

Good morning, everybody. Dennis Engelbrecht, Digging Deeper.

Just thinking about my pathway through life and through business and how to get ahead in life. And I think during my life, I hit certainly a lot of what you would call ceilings along the way, I guess. And at some points broke through and other points broke my head and fell back down, trying again.

And I was thinking, a lot of you out there are in your careers, you're trying to get ahead, you're trying to do better. And how do you actually do that efficiently and without collateral damage? And when I say without collateral damage, you can be working so hard to get the next position that you're not doing your own and that work falls on others and things like that. Or you're stepping on someone else's toes to try to get over them or making someone else look bad to make yourself look good. And all of those things are not good things.

So, as you try to get ahead, you want to do it efficiently, effectively, but you don't really want to have collateral damage because the collateral damage in the end will damage you and your efforts to get ahead. So in thinking about how to get ahead and how to do it efficiently without collateral damage, I really came up with these five things.

Number one, earn respect. And you do that by working hard at your current job, at your own job, and then showing a willingness to go the extra mile when it's called upon or needed and to take on additional tasks. Maybe getting on a committee or joining in a strategic planning process or something like that, but something extra you can get involved in. But you can't neglect your own job, because again, that falls on somebody else and creates collateral damage. Plus, you don't really earn respect if you don't do your own job well. So that's number one, you got to do your own job well, but then showing the willingness to go the extra mile.

Number two, develop relationships, and internally and externally. You got to have relationships internally that'll help you along the way. Because so much of what we do today involves a team, and you got to be able to work with other people, work effectively. So, if you can develop relationships internally, that's great. And then developing relationships externally is important as well. If I just think of construction, and the way I've seen a lot of people get ahead fast is by becoming their customer's go-to person. If a company's, one of their top two or three customers sees you as their go-to person, well, people are going to notice that. And that's going to be important positive to your business, but it's also going to be an important positive for you to try to move ahead in your life and your career.

Number three, developing followership. A lot of times as we've done peer groups and we've reviewed somebody's potential for future company leadership, one of the things we oftentimes look at is have they developed some followership within their own company. When they go off in a direction, is there anybody behind them going with them? Or the people are basically, "Nah. No. I don't... Uh-uh." So, developing that followership, do people respond to you and your calls to action? When you need to get something done, do people in your business cooperate and do things for you? And you want to develop that followership within your company, certainly. And that'll help you get ahead.

Number four, develop your knowledge and skills. And not just with the job you currently have, again, but you can certainly be looking ahead. And there may be some knowledge and skills you want to get, a class you want to take, a book you want to read to further develop your knowledge and skills, so that you're ready and prepared for the next step in your career. And you may want to talk to your managers and see what they think. Certainly, if you're in alignment on where you're going with your management, you should also be in alignment on maybe some of the things you could learn, some of the extra steps you could take to be prepared to move forward. But don't neglect, again, your current job. You also want to advance your skills there, so that you can be as good as possible at your current job.

And then, number five, seek out mentorship. Learn how leaders, your leaders and the upper leaders in your company think. What do they think about when they're making personnel assignments? What do they think about when they're preparing the annual bonus and salary adjustments for their team? What are the considerations? Ask them. Maybe ask

them even if you could sit side by side with them as they go through something like that. What do they look at when they're looking at a contract and they're reviewing a contract, what are the important points that they focus on? When they're hiring people, how do they make effective hiring decisions? How do they decide, "Does this person have the right character for our company? Do they have the right set of skills?" How do I know, because everybody can write a resume, and everybody can sort of self-promote. So how do you cut through all that to make good hiring decisions?

But there are a million of those whats that you could gain mentorship on to help you understand how people think. And again, in getting ahead, that interest you show in those ideas will help impress others as well, and help them want to move your career along because it's... I guess, the opposite would be somebody who just thinks they deserve it because of who they are, and they might not get as good a response as somebody who's seeking out the knowledge, the mentorship, the extra skills, the followership, the relationships, and doing their own job.

So, if you want to get ahead efficiently without collateral damage, do those five things and I think you'll find success. Dennis Engelbrecht, Digging Deeper.