

***“IT WILL BE DIFFERENT WHEN I’M  
IN CHARGE !!...”***

**THE MYTHS VERSUS REALITIES OF  
EMS SUPERVISION AND  
MANAGEMENT**

*Raphael M. Barishansky*

# No words can suffice



**And you thought your job sucked**

# What to call this presentation?

- You're in charge.....now what ?
- Why does everyone hate me...an introduction to being an EMS supervisor
- How to survive as an EMS Supervisor or Manager
- Help !!!!!!!! (yes....you are in charge and have to do something)

Is this you?



# Who among you are willing...?

- ◎ EMS is starving for leaders who have:
  - Vision
  - Passion/Energy
  - Integrity
  - Courage to take calculated risks

# Leadership 101: The 4 Pillars

- Honesty
- Competence
- Consistency
- Vision



# Honesty: Give it to me straight....

- ◎ Tell the truth – the whole truth - and nothing but the truth
  - If you lie, it will be remembered a lot longer
  - If you don't know – ADMIT IT! - then find out the right answer (otherwise people will make something up)
  - Rumors

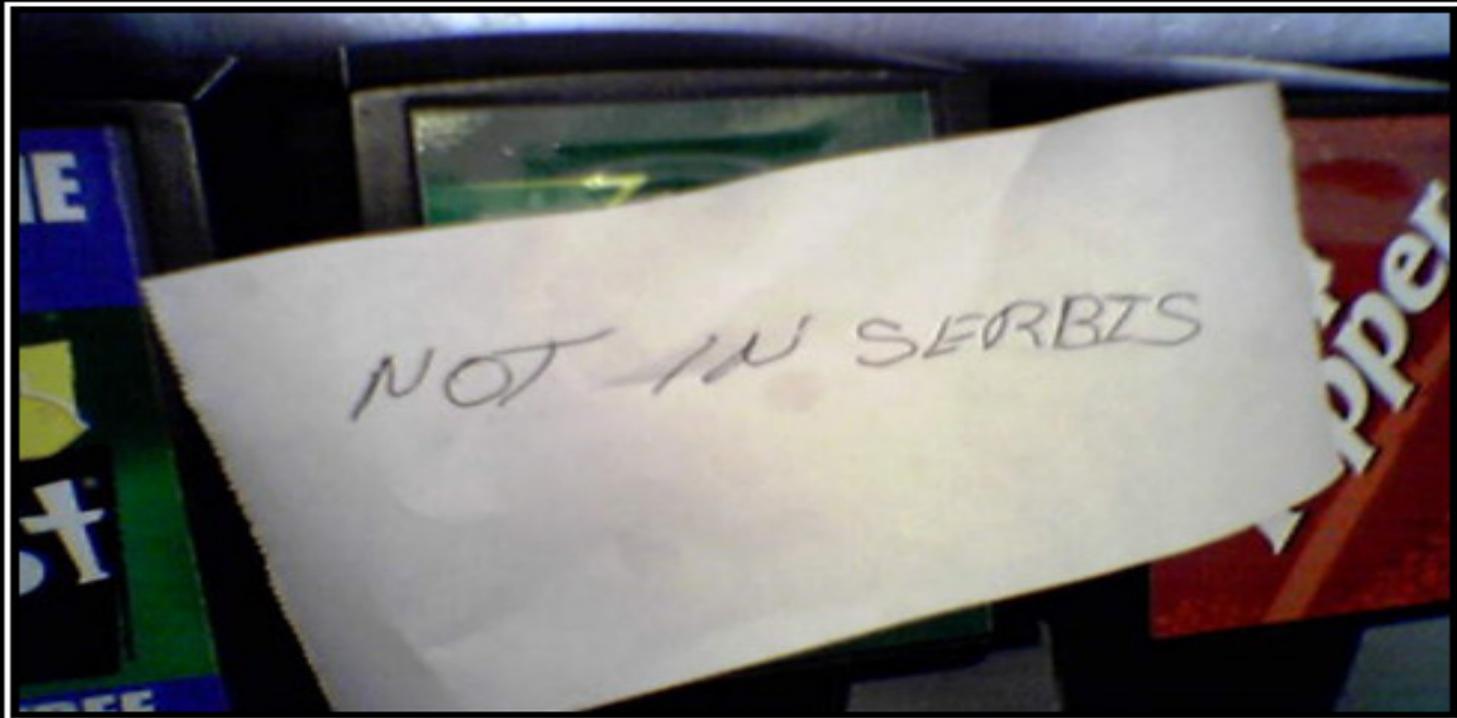
# Honesty: showing all the cards...

