



**VALDOSTA FIRE
DEPARTMENT**

A Department Without Limits

Editor:
Sgt. S A Miller

BIRTHDAYS:

LT RONALD ROE 10/01

SGT TYSHON REED 10/02

LT RONALD SHOEMAKE 10/14

SGT AARON LYONS 10/20

FF JOSHUA MCBRIDE 10/22

FF AUSTIN WILLIAMS 10/30

CHIEF'S TOPIC OF THE MONTH

Repost from November 2015.

Each month, it is always challenging to find that "right" topic. I try to find ways to motivate, encourage, inspire, support, and show love. This month I decided to talk about being a Champion. I know of a few employees that personally need a few words of encouragement. I recently read a quote by Apoorve Dubey, "To get up when you are down, to fight more intensely when you are struggling; to put in the extra effort when you are in sheer pain, to comeback when nobody expects you to, and to stand tall when everyone is pulling you down are what makes a champion." When reading the quote, I could only think about the famous hit song by the British rock band Queen - "We are The Champions." The song was written by Freddie Mercury and I

wanted to share one of the verses.

I've paid my dues

Time after time

I've done my sentence But
committed no crime And bad
mistakes

I've made a few

I've had my share of sand
Kicked in my face

But I've come through

And we mean to go on and on
and on and on

We are the champions - my
friends

And we'll keep on fighting

Till the end

We are the champions

We are the champions

No time for losers

'Cause, we are the champions
of the World "Freddie Mercury.



Freddie D. Broome, Fire Chief

For those that are going through some struggles in your personal or professional lives, remember you are not alone. You have your Fire Department family and community here for you. We all make mistakes, we all doubt ourselves and often question our faith but in the end, "We keep fighting till the end" because "We are the Champions of the World." Our community believes in you, our city believes in you and I believe in you. Always remember that