

Never Finished



***“Earn trust, earn trust, earn trust.
Then you can worry about the rest.”***

– SETH GODIN

If you've ever had the privilege of deeply loving or spending significant time with a firefighter, you've likely heard the word “brotherhood.” Often, this word is spoken with a profound sense of connection that goes beyond words, carrying a depth of meaning that is hard to fully explain.

“Brotherhood” evokes a profound sense of honor, loyalty, respect, and personal responsibility, all while prioritizing the needs of others above one's own. The bond within a community of individuals, united by a shared purpose, fuels the drive to excel in one's own responsibilities while prioritizing the needs of others above oneself.

In visiting with firefighters, this “brotherhood” (which includes “sisters”) can't be turned off and on. It is not just exhibited at a fire or on a rescue mission, but present in day-to-day life, crossing work boundaries without hesitation.

One of the key aspects of this “brotherhood,” lies in the foundation of TRUST. In the words of one firefighter, “My brothers can TRUST me to do my job and to always ‘have their back’ because I have learned and constantly improve the foundational skills of my job. I can TRUST them to do the same.”

Highly effective executive coaches adopt this same practice in living out their service mindset, becoming perpetual learners through ongoing practice, education, introspection, and by nurturing a growth-oriented mindset. The learning is never finished, leading to a strong sense of trust and respect from those they serve.

When comparing our practice of executive coaching to that of a firefighter, we can adopt two key practices from these heroes that will greatly enhance our ability to support clients.

1. Continually learning and growing in our role as an executive coach.
2. Modeling for others the desire to continually improve.

Some of the most valued times in a firefighter's career are the times they spend with brothers and sisters in practicing their responsibilities, refining their skills, and learning what works. This time spent together practicing creates the bedrock of trust that the brotherhood is built on, allowing the opportunity to celebrate one another, push each other to greater accomplishments, and continually refine practices.

In the words of a Firefighter Chief, "I must show my team what it means to seek to become better, to constantly want to do better, to further build their trust in my abilities, my choices, and my decisions." As leaders in the executive coaching profession, it is essential for us to recognize the importance of modeling a commitment to continuous learning, enhancing our effectiveness, and skillfully drawing out the best in others.

Above all, it is critical for us to realize that, whether as firefighters or executive coaches, we are part of something bigger than ourselves. Our individual contributions are strengthened by the collective commitment to serve, support, and elevate others. By embracing a mindset of a continual learner, we cultivate a lasting impact that is ultimately able to transcend personal achievement.

*"Live as if you were to die tomorrow.
Learn as if you were to live forever."*

- Mahatma Gandhi