

HUMILITY

**The Most Beautiful Word
in the English Language**

HUMILITY

謙遜

"BE LIKE THE BAMBOO
THE HIGHER YOU GROW
THE DEEPER YOU BOW"

CHINESE PROVERB



AGENDA

- **INTRODUCTION**
- **HUMILITY BASICS**
- **PRACTICING HUMILITY**
- **KEY POINTS AND RECAP**



INTRODUCTION

- Words have enormous power
- They can make us erupt into laughter or bring tears to our eyes
- They can influence, inspire, manipulate and shock
- They can build and destroy



INTRODUCTION

- Some words have different effects on different people
- One such word is humility



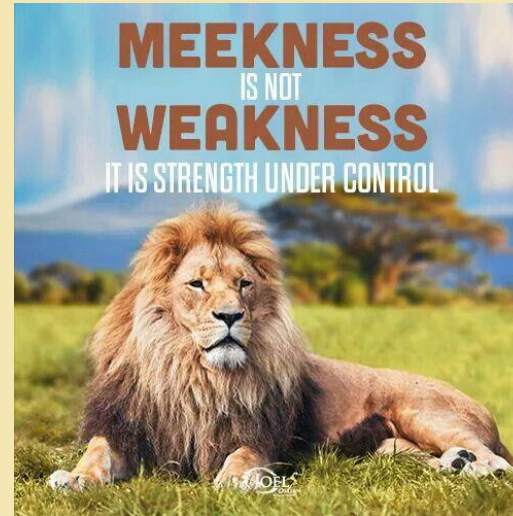
INTRODUCTION

- It is one of those words that are seldom in neutral gear
- Some love the word and all it stands for
- Some almost fear it and interpret it synonymously with lack of self-confidence or timidity



INTRODUCTION

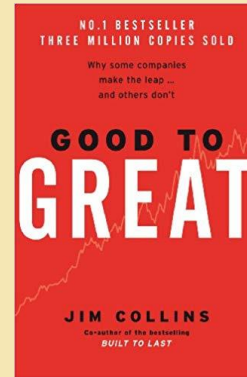
- The dictionary defines humility as modesty, lacking pretense, not believing that you are superior to others



- An ancillary definition includes: "Having a lowly opinion of oneself, meekness"

INTRODUCTION

- Jim Collins mentioned it in his seminal work **Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... and Others Don't**



- In this book, Collins examined companies that went from good to great by sustaining 15-year cumulative stock returns at or below the general stock market, and after a transition point, cumulative returns at least three times the market over the next 15 years

HUMILITY BASICS

- Among the many characteristics that distinguished these companies from others is that they all had a Level 5 leader
- Level 5 leaders direct their ego away from themselves to the larger goal of leading their company to greatness
- These leaders are a complex, paradoxical mix of intense professional will and extreme personal humility



HUMILITY BASICS

- They will create superb results but shun public adulation, and are never boastful
- They are described as modest



HUMILITY BASICS

- An example of such a leader who epitomized humility is David Packard, the co-founder of Hewlett-Packard, who, in Jim Collins' words, defined himself as a HP man first and a CEO second
- He was a man of the people, practicing management by walking around
- Shunning all manner of publicity, Packard is quoted as saying: "You shouldn't gloat about anything you've done; you ought to keep going and find something better to do."



HUMILITY BASICS

- Another great leader is Patrick Daniel, CEO of North American energy and pipeline company Enbridge, who espouses these leadership attributes:
 - **Determination to create results and humility**
 - **Shifting the focus away from himself**
 - **Continually recognizing the contributions of others**
- "I have learned through the lives of great leaders," he said, "that greatness comes from humility and being at times, self-effacing"



HUMILITY BASICS

- Clearly these leaders, and many others like them, don't espouse the meaning of humility as "mEEK"



- On the contrary, it is a source of their strength

HUMILITY BASICS

- But the notion of being self-effacing is one that we struggle with in our competitive culture, prescribing that we take every opportunity to toot our own horn, and that we don't dare leave the house without our dynamic elevator speech all rehearsed



HUMILITY BASICS

- We often confuse humility with timidity
- Humility is not clothing ourselves in an attitude of self-abasement or self-denigration
- Humility is all about maintaining our pride about who we are, about our achievements, about our worth – but without arrogance – it is the antithesis of hubris, that excessive, arrogant pride which often leads to the derailment of some corporate heroes, as it does with the downfall of the tragic hero in Greek drama

HUMILITY BASICS

- It's about a quiet confidence without the need for a meretricious selling of our wares
- It's about being content to let others discover the layers of our talents without having to boast about them
- It's a lack of arrogance, not a lack of aggressiveness in the pursuit of achievement



HUMILITY BASICS

- An interesting dichotomy is that, often, the higher people rise, the more they have accomplished, the higher the humility index
- Those who achieve the most, brag the least, and the more secure they are in themselves, the humbler they are

- **“True merit, like a river, the deeper it is, the less noise it makes”**
-- Edward Frederick Halifax



- We have all come across people like that and feel admiration for them

HUMILITY BASICS

- There is also an understated humility of every day people we work with who can get the job done without drawing attention to themselves
- Witness the employee who is working at his computer into the late hours, purely motivated by a keen sense of duty
- The executive assistant who stays after 5:30pm on a Friday night in an empty office to await a courier
- The manager who quietly cancels an important personal event to fly out of town to attend to the company's business



HUMILITY BASICS

- Humility is also a meta-virtue



- It crosses into an array of principles

HUMILITY BASICS

- For example, we can safely declare that there cannot be authenticity without humility
- Because, there is always a time in a leader's journey when one will be in a situation of not having all the answers
- Admitting this and seeking others' input requires some humility

