



WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

Thinking back over the thousands of conversations and meeting I've been involved in during 2014, I continuously witness behavioral patterns that can only be described as "dysfunctional" and "dishonest."

I see it in all aspects of life, be it personal, corporate or community. I purposely did not include government in the list as it is dysfunctional by definition, and we have no way to remedy this affliction.

We do, however, have the power to peacefully coexist and manage the other three. It totally revolves around how "centered" we are, how we respond to the world around us, and if we seek a connection with a being higher than ourselves. Ultimately, our inner and outer peace is directly proportional to our character, our integrity and our open, truthful communications with ourselves and those around us

In talking to business owners, executives and employees, the standard complaint is how employees are disengaged and teams can't work together. How internal politics and infighting disrupts harmony and production. This is always accompanied by employees venting about how management does not communicate clear goals, expectations, values and visions.

But the biggest complaint—the single grievance that can have the greatest impact on corporate harmony and the bottom line— is employees feeling that they are not appreciated and do not receive timely and honest feedback regarding their performance – be it good or bad.

When I discuss this with business owners and managers, the standard answer I hear is, *"I just don't have the time and energy to deal with it – it will work itself out."*

Now for the truth. For us who consult and coach construction leaders, managers and employees, what WE HEAR you say is, *"I don't have the emotional courage to accept personal responsibility for holding my employees accountable for their actions and choose to live with the outcome. Although I hold them totally responsible for quantitative results – like budget, schedule, and profit margins– and will quickly terminate non-performers, I do not have the emotional courage and backbone to hold them accountable for their behaviors."*

First and foremost, leaders must have the courage to pursue the truth and accept their own weaknesses and vulnerabilities. It can be painful and gritty but if you don't know yourself, you will fail to achieve peace and success in every aspect of your life and will never fully accomplish and enjoy your God given potential. Secondly, you are not respecting the needs, emotional or otherwise, of everyone you deal with on a daily basis. You think your employees or direct reports work for you for the money or because you are a really cool guy or gal.

Well, nonperformers do, but great employees work for companies and managers who respect and truly care about them as individuals first and their competency secondly.

The fact is that we all are walking around wanting to be loved. Be it you, your family, your friends, your employees, your subcontractors or clients, I think if one takes off the rose-colored glasses and sets aside the cynical attitude, what you will see is a sign hanging around everyone's neck – including yourself –that says, "Acknowledge Me, Love Me."

For us macho construction types, we immediately head for the woods when we hear the "love" word – especially when it applies to employees and coworkers. See, we misunderstand the concept thinking it is the words we speak when it's really all about actions like honest communication, trust, integrity and a sincere respect for our fellowman. Love is a verb that reflects who we are and manifests itself through our words, deeds and actions. Kind of that ol' "action speaks louder than words" thing.

Honest communication says, "I'm trying to understand what you're saying and where you're coming from, even though I might not agree." We can agree to disagree, but through honest, respectful dialog that may involve significant conflict, we gain trust. What we say, when we say it and how we say it reflects who we are. If there is misalignment between our words and actions, we are perceived as insincere and untrustworthy. And, we probably are.

To develop our leadership and communication skills, we have to humble ourselves by looking inward and acknowledging our own shortcomings. Until we understand and embrace our own humanness and become servant leaders, we are simply occupying space on this rotating orb called earth rather than making it a better world.

So I say – "Love has everything to do with it."

Love your maker, love yourself, love your family, friends and coworkers; love what you do. You'll know when you're there when you truly love life, not just live it.

To Success In All Your Endeavors

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