

Civility

Leadership Montgomery Homecoming

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September 2007

1. The quality of our lives depends upon the quality of our relationships; the quality of our relationships depends upon our relational skills.
2. Relational intelligence, the ability to relate well to others, appears to be a better predictor of success in school and in life than the intelligence we measure with IQ. (Daniel Goleman et al.)
3. Civility and good manners are time-proven, very effective codes of relational skills. They teach us how to handle others with care, which is an absolute necessity in today's workplace. If you want to lead, you'd better make them part of your personal cognitive and emotional kit.
4. The Portrait of a Leader. The leader for today is a person of vision, integrity and empathy. He or she is tactful but not manipulative, temperate but resolute, a communicator without being glib, and always aware that he or she is the trustee not only of the organization's wellbeing, but also of his or her employees'. Being well-schooled in relational competence, the best leaders can concentrate on the crucial organizational issues of the moment. Leaders who have poor people skills are distracted by their own insecurity. The result is that the organization's bottom line is hurt. Also, perceiving their insecurity, their employees do not trust them fully, which impairs their ability to lead. Leaders should project an aura of power in repose. In order to do that they need to be at ease while dealing with others. They need to handle every circumstance effortlessly. A good training in relational skills is of the essence in obtaining that ease.
5. Writing for the Workforce Management blog in April 2007, John Hollon focused on telling data about current hiring criteria. The data came from a poll by OfficeTeam, HR.com and the International Association of Administrative Professionals. "67 percent of hiring managers said they would hire an applicant with strong 'soft' skills even if their technical skills were lacking. However, only 9 percent said they would hire someone with strong techskills but weak interpersonal skills. In addition, 93 percent of hiring managers felt that technical skills are easier to teach than soft skills."
6. Civility is a form of benevolent awareness. We are civil when we are aware of others and we weave respect, restraint and consideration into the very fabric of that awareness.
7. The Three Arguments for Civility. By being civil we put into everyday practice the Principle of Respect for Persons; by fostering civility we lower the incidence of violence; civility is a main component of our wellbeing.

8. The Costs of Workplace Incivility

USC Marshall School of Business workplace rudeness study (reported: 2006). More than 90 percent of workers experienced incivility; of these 50 percent lost work time worrying about the uncivil incident; 13 percent left the company.

According to an Accountemps-IRC 2006 survey American managers spend 18 percent of their time at work resolving personnel conflicts. That is 1.5 hours a day, or almost a day per week. The figure was 13 percent in 1991 and 9 percent in 1986. Some business scholars believe that the 18 percent figure is unrealistically high.

Skillsoft survey 2006. 95 percent of managers say that their life at work is stressful; 28 percent have taken time off as a result.

ComPsych StressPulse survey (2006). More than 50 percent of the American workforce has high stress levels; more than one-third identifies "people issues" as the #1 cause of stress at work. Workload is #2.

According to the American Institute of Stress the cost of stress to the American economy is \$300 billion per year (health care, missed work, stress reduction efforts).

9. Stress is often the product of our conflict with others. Both in our personal lives and at work, bruised or broken relationships are main sources of stress. If we have good relational skills we are able to maintain good relationships, thus lowering the levels of stress in our lives.

10. We are hardwired for co-operation. We have social instincts. We are not born, however, with the abilities to put into everyday practice and within a complex society those instincts. The rules of civility and good manners teach us that. We need to learn them to transform instinct into effective action.

11. The decline of the principle of authority and the massive societal investment in the ethos of diversity are reshaping our lives. Today's leaders cannot afford to ignore these trends. Because of them, management is of necessity an exercise in inclusion, persuasion and recognition. Leading takes the form of consensus-building. Inevitably, this makes interpersonal skills more important than ever.