

SESSION 12. THE PERSON ON THE WHITE HORSE

Audio Transcript

All businesses, all organizations, from the smallest to the largest, need a leader. They have their committees, their echelons of command and, perhaps, a widely dispersed group of semiautonomous divisions; but the overall company, and each of its divisions, must have strong and able leadership.

Contrary to popular belief, you do not raise morale in an organization; it filters down from the top. The attitudes of the people working in any organization will always reflect the attitude of the leader. And this leader will always be found to be just one person: the man or woman on the white horse.

I'm sure you're aware that even the largest and oldest companies, with many thousands of employees and hundreds of management people, will, when they find themselves in trouble, or not doing as well as they should, seek out one person and place him in the position of final authority. The whole company, the board of directors, and, perhaps, thousands of stockholders all look to this one person for leadership and success. The case of Chrysler Corporation and Lee Iacocca is an excellent example. (Incidentally, we have Mr. Iacocca on an audio program, and it's excellent.)

Wherever you find a successful, going concern – whether it's a gas station, a supermarket, a school club, a PTA, or a well-organized home – you'll find behind its success an outstanding leader. This is the most valuable person in society. In industry, he makes the wheels turn – the entire economy work. This is the person who's responsible for the growth of nations and their position in the world; he's the employer of millions; he's the dreamer, the planner. To him, a clock is something that other people watch. You'll find this person working early and late, and when he's not working, he's usually thinking and planning.

Way back during the depression of the 1930s, the refrain most often heard by employers was, "I'll do anything. Just give me a job." Millions were unemployed; thousands of business firms had closed their doors; and outside employment offices, long lines of people stood waiting for any kind of work.

It was during this time, in Long Beach, California, which was crowded to overflowing with thousands who had migrated there looking for work (when there wasn't enough work to go around for the permanent residents, it seemed), that a friend of mine made an interesting discovery: He found that he could go to work almost anywhere he chose. Now, as amazing as this may sound, it is absolutely true!

One day, it dawned upon him that the business establishments of various kinds were just as anxious to succeed as were the people looking for work.

The owners and managers of these businesses were worried about the hard times that had descended upon the country, and a great many of them were looking for someone to come to their aid – the person who would somehow show up and solve their business problems. But all they heard was people asking for work, saying, "I'll do anything." These people were asking for a

paycheck from a company that was very likely teetering on the brink of financial ruin itself. So in windows of businesses all over the land, signs appeared, reading, “No Help Wanted.” This was a form of negative advertising, and while it kept the plaintive hordes away from the door, it also hurt business.

Well, my friend decided to become part of the solution, instead of a part of the problem. His method was simple, and it worked like a charm. He selected the kind of business he felt he would like to work in, and in which he could build a career. He then devoted a month to finding out all he could about that particular business. He talked to other people in the same line; he heard their problems, and what they felt was wrong. He talked for hours, probing, asking questions about what they felt was needed, and so on. He went to the public library and read everything he could find on that industry. Then he began to think of ways and means by which this business might be improved.

When he was ready, and finally made his call on the company for which he had decided to work, instead of asking for a job, he said to the boss something like this: “I believe I know of several ways in which your business can be greatly increased, and I’d like to talk to you about them.”

Here he was, selling the one thing on earth in which his prospect was most interested. The fact that he now knew a good deal about the business permitted him to talk intelligently. He took a positive attitude, he expressed a willingness to pitch in and help to put the business on a sound and profitable footing, and, of course – that’s right – he got the job. Millions were out of work and asking for jobs, but one man found a way to be of help.

What had he done? Well, first, he had specialized; he had selected one line of work and decided that was where his future would be. Then he had to prove himself, and he did.

The “jack-of-all-trades and master of none” was the person who suffered during the Depression. People who knew what they were doing and where they were going sailed through those Depression years, just as a large ship sails through a storm. It wasn’t as comfortable as it could have been, but at least the crossing was a success – at least they didn’t founder. And thousands of businesses actually grew larger and prospered during the Depression.

