, let’s look at different clients.

Aspiring Public Servants:

We work with individuals that are working to attain a career in public service with our focus being on fire and police as the primary public safety agencies. Through conversation, assignments, reflection and more, we help these individuals understand themselves better so that they may convey themselves as a valuable asset to any potential organization for which they might apply. We also work to inspire these individuals to challenge themselves, hold themselves accountable, and to see a larger perspective. As these aspiring public servants develop, grow, and apply for jobs, we work with them to improve their interview skills through understanding themselves as well understanding the hiring processes and practicing interview skills.

Aspiring Public Safety Leaders:

While we recognize there are formal and informal leaders in public safety, our approach to both is very similar. Our goal is not to prepare someone to take a test, but to help them improve daily performance, making them a better informal leader which will lead to an opportunity to promote. Along with working to improve their performance, we do work with them to understand common promotional practices and interviewing skills. Our methodology to grow leaders is the same as with aspiring public servants; conversation, reflection and writing assignments and role playing. Again, we ask a lot of questions, and you find the answers...with our help, of course!!

O.A.Q.: Occasionally Asked Questions....continued:

Formal Public Safety Leaders:

Improving the performance of promoted leaders is similar in nature to the work we do with aspiring leaders. We ask a lot of questions, share perspectives and stories, provide ideas on where and how to find solutions to their challenges. We will use our experiences as leaders to help others identify pathways to success or understand different perspectives. We can fall back on our successes, and failures, to help others develop solutions. We have conducted role play exercises to help develop leaders in areas where they have little or no experience or they struggle with their current abilities.

Organizations:

The work we have done with organizations includes, but is not limited to, strategic planning, S.W.O.T. analysis, leadership training, programmatic/process review, personnel issue management and resolution. Sometimes we are just an ear for a lonely leader at the top to discuss issues and ideas as they talk themselves to the solution they need.

Are you effective? What's your track record?

We are very effective. We have been nearly 100% successful in assisting others in achieving their goals on their chosen path. We have helped people get into public service as well as out of public service. We have helped agencies improve the performance of their leadership teams as well as their hiring or promotional processes. The changes and growth we see in our clients as they travel their path to success is not only fun but also very rewarding. Some of our clients have undergone transformations worthy of a Netflix movie!

Why are you doing it?

Early in my career, mid-to-late 90's, I recognized that while I enjoyed providing care and service to the public, my real passion was helping others grow and develop. I liked helping others succeed. I also recognized that while I was a good service provider, if I improved others, I could stretch my impact on the community indirectly. In short, I like to help people. Although I have retired, I still like helping people and the people that are working to improve themselves are my favorites. The ones that are willing to push themselves, challenge their thoughts in the interest of being better are fun to work with. I really enjoy it.

In as much as I worked in the fire service but recognized the same needs in the law enforcement field, I brought on a peer. Tim Walters is a long-time public servant from the other side of the house. While I make fun of him for not being able to pass the fire service exam, he is a true professional with great experience, perspective, and values. He can help bring old school values to the new generation of law enforcement. He too enjoys helping others succeed as is evidenced by an entire career mentoring others to succeed.