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## ***Bad Management Practices start at Home***

By Paperitalo Staff

A number of events in one's personal life serve to exacerbate and emphasize the poor management practices we learn by observation at home. These events include, but are not limited to, births, deaths, marriages, divorces, and graduations. Our household is currently going through a graduation. I used to think that participating in team sports as a child would help one learn how management works. My observations in the current circumstances tend to negate that idea.

In this graduation process (a set of events extending over several days), I have observed:

1. poor planning;
2. no planning;
3. transference of "the monkey" from one back to another;
4. acceptance of "the monkey" by those who should not accept it;
5. agreement to mandates by others that should not even be considered by parties who do so because their primary goal is to not make waves;

and so on.

These bad habits are reinforced again and again, through observation of one's elders' actions over the years. This results in one's own bad management habits being refined and developed to the point that they are executed without thinking, much like brushing one's teeth.

One bad habit that I learned at the knee of my mother and her sisters, for instance, was that of immediately blurting out one's opinion of a freshly presented scene or circumstance without thinking. Call it the habit of anti-reticence. This habit served me quite poorly when I worked for large companies. It is one I am still trying to break.

Considering all of these matters, as a manager one must be cognizant that every rookie introduced into the workforce comes bearing many of these bad habits and ones that I have not

even mentioned or of which we are not conscious. We cannot even assume that seasoned employees, freshly under our tutelage, have been broken of these habits. The good news is that fixing these habits can be done fairly easily by the energetic manager.

Initially, introduce the concept of “spinning the invoice printer” and never let go of it. This should help keep subordinates focused. Then move on to the bad habits. Like most bad habits, the first step is to recognize they exist, and starting with one’s self, fix them. Second, raise awareness of these habits with every one of your direct reports. Set the expectation that you and each direct report will regularly review these habits and progress towards breaking them. Third, never, ever stop working on them.

Granted, my solutions here are simplistic, but I submit to you that the habits are simplistic. It does not take a library of management books to fix them. It does take awareness and diligence to recognize they exist and work on removing them as roadblocks to effective work.

Bad safety habits begin at home, too. My grandfather, Charles Thompson I, was killed in a coal mining accident in 1930. He was the “shooter”—the person who set the dynamite. When the dynamite did not go off, he had to go back in and check on it, and guess what—it went off and a large rock fell on him. My Uncle, Charles Thompson II, died as a result of a car falling on him which he had blocked up insecurely. I grimly joke with my cousin, Charles Thompson III, that if I were him, I would wear a hardhat 24/7--his branch of the family seems susceptible to falling objects. Expect attendees at safety meetings to have equally bad safety habits learned at home. Address them accordingly.

Be safe and we will talk next week. ##