The best way for you to develop the security that lasts a lifetime is to become outstanding at one particular line of work. Look at it this way: Regardless of economic ups and downs, the industry of which that line of work is a part will continue to operate. It won’t shut down completely. As long as you’re in the top 5 percent of the people in that industry, you know you’ll always be in demand – you’ll be wanted and needed in that industry....

The man or woman who becomes truly outstanding at what he or she does has the world on a string. Here’s the person of confidence and peace of mind. Here’s the person who is quietly aware of his or her ability and has an intimate knowledge of his or her job and industry. Here’s the homemaker or student who is at the top of the group. This person has it made, and he or she, and everybody else, knows it.

Ask yourself this question: “Am I now such a person?” Down deep inside, you know the answer. If you answered yes, you’re among the most fortunate people – and in one of the smallest and most select groups on earth. If your answer was no, it can be turned into a yes in a surprisingly short time.

The first step is to make one really big and important decision. It’s a decision the great majority of people never make, and they suffer as a result. Failing to make this decision keeps a person from ever really getting on course or clarifying his goals. If you’ll make the decision I’m recommending, you can take a deep breath, give a comfortable sigh of relief, fix your eyes firmly upon your target, and go to work relaxed, comfortable, and sure in the knowledge that the success you seek will be yours.

When he was asked the formula for success, the great steel magnate, Andrew Carnegie, answered, “Put all your eggs in one basket, and then watch the basket.”

Let’s be frankly realistic. Who gets laid off work during an economic slump? Well, what gets thrown over the side when a ship is in danger of going down? Everything not absolutely essential to the operation of the vessel and the safety of her passengers. And it’s the same in a business or any other organization. It has to be that way.

A corporation’s main purpose is to remain in business forever. As long as it remains in business, it can provide a needed product or service, protect the investment of those who have faith in it, and provide jobs for those who are essential to its continuity of operation. It’s the duty of management to protect the firm and the people who depend upon it, just as it’s the captain’s duty to do everything in his power to keep his ship sailing.

All a person needs to do is make certain that he is a vital part of the business or organization. Those who insist on remaining spare gear, those who do no more than they must in order to squeak by – those who say, “I’m not going to do any more than I’m paid to do” – must expect to be jettisoned when things get too rough for safety.

Nobody, particularly the captain, likes to see cargo thrown over the side, but if it will help save the ship, there’s nothing else he can do.

That’s why people are laid off. It has nothing to do with management and labor relations, or personalities. And in the long run, it’s best for everyone, since once smooth sailing has again been reached, additional employment can again be made available. So each of us must decide whether he wants to be a part of the cargo or a member of the crew.

It’s said that millions suffer today from a malady called panophobia. Panophobia means, literally, “fear of everything.” It’s an uneasy feeling, a feeling of insecurity, that generally manifests itself as a sort of lump of fear that settles right behind the belt buckle – especially on Sunday evenings and on Monday mornings.... It’s an apprehension, a feeling of foreboding.

This extremely unpleasant condition is said to result from the unspoken but realized fact that we’re getting credit for more than we’re actually doing, or that we’re doing less that we could be

doing. It's the perfectly natural and normal understanding deep within us that there's something basically wrong about getting praise that's not earned or, if we are employees, being paid for something we're not doing as well as we possibly can.

If we have panophobia, running does no good. We find it follows us on vacation, and around the house and yard on weekends. It's inside us, and no matter how fast the jet we board, or how exciting the television program we watch, soon we're aware of it again.

There's a simple cure for this malady. It's to throw ourselves not out of a window, but into activity, into our work. It's the decision to be worth more than we're being paid. Only in this way can we grow. It's overbalancing the scales in the service we give, knowing that our rewards must follow as a natural result.

Anyone who is honest with himself realizes that he has been happiest and most satisfied after having successfully completed a difficult job.

