

# Leadership principles learned from Royal Mortenson

By Wayne Bailey



About a year ago, I had the pleasure of sitting in a classroom with Royal Mortenson where he was speaking. He offered the following notes to us and to use as we see fit. He even offered for us to claim the words of wisdom for ourselves. The first point below talks about being a person of character and strength, so this author is giving credit where it's due.

Be a person of character and strength. What does this mean? Someone once said character is doing something when no one else is looking, good or bad. Strength to me is having the will power to do the right thing.

Never be afraid to take a moral ethical stand on something you believe in your gut to be right. At the end of the day when you go to bed, can you say you made the best judgment based on the knowledge you had at the time?

Hold yourself accountable for all you do. Hold others accountable for their

actions. Who are you accountable to? We all need to be accountable to someone. If the big boss has a boss. Unless you work for yourself, be accountable to someone. Never live the life without checks and bounds.

Don't lie or steal. This would be the thing that would get me in the most trouble when I was growing up. My dad would say, you can do just about anything and I will forgive you, however, he didn't have any room for a lie or not told the complete truth. Listen to and help anyone anytime. Expect and demand that your leaders do the same. When this occurs, they must reach out and grasp and give a hand up.

Someone had to lead on the absence of authority. Take charge. The old saying is if someone is not in charge, just wait, someone will step up to the plate.

Band of brothers. Never turn your back on family. In the profession we work in, our lives depend on us taking care of each other on or off the fire ground.

Always strive to be tribal and tactically proficient in all you do. Never let it be said that you and your unit failed because you didn't do your homework.

Everything you do must purpose yourself.

Take care of your family. Don't offer them what's left over from your day. Make them a priority. In a blink of an eye, you're celebrating your 50th anniversary and watching your kids have kids. Don't let life pass you by.

Never promote racism or otherwise cruel freaking behaviour; it is a

hallmark of an ignorant person and unprofessional.

How you roll will always be the foundation of your organisation. People do what they see.

Have an irrational vision of success. Find out what makes you succeed, drink it and stick with it.

Visionary leadership. What will you be doing in six to eight years from now?

Manage your time wisely. If you don't, someone will. Priority is time, people and money.

Be out in the field or office every day. Talk to and touch the people that are in the trenches.

Figure out the organisational centre of gravity. The strength to accomplish must be your main effort. Using a bicycle as an example; be the axle and let the life around you be the spokes. If you have one spoke shorter or longer, you're going to be in for a bumpy ride. It's important to have balance.

People must know your priorities. Don't make people guess what is important. Let your family know they are priority in your life; don't assume they know.

Look, listen and learn before you make change. Know your lesson before making changes. Change for change is insulting to those you lead.

Build consensus in your organisation. The art of leadership is getting people to do what them to do.

Executive leadership is about environment. Your job is to create an environment where others feel valued and productive.

Be consistent in your demeanour and focus. Don't have a flavour of the day.

Communicate with others. Encourage open debate. Don't be threatened by disagreement or threatened by a different opinion.

Be transparent in your leadership style. Make as many decisions in open forms as possible. This leaves no doubt who made the decision.

It's never about you. It's about the mission and the people charged with accomplishing the mission. 🔥

