

Good morning, everybody. Dennis Engelbrecht with the FBI where *We Build Better Contractors*, digging deeper today.

So, I was having discussion with a colleague the other day about future leaders and how either important or negative ego might be. So, I was thinking about that. I actually looked up the definition of ego and the definition, the one that seems to fit the way we think of ego, one's image of themselves, that's their ego. Then it said egotism equaled conceit or was defined as conceit. Thought, okay, that's what we don't want. We don't want the conceit, but we want someone to certainly have a good image of themselves, I guess, or a healthy ego.

So, what I want to talk about today is a healthy ego. What is a healthy ego? Then what's dangerous or negative as we either look at ourselves as leaders, or we look at the future leaders of the company and we're trying to decide who they're going to be. So where does ego fit in? What's a healthy ego and what should I be looking for?

So, for leadership success, one of the things I want out of leaders is for them to be confident. You want your leaders to have some level of confidence. I think people who rise to leadership do have some level of confidence and that's part of, again, a healthy image of themselves. The downside of that is we want them confident, but not cocky. What is cocky? Well, cocky is sort of like I'm better and you're not kind of thing and somehow putting that in your face with comments or whatever happens. So cocky people maybe don't do so well with followership. They can be confident, but they lose followership because of that personality trait.

So, we want confident, not cocky. We want people that are willing to lead, to take the lead, to make decisions. Who won't be frozen by the moment when a crisis or a difficult decision comes up? I guess the other side of that is somebody without enough ego or confidence or willing to take the lead, to step up. People who shrink from the moment, that's not who we want in our leaders. That they don't, I guess, have a high enough image of themselves or enough ego to perhaps lead. So we want people willing to take the lead and not those who are unwilling.

We want our leaders to be willing to listen and to have constructive debate. To not, the other side of this, is to not have to have all of their ideas prevail. So, you think as of what we want, we want them to be able to listen and have constructive debate, to come up with good decisions. Sometimes that might not be their own, but the leader who their decision always has to prevail, pretty soon you're not hearing of any good ideas from anybody else because they know they're going to get shot down and be cast aside. Again, you get a bit of a followership problem with somebody that's in that kind of position.

But I think the ideal person who's willing to listen and have constructive debate becomes skilled at drawing out the ideas of others and actually gaining decision and consensus around that. I think that's what we really want again, for that healthy ego.

The fourth thing that comes to mind is what motivates them. I think with a healthy ego, you want that person to be motivated by what's good or what's right. That's versus by greed or self-interest. Again, I think, you probably know some of these egotists that you could think of that are motivated by greed or self-interest. I don't think that's the kind of leader you want to be, or you want leading your company in the future. So, you definitely want folks that are motivated by what's good or what's right.

Number five, being able to be self-aware and interested in self-improvement. I guess that's versus the person that thinks they're flawless or perfect, or God's gift to the business that you have. I know we have some of those folks out there, but you definitely want folks that can be self-aware, that are interested and capable of self-improvement.

Number six, you want folks who can accept feedback. This kind of related to that self-awareness thing, but you see different kinds of people who can accept feedback and then use that feedback to improve. I think sometimes the folks

with an unhealthy ego, they only see criticism and they get angry, and they fight back when they hear something, instead of being able to accept feedback for the good it can provide.

Finally, a healthy ego is probably somebody who's comfortable enough with their self to be vulnerable. This is versus some folks kind of create a wall around themselves or a shield around themselves so that folks can't get in and see the real person that they are. I was once struck... I'm an old guy so this may take back before some of you know him, but there is a famous and very successful quarterback named Joe Theismann. I saw Joe Theismann being interviewed and he was talking about he had some mental health issues as life went along and he blamed it on his large ego. The way he described that was he really built that wall or shelf around him. He didn't want anybody to see the real him because the real him actually wasn't that confident. The real him had a lot of doubts and all of that and he always thought as the quarterback and as the star, he couldn't show that to anybody.

But then he realized later in life, first of all, that made him unhealthy mentally, but also, he could have been a much greater leader had he been able to be more vulnerable and then people could have known him better, and appreciated him better, and he could have been an even better leader. So just a few tips for you to think about your leadership and do you have a healthy ego. Are there some areas where you can improve on that? Certainly, in looking at your folks, also just the few tips to be able to judge whether or not those folks you're looking to lead your company in the future have that healthy ego or what areas you might be able to help coach and guide them.

So again, Dennis Engelbrecht, Digging Deeper.