

Inner circle of friends

By Wayne Bailey



Wayne Bailey

S hahrkh Khan said, "I do have a close circle of friends and I am very fortunate to have them as friends. I feel very close to them. I think friends are everything in life after your family. You come across lots of people all the time but you only make very few friends and you have to be true to them otherwise what's the point in life"?

When I count the number of close friends in my inner circle, I could count them all on one hand. Yes, we have many friends on Facebook, Twitter and other social media, however, how many people do you have close enough to confide in your worst thoughts as a leader? Who do we trust with our insecurities? I ask you to wisely pick these people. In the emergency service, if someone finds your weakness, they can make life hard for you.

Reminds me of a time we found out a fellow fire fighter despised the look, smell and taste of mayonnaise. You

might ask, what is mayonnaise? It's a dressing that some people put on a sandwich. According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, mayonnaise (/ˈmeɪeneɪz/, often abbreviated as mayo) is a thick, creamy sauce often used as a condiment. It is a stable emulsion of oil, egg yolks and either vinegar or lemon juice, with many options for embellishment with other herbs and spices. Lecithin in the egg yolk is the emulsifier. Sounds yummy, right.

Our fire fighter found mayonnaise everywhere he went. In his locker, on his food, in his boots, in the bathroom, everywhere. Why? We found his weakness.

When you build an inner circle around you, that person should bring value to you as the leader and to the department and not make life tough on you like we did our fellow fire fighter. When you choose this person or persons, measure twice and cut once as a close friend told me. May sure you have a confident before confiding in them.

When you start looking for the inner circle person, what traits should you be looking for? Here are some of my picks:

People of integrity

CS Lewis said, "Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching." When was the last time you made a decision not to do something because you thought it

was the right thing to do? That's what you're looking for in people with integrity. You want your personal morals and character to match this person. The phrase 'Iron sharpens iron' means you need something hard and resilient to sharpen your knife. What if you sharpen your knife with less means such as concrete? If you don't ruin your knife, you're will at least make it very dull.

Creative minds around you

In our business, we always have a plan B. I highly recommend a book, "An Astronauts Guide to Life on Earth." by Chris Hadfield. Fire fighters can learn a lot from this book on survival. In space, Colonel Hadfield spoke of things going wrong. As a team, he said they usually were creative in getting work accomplished. He spoke about an emergency spacewalk that had to happen due to their space ship losing ammonia from the outside. He said planning an unscheduled trip outside usually took weeks or more. In this case, they did it within 24 hours. If not, they would have died. By having creative minds on board and back in Houston at ground control, they were successful and arrived back to planet earth in one piece. More insights on Colonel Hadfield can be found here <https://youtu.be/Zo62S0ulqhA>.

Devoted people

When I think of devoted or loyal friends, I think of the quote by Groucho Marx. He said; "When you're in jail, a good friend will be trying to bail you out. A best friend will be in the cell next to you saying, Dang, that was fun." In our business, we are devoted to carry out the job of making a save from an auto crash, medical emergency and in training each and every day. Devoted people get things done and it comes from the heart, not the mind.

People who share your vision

Ken Blanchard said, "None of us is as smart as all of us." As a leader, you must first have a vision before others can follow. If your vision is to install 1 000 smoke alarms in an area where you had recent civilian fire deaths, how long would it take you to do the job by yourself? By having a team that shares your vision, you can get the job done in one day. There are followers out there waiting on you to share your vision.

Knowledgeable and clever people

I'm sure you've come across people where you said "That ole boy is not the sharpest tool in the shed or he or she may be dumb as a box of rocks or dumb as a bag of hammers." I tell people I may not be the sharpest knife in the drawer but beware, there are other knives in the drawer that will cut you. I have knowledgeable and clever people all around me that keep me out of trouble every day. Some people lacking self-esteem may want the public and their peers to think they are a shining star. Not me. When I'm lost or out of ideas, I go to the people in my inner circle for help. If I was the smartest, who would I turn to?

People with complementary traits

As a leader, it's good to have people in your inner circle



that have some of the same gifts as you. There are too many to list here, however, here are some traits or gifts I would want in people around me. They are the gift of wisdom, knowledge, discernment, administration, helper and humbleness. We can always use wisdom in everything we do. Socrates said, "The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing." When I don't have the knowledge in a subject area, I don't hesitate to make a call and ask the question of someone that is more knowledgeable than me. For discernment, I find women have this trait more than men. They have this sixth sense. They will be driving through a neighbourhood and say, "Let's get out of here, this place is creepy." Listen to these people. Without administration and helpers, life would be jumbled and a lot of things not getting done. Oh yeah, you have a great vision to install those 1 000 smoke detectors but who is going to order them, have the alarms on the ground with the necessary tools to install them? Last but not least, humbleness. We model what we see. When I see humbleness in a one's spirit, it reminds me to be the same.

People with connections

In life, it's not necessary what you know but who are your connections. Just recently, I had a need and stood in front of a networking group and said, "Who do you know that does landscaping?" I had two people give me names of people that they had done business with. Life is all about connections. In your community, you are connected to leaders of influence, people to donate for a cause when needed. William James said, "We are like islands in the sea, separate on the surface but connected in the deep." We all have connections that others need. Make sure you share your connections with others. Zig Ziglar said, "You can have everything in life you want, if you will just help other people get what they want."

In closing, I remind you to measure twice and cut once. Choose your inner circle of friends and associates wisely. 🔥