

Good morning, everybody. Dennis Engelbrecht with an encore presentation of Digging Deeper.

Today, I want to talk about the art, and I really think it is an art, the art of bringing discipline to your organization. Well, why would you want to do that? Why would you want to have discipline in your organization? Well, discipline is what helps to get things done. And in construction, there's a lot of things that need to be done. There's a lot of steps, there's a lot of process. And I think over time, you've probably all found as I have, that if you don't follow the steps or do the things along the way, things fall through the cracks and problems happen and mistakes are made more often than not when you don't have that discipline. I don't know how many of you have seen the movie Hoosiers, but a great example of what I'm talking about. Gene Hackman starred in it, and he was a coach who needed redemption, and he goes to a small school in Indiana to get that redemption.

It's interesting, he takes over, I guess what you would say as an undisciplined high school basketball team. He goes to the first practice and all the players want to do is shoot, and they don't do any drills, or they're not used to doing any drills. They're certainly going to do them now. But Gene Hackman dives in there and starts to change the culture of what's going on. So, all those players who all they want to do is shoot for the first week or two, nobody shoots ever. It's all about footwork, passing, going through drills, developing the habits, and getting all the things, the basics in effect that will allow people when you're in the heat of competition, to be able to use those skills then and have them come through to hopefully have a winning team. And in this effort to get them to practice the right way, so they play the right way, he has to kick somebody off of the team.

He has to administer some discipline to create discipline because at first, they were not reacting well to him, and they were not a discipline team. So, for that practice and discipline to begin to have the desired effect, your team needs to gain trust in that discipline. And in the movie, they did eventually start to gain trust, and even the community had the same problem. They didn't like what they were seeing, but eventually they gained trust in the coach and the team, the star player comes back from deciding not to play for the basketball team, to play for the basketball team because they're playing the right way. And it now is an organization that has some discipline. So, coming back to construction, what does discipline really mean? What does it look like? Well, I think discipline occurs in all of the meetings, the checklists, the processes.

Again, the reports that people do, their timeliness in being somewhere and doing things. Timelines then are met, work is organized and prioritized appropriately. And if you look at that organization wide, if all of those things are being done that looks like a disciplined organization. For you to achieve a disciplined organization or a more disciplined organization, I'm sure every organization out there has some discipline. But I think if you look around, you'll probably see some other areas or perhaps some people within the system that are not acting in a disciplined manner. So, the first thing, and you've probably heard me say this before, if you don't inspect, don't expect. So, in order to get a disciplined organization, you have to inspect. You just can't rely on everybody's doing everything they're supposed to be doing. You have to sometimes check up behind and make sure those things are being done.

And what do you expect requires some clarity too, because maybe people don't know exactly what they're supposed to do or how they're supposed to go about it or don't understand the process. Or oftentimes they don't do it because they don't believe in the process or understand the connection between the process that they're doing and the end result. So, in your expectations, you sometimes have to have more clarity, be more specific so people understand the connection between how they do something and the performance result that you're going to get in the end. And then part of if you don't inspect, don't expect is what you tolerate, because we can have expectations that are up here and we can have people performing at a whole different number of levels that are not up where your expectation is, but where your culture and where your people will tend to go sometimes is the lowest level of performance and discipline that you'll accept.

And we accept those things for a lot of reasons. Sometimes. Sometimes it's just conflict avoidance. We hate to have conflicts, so we don't require people to meet those higher standards that we may have. I want to encourage everybody to learn how to have productive conflict, because if you bring up things that people are doing wrong. That's not comfortable for them, probably not comfortable for you. So, you have to have that productive conflict in order to make any changes and have people meet the standards that you're trying to meet. And you probably have the case also where some people simply won't or can't meet those standards. And these are two different situations. Obviously, if somebody can't meet the standards, perhaps there's a way with training or support. If somebody just naturally is not organized, then maybe they suffer from ADD or ADHD, whatever those things are.

And maybe they need support. Maybe they're the person who needs some help from a personal assistant or an assistant or a secretary or that kind of thing to help them stay disciplined and be their best self. Now, if somebody can't, then we go back to what you will tolerate. Eventually, if somebody won't be disciplined, then you have to make a decision on, maybe you have to put them in a place where the discipline is less required, or you have to part ways. And those things are very important. I think going back to the story of Hoosiers and Gene Hackman, until he made an example of one of those better players by saying, "Well then you can't be part of this team if you're not going to act in a certain way." He didn't have the discipline, and I don't think anybody believed that that discipline was going to be necessary until he made an example of it.

So sometimes you need to do that, unfortunately. So how do you know if you have a disciplined organization? Well, in a disciplined organization, people do their jobs both because it's how you achieve excellence, but it's also because that's expected. So, people do it because that's how you get excellence and people do it because that's what's expected. So, as you look around your organization, you see people doing the things they're supposed to be doing, and they're doing them for those two reasons. Now, one last tip on, if you want to bring discipline to your organization, you do have to look inward and make sure that you as leaders are practicing and demonstrating that discipline as well, because more often than not, folks are going to look to their leaders for the example, and they're going to try to act like the leaders do and act within those expectations again, of the leaders.

Another way to think about a disciplined organization might be if you read Jim Collins, *Good to Great*, they just described something called the Flywheel Effect, that all of the greatest companies that they had studied had this flywheel effect where it's what the way they describe it is trying to move this great big, heavy gear, and you get it in motion, but once you get it in motion, it tends to stay in motion. And if you have that kind of effect going on in your company, that usually means that people are following the process, they're doing things on time, they're doing them in a discipline manner, they're getting their work done, and that's what really makes an organization click. So, work on your art of bringing discipline to your organization, and I'm sure you're going to see great results.

Dennis Engelbrecht, Digging Deeper.