A leader is a person who can help and lead others. It's the conscientious mother who wants her children to grow up knowing the rules for success and happiness. It's the father who shows by example that any job worth doing is worth doing well. It's the student who studies to learn, not just to get a grade – who has a mind of his own and sets the pace for his fellow students. It's the farmer whose farm sets an example in his area. It's the businessperson whose small business continues to grow and prosper with the passing years. It's the employee who has the good sense to realize that one gets most out of any job by giving loyalty and dedication to the firm that pays his wages. A leader is any person who realizes the importance of becoming a bigger and better person with the passing of every day, week, and month. A leader takes the responsibility for his own growth; he's a planner, a thinker, a doer.

Each of us can become such a leader in his own area of activity. It's not difficult. And in the long run, it's easier for us, and on us, than what at first may appear to be the easier of two courses.

Simply fix your eyes upon your goal – visualize it with every ounce of your being; enjoy the prospect of it – and courageously set out toward it. Maintain a cheerful, helpful attitude toward everyone. Why shouldn't you be cheerful, since you know you'll achieve everything you've set your heart upon?

Become a sponge for information that will help you on your way. You don't have to waste years making the mistakes others have made before.

You'll be surprised at how quickly you'll reach your goal. But don't be impatient. Know and have faith that what should come to you will come to you at the right time. Everything in the world works on the side of the person who works with nature's laws.

And, above all – if you should forget everything else – remember that everything about you – everything you will ever have, know, experience in any way – operates in accordance with law, law that is true and unchanging, the law of the stars and of the balance of the world.

As Emerson wrote: “Let him learn a prudence of a higher strain. Let him learn that everything in nature, even dust and feathers, goes by law and not by luck...and that what he sows, he reaps!”

Look about you; take stock of your present situation, because it’s nothing more or less than the result of your past sowing. Are you happy with it? Is it what you want? Then you know what you must sow – today and tomorrow and the next day. And in the sowing, rest in the calm, serene, and cheerful certainty that, having sown, you will then reap, all the years of your life, the rich results that come automatically – the abundant harvest.

Now, this is Earl Nightingale reminding you that success as a human being in modern society does not come naturally. It requires the conscious utilization of ourselves in the service of others. We have our minds, our genetic possibilities, a certain amount of time, and our free will. We belong to the world minority that lives in a free society. We become whatever we seriously make up our minds to become. That’s possible because whatever we seriously decide to do is naturally linked to our genetic possibilities. A person with little or no aptitude for science will never decide to become a scientist. A naturally shy and retiring person will never take a job in sales, or, if he does, he will soon get out of it.

Each of us has his own inner voice. Emerson referred to it as that “iron string” that vibrates within us.

Each of us wants to succeed during his holiday on earth, and each of us should. But we don’t succeed in groups; we succeed or fail as individuals.

The *Lead the Field* program you have listened to on these cassettes or CDs contains the best basic information and the great ideas we need to reach whatever goal we seriously choose.

Listen to this audio program often. You will be astonished to discover how much you missed during your first and second listenings. There’s a very good reason why this happens: As we listen to a message, an idea will catch our interest, and we will concentrate on it for a few seconds or longer. While we are thus engaged, we will miss what’s being said during the time we’re concentrating on that idea. It’s like lifting the tone arm on a record. The next time, we won’t stop listening when that idea appears, and we will really hear – consciously, for the first time – what immediately follows.

Think of this program and the other Nightingale-Conant programs you order in the future as your partners in success. You can always refer back to them. You’ll find yourself delighted by the new enthusiasm and excitement you’ll experience as you bring new meaning and new rewards into your life.

Thank you.

Exercises — Write your answers in the space provided below.

1. Evaluate your leadership skills, and note any ideas for improvement below:

2. How can you develop what Earl Nightingale calls “the security that lasts a lifetime”?

3. Resolve to, each day, do more than you are paid to do.