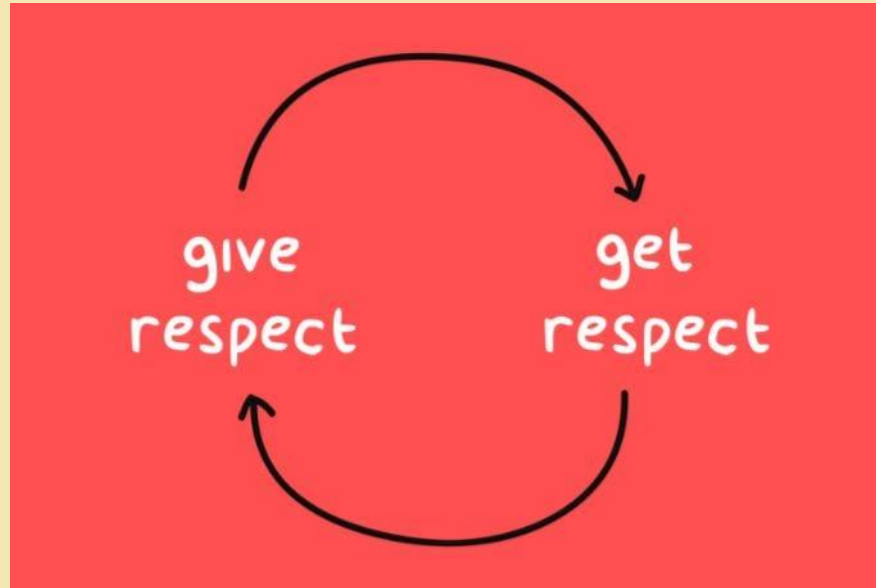
He who knows all the answers has not been asked all the questions.

Confucius

@avetang

HUMILITY BASICS

- Another mark of a leader who practices humility is his or her treatment of others



- Such leaders treat everyone with respect regardless of position

HUMILITY BASICS

- Something interesting happens, too, when we approach situations from a perspective of humility: it opens us up to possibilities, as we choose open-mindedness and curiosity over protecting our point of view



HUMILITY BASICS

- We spend more time in that wonderful space of the beginner's mind, willing to learn from what others have to offer
- We move away from pushing into allowing, from insecure to secure, from seeking approval to seeking enlightenment
- We forget about being perfect and we enjoy being in the moment

PRACTICING HUMILITY

Here are a few suggestions on practicing humility:

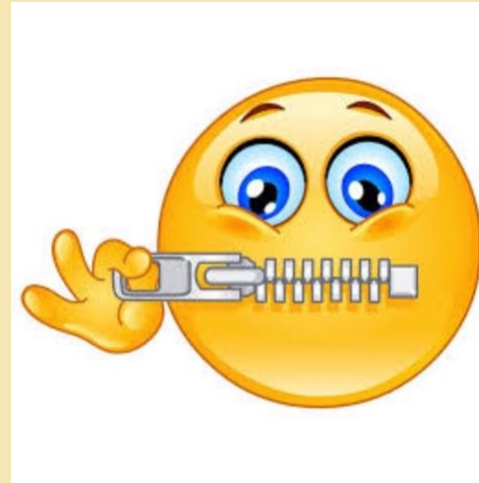
- There are times when swallowing one's pride is particularly difficult and any intentions of humility fly out the window, as we get engaged in a contest of perfection, each side seeking to look good
- If you find yourself in such no-win situations, consider developing some strategies to ensure that the circumstances don't lead you to lose your grace

**MAKING
MISTAKES IS
BETTER THAN
FAKING
PERFECTIONS.**

PRACTICING HUMILITY

Here are a few suggestions on practicing humility:

- Try this sometimes: just stop talking and allow the other person to be in the limelight

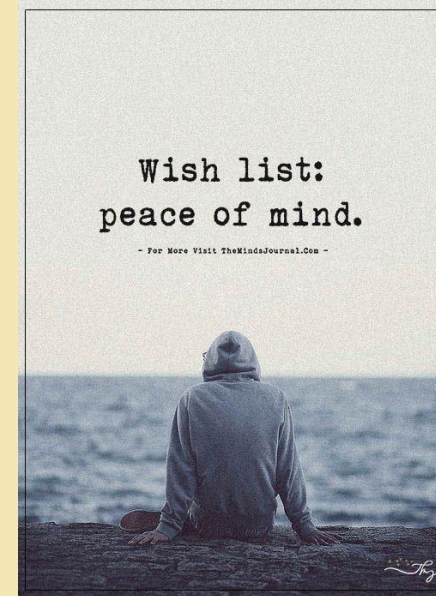


- There is something very liberating in this strategy

PRACTICING HUMILITY

Here are a few suggestions on practicing humility:

- Here are three magical words that will produce more peace of mind than a week at an expensive retreat: **“You are right”**



PRACTICING HUMILITY

Here are a few suggestions on practicing humility:

- Catch yourself if you benignly slip into over preaching or coaching without permission – is zeal to impose your point of view overtaking discretion?
- Is your correction of others reflective of your own needs?

PRACTICING HUMILITY

Here are a few suggestions on practicing humility:

- Seek others' input on how you are showing up in your leadership path
- Ask: **“How am I doing?”**
- It takes humility to ask such a question
- And even more humility to consider the answer



PRACTICING HUMILITY

Here are a few suggestions on practicing humility:

- Encourage the practice of humility in your company through your own example: every time you share credit for successes with others, you reinforce the ethos for your constituents



- Consider mentoring or coaching emerging leaders on this key attribute of leadership

KEY POINTS AND RECAP

- There are many benefits to practicing humility, to being in a state of non-pretense
 - **It improves relationships across all levels**
 - **It reduces anxiety**
 - **It encourages more openness**
 - **It enhances one's self-confidence**
 - **It opens a window to a higher self**