

Hello everybody. Dennis Engelbrecht with the Digging Deeper Blog Series.

One of the issues that we talk about most with our contractors is succession, and I'm talking about overall leadership succession or ownership succession, so kind of at the top sort of thing. And almost everybody we have is looking for what I guess you'd term a servant leader. It's interesting because we've transitioned. If you go back 50 years ago, we had these much more domineering dictatorial leadership models that seemed to work, but now everything seems to be more about cooperation, collaboration and that seems to work with the newer generations and respond to what everybody wants.

So now you're the leader, and you look down through your organization, and you see the group of people that are doing a good job and really seem to be driven. Drive. We want that drive, but I'm wondering, is it drive or is it greed, and how do you know the difference? Because if we think of that servant leader, we want somebody who's driven, but we don't want somebody who's driven just for themselves. We want them looking out for the organization. But I think back to when I was a young leader, I think that was a very fuzzy line. And maybe it was more greed than drive. I was looking for the rewards of being in charge perhaps as much as I was looking out for the good I could do by being in charge.

But I think as we look now, I see a lot of people that are those potential next generation leaders and we looked down there and it's hard to tell. We look at it. Is it drive or is it greed, and how do you tell and how do you sort through that? I don't think there are any easy answers to that because I think there's a portion of maturity that plays into that as well. I think as an owner or leader of your company, you certainly see that if you do more for your people and your community and everything else, it tends to come back to you, right? So, the more you do for others, the better things seem to turn out and the more people do for you.

But cart before the horse, horse before the cart, but I think it's clear we want those people to have more of the drive than greed. So, what I encourage is you attack that head on, talk to folks and really see what they're about. Sometimes you can give them a taste of leadership, a taste of ownership, and very oftentimes, you can see how people are responding to them. I can recall again in our round table programs that we interviewed a lot of people and we were interviewing one potential leader and we found out that even though the upper leadership thought he was the best future leader, his cohorts and people below him didn't see it. They saw him as out for himself. So that's another thing you can do is really investigate how people actually feel about them, and sometimes we live in our ivory tower and we don't get that information. So, we got to step out of our ivory tower to perhaps find that out.

And then one last item on this. Just because a young person exhibits more of that greed today than drive, don't give up on them, but they're not going to change unless you recognize the flaw, bring it to their attention, make them think about who they are, who they want to be as a person. If they don't want to change, they're not going to change. But for people to change, they have to have an awareness also that there's a need for that. So, don't avoid the frank conversation because they may not be lost souls. They just haven't matured or developed to the point perhaps where it truly is drive for success for the group versus drive for those individual rewards at the expense of the group.

Once again, Dennis Engelbrecht, Digging Deeper. Thanks for tuning in.