



Continuing to Grow and Develop

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Tom Landry, the legendary coach of the Dallas Cowboys, was asked one year by a friend, “How many of the players on your team have the potential to become All-Pro?” Landry replied, “They all have the potential to become All-Pro. But only about two or three will continue to develop their skills to the point where they will be recognized by the league and reach All-Pro status.” He went on to explain that most will reach a certain level of competency and then become content. Others begin to lose their passion for playing the sport and begin to just go through the motions.

There are individuals in every organization who, when elected or appointed to a position, may begin with a lot of excitement and enthusiasm, but in time, settle in and become complacent. They are not motivated to improve or to do more than the job requires. They simply begin to go through the motions, and the organization and their particular area of responsibility begins to suffer.

In order for a person to want to improve and excel in a job or anything, he/she must have a passion for what they do. It is passion that creates the energy and desire to improve. It is passion that generates creativity. Unfortunately, many people accept a position in an organization, not because they have a passion for the job or a particular area, but because there was a need to have someone simply “fill” the position. If you find yourself in such a situation, the first thing to do is admit it to yourself that you have no passion for what you are doing. Then, begin to take the necessary steps to get someone who has a passion for the job to take over your responsibilities.

It is a natural tendency, and very easy for individuals in all walks of life, to reach a certain level of competency and then become content. It happens with people in the work force, and it happens with people involved in sports.

As Chaplains, we should be careful not to let this happen to us. We should continue to work hard at building relationships and become more effective in serving those who served.

Take for instance our listening skills. This is one area where we should continue to improve and not become content with our level of competency. One of the biggest hindrances to establishing and maintaining a beneficial relationship with individuals is that we don't listen very well. Stephen R. Covey, in his book *The 7 Habits of Highly*

Effective People said, “Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.”

So, next time someone attempts to talk with you, try to give yourself entirely to “being with” the other person both physically and psychologically. Listen intently to what is being said and . . .

- Don’t interrupt the speaker
- Don’t jump to conclusions
- Don’t start talking before the other person finishes his/her thought
- Don’t categorize the other person
- Don’t argue mentally while the other person is talking
- Don’t get angry
- Don’t fidget
- Don’t try to fake listening or empathy

Remember: As a Chaplain, how we listen to someone can invite or encourage them to trust us, open up, and share significant dimensions of their life, or it can promote their distrust and lead to a reluctance to reveal anything of significance to us.

There are a lot of chaplains on our team in the VFW. We all have the potential to become “All Pro.” Keep working hard at what you do. Don’t become complacent.

Resources for Chaplains: Hope you see you at the Mid-Winter Conference January 22-23, 2016 at the Eisenhower Hotel in Gettysburg, PA. In the meantime check out my Chaplain’s Page at the PA Department Web Site - vfwpahq.org Just look under District/Post Tools and you will see Chaplain’s Guide. I have posted a number of items you may find helpful as you continue to serve those who serve.

Blessings as you serve,

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