- ◎ Resist the urge to sugar-coat
  - Explain the reality of situations in a factual manner – “why we can’t do/implement this” - without offering blame or a scapegoat
  - Tell the unvarnished truth - not what you think people want to hear – it may not be liked, but it will be appreciated

# Honesty (continued)

- ◎ This all goes to gaining and maintaining credibility – tough to gain, easy to lose

# Competence



## COMPETENCE

Who says you need to know what you're doing  
in order to do a job?

[fakeposters.com](http://fakeposters.com)

# Competence: Picking Your Peers

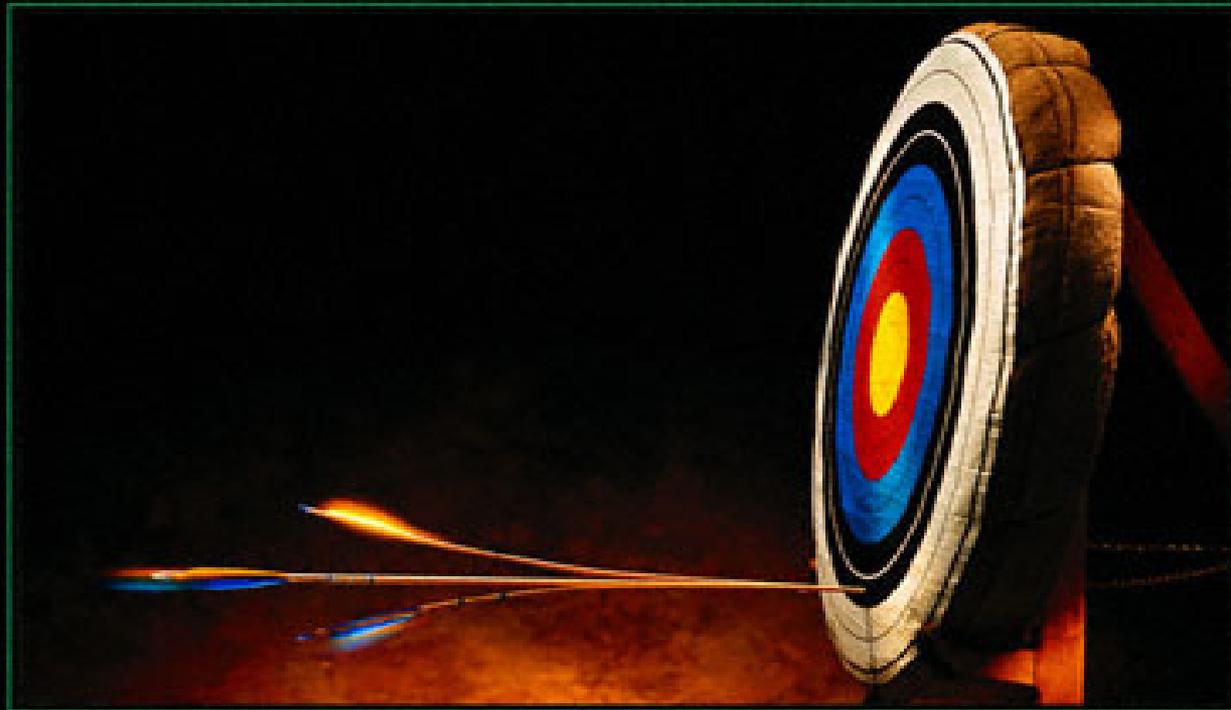
- ◎ Choose a mentor
  - Look for the successful people around you (not just in EMS)
  - Figure out how they got where they are, the choices they made and the obstacles they faced
  - Don't be afraid to ask questions

# Competence: Tuning In

- ◎ Stay on top of current events in the field
  - Read everything you can get your hands on (internet, magazines, newspapers, books, etc.)
  - Chances are you will learn something from what someone else is doing.
  - This goes for whatever position you are in.

# Consistency

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# CONSISTENCY

IT'S ONLY A VIRTUE IF YOU'RE NOT A SCREWUP.

# Consistency: Appearance is everything...

- ◎ Also, its not just what you say, but how you say it
  - Communications should be clear and consistent
  - Practice what you preach – you must have the same standards for managers and line employees.
  - Also, never say “do as I say, not as I do”

# Consistency: Blue to White

- ◎ Never forget where you came from.
  - But remember – you are no longer “one of the boys” - Boss Vs Buddy
  - Watch out for the “us” and “them” mentality when things get strained
  - Don’t play favorites with former partners – but don’t be harder on them either

# Vision:

- ⦿ Having a vision
  - Seeing it clearly
  - Communicating it clearly
- ⦿ Realizing a vision
  - Picking the right “team”
  - Putting the interests of the organization above the needs of the few ....or the one

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## VISION

HOW CAN THE FUTURE BE SO HARD TO PREDICT  
WHEN ALL OF MY WORST FEARS KEEP COMING TRUE?

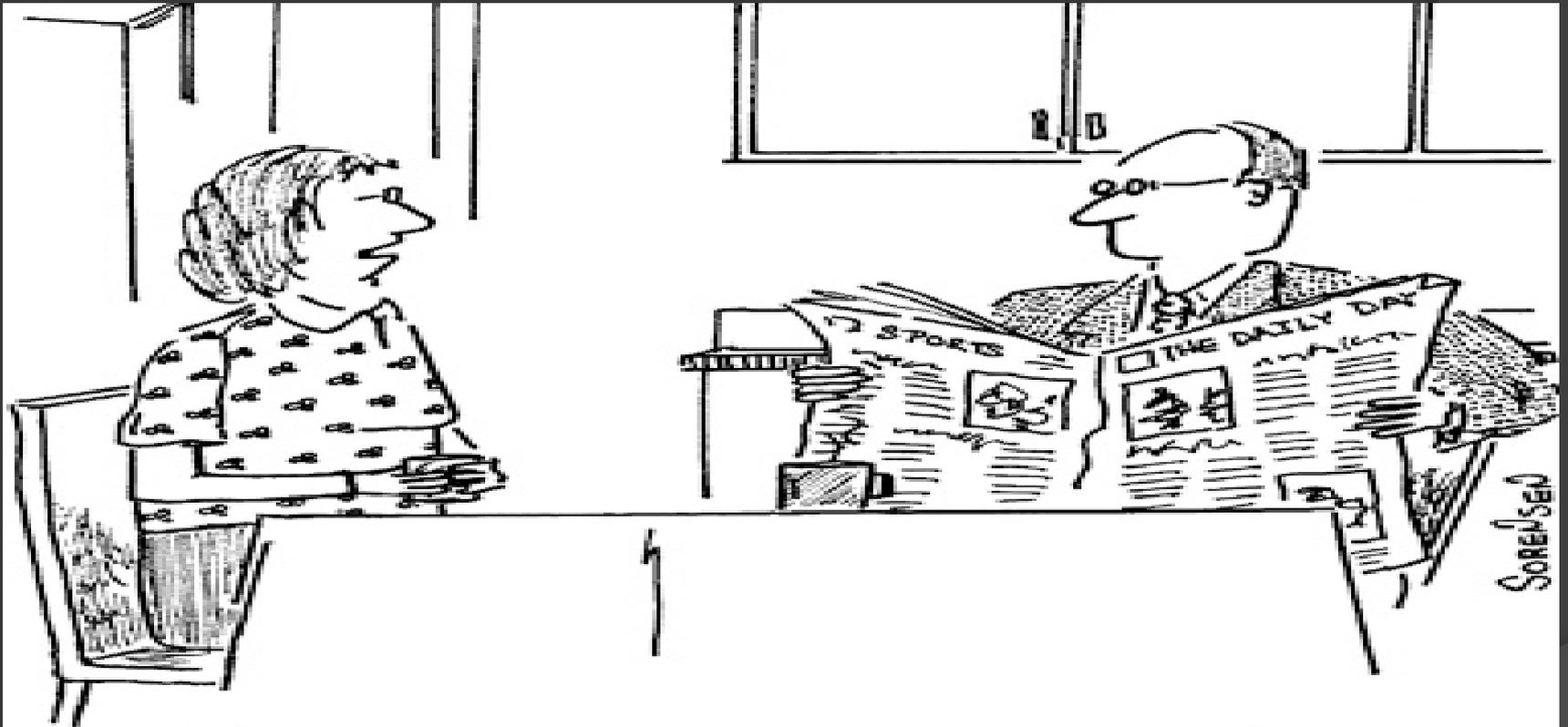
# Necessary evils....

- ◎ Accept that every job has some element of politics and bureaucracy
  - Politics – the art or science of government; the total complex of relations between people in society
  - How many times have you heard or said the words “I don’t want to get involved in politics”

# Necessary evils...

- Use networking and team building to engender support - not establish cliques
- Learn to distinguish processes that are needed from those that are merely habitual
- Everyone has an agenda – even you !!

# Compromise



**“Jessica compromised by getting a tattoo that looks like a piercing.”**

Reprinted from Funny Times / PO Box 18530 / Cleveland Hts. OH 44118  
phone: 216.371.8600 / email: ft@funnytimes.com

# Compromise

- ⦿ Compromise is a huge word
- ⦿ The most effective leaders have a delicate balance of consistency and flexibility
- ⦿ Each situation must be carefully evaluated for the benefits and costs of compromise versus being unbending

# An ounce of prevention....



# An ounce of prevention....

- ◎ Take common sense steps to avoid mistakes
  - Always have someone else look over your written work (memos, policies, etc)
  - Double check authority sources (federal, state, regional, local) for updates before putting out “final” documents
  - 24 hour rule



# To err is human....

- ◎ Everybody makes mistakes – you are going to as well.
  - Own up - figure out what went wrong - move on! (yes, you read that right)
  - We call these “lessons”
  - Don’t dwell on what can’t be changed

# To forgive....?

- ◎ When taking action as a manager....ask yourself if it can pass the “mother test”
  - If your mother sees it in the local paper will she make a copy and carry it in her purse to show all of her friends ...
  - or shred it, burn it, and then bury the remains?

# More errors

- ◎ Management transparency – remember that every decision you make has the potential to wind up on the Internet:
  - *“Fire Chief Suspended After Hazing Videos Released”* [www.wjz.com](http://www.wjz.com) (07/14/08)

# Can you hear me now....?



# Can you hear me now....?

- ◎ Listen to what is being said – listen, don't just wait for your turn to talk – this means active listening:
  - You should be able to repeat back the message in your own words
  - You don't have to agree with it – just understand it

# Management 101: Accentuating the Positive



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# Management 101:

## Accentuating the Positive

- ◎ Compliment your employees whenever possible - and appropriate
  - Although it's easier to focus on the negative – don't do it
  - Frequent small acknowledgments outweigh rare large ones
  - Praise in public - discipline in private

# Management 201: Seek Input



# Management 201: Seek Input

- ◎ Involve everyone in decisions
  - Even those who seem to “complain all of the time” (some of the best ideas and thoughts on implementation can come from these people)
  - Learn from everyone – the good and the bad.
  - Emulate the good and try not to emulate the less-than-good

# Management 301: You are who you lead....



## LEADERSHIP 101

No one is filing a report with HR  
when you choke out coworkers in public  
for annoying you.

[motifake.com](http://motifake.com)

# Management 301: You are who you lead....

- ◎ Teach people what you want them to know – Ludwig says “MBWA, not by memo”
  - Great for communications
  - Allows for meeting everyone and keeps you in touch with reality
  - Listening to ideas

# Management 301: Know thy enemy (and thy friend)

- ◎ Identify the key players:
  - Boss, secretary, predecessor, Medical Director, office manager, etc.
  - Relationships – with those under you, on the same level as you and above you - will make you or break you
  - Employees are the key to your success
  - No one can do it alone

# HR 101: Discipline

**IT'S FROM THE PARAMEDICS...SAYS  
THEY'LL BE DOWN THE STREET IF  
WE NEED THEM.**



# HR 101: Discipline

- ◎ Give your employees the benefit of the doubt
  - Get all the facts
  - Do not rush to judgment
  - Give people a chance to explain

# HR 201: Pre - C.Y.A.\*

- ◎ If you didn't write it, it didn't happen....
  - The good....and the not so good....
  - Document !!!
  - Document !!!
  - Did I mention - DOCUMENT !!!!
  - And keep it !!

*(\*Calling Your Attorney)*

# Words not to live by....

- ⦿ *“We’ve always done it like that....”*
- ⦿ *“That’ll never work here.....”*
- ⦿ *“’Cause I’m the boss - that’s why....”*

# More words not to live by....

- ⦿ *“You do your job and I will do mine”*
- ⦿ Also, remember that in your capacity as a supervisor or manager there is no such thing as:
  - *“Off the record...”*
  - *“We’re having a private conversation....”*
  - *“It’s just between us.....”*

# Final thoughts on leading...

- Don't take criticisms personally
- Do not be vindictive
- Be contrite when you are wrong
- Be fair

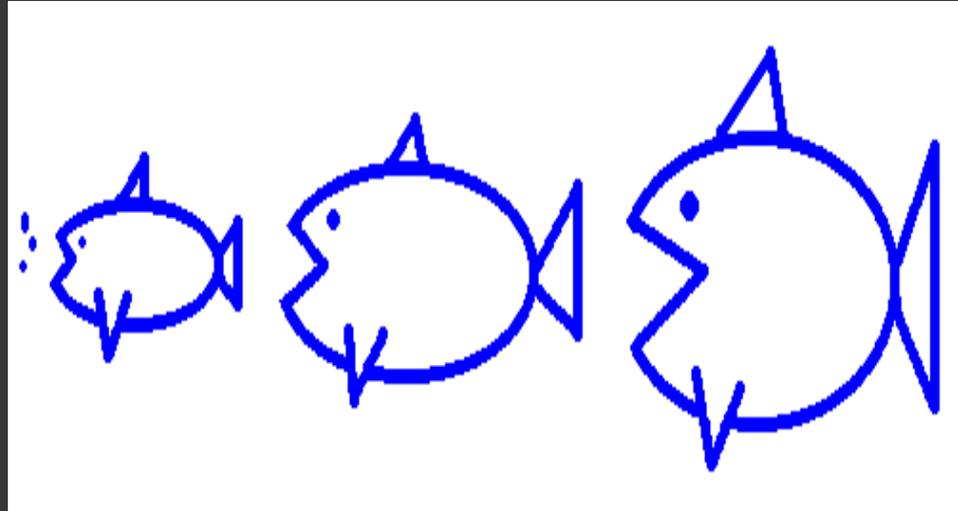


# More thoughts on leading...

- If it doesn't feel right, don't do it.
- Take responsibility
- Be critical of yourself in a constructive way (honest self - assessment is key to success)

# Still more thoughts on leading...

- Everybody reports to somebody  
(Supervisor to manager to director to VP  
and the list goes on)



# Even more thoughts on leading

- Management is 10% education, 40% experience and 50% intuition



# Conclusions

- Its tough at the top - never easy to be a supervisor – even less easy in EMS.
- It will get easier – I promise.  
*(but never simple)*



# Suggested Resources

## ◎ Books

- *First Time Manager*

- Lorin Belker and Gary Topchik

- *Its Your Ship*

- D. Michael Abrashoff

- *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*

- Stephen Covey

## ◎ National Fire Academy (NFA) Classes

- Advanced Leadership Issues in EMS

- Management of Emergency Medical Services

# The charge

- To take this advice....  
and turn it into action

Remember – this could be you....



**And you thought your job sucked**

But wouldn't you prefer this?



# Questions?



Thank you...

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