

A New Year's Resolution

As we start a new year, it's a great time to revisit the topic of personal accountability.

Every day in the WSJ and FT, there is at least one article on the excesses of a CEO or apparent dereliction of duty by a corporate board. These offensive business practices add to a growing list of questionable ethical and self-serving decisions. In some cases, there is also the complete absence of ethics and morality. The combination of these transgressions has seriously eroded trust and respect for CEOs, boards and capitalism in general.

Clearly, today more than ever, we need our business leadership to re-establish a code of conduct that we can all be proud of. It's high time for all CEOs and boards to take the lead role as models of this new higher standard of conduct.

2 Fundamental Principles

Each of us are judged on two principles, each weighted equally.

- What did I achieve?
- How did I achieve it?

Good leadership demands that we never rationalize or accept that the end justifies the means.

It's time for each of us to re-examine our conduct as leaders and as members of society. How did we act last year? Are we really proud of our behavior? Did we achieve our results the right way?

It's impossible to legislate the right way to do things but we all know when something is not done right. The Golden Rule is simple and direct; do to others what you would have them do to you.

Some Simple Concepts

The wonderful little book by Robert Fulghum, All I Really Need To Know I Learned In Kindergarten, contains some simple concepts that each of us, especially our leaders in business and government can use immediately.

- "Share everything"
- "Play fair"
- "Don't hit people"
- "Put things back where you found them"
- "Clean up your own mess"
- "Don't take things that aren't yours"
- "Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody"

For improving ourselves as a person (and to keep peace at home), some of his other sage advice is:

- “Wash your hands before you eat”
- “Flush”
- “Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you”
- “Live a balanced life”
- “Learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some”
- “Take a nap every afternoon”
- “When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic and stick together”

As you start the New Year and set our personal resolutions, its time for each of us to try to improve ourselves every day and role model the right behaviors for everyone we come in contact with.

This year, my hope is that each of us assumes a higher level of Personal Accountability. We can rebuild the trust and confidence in our business leadership for the benefit of all one person, one day at a time. Let’s make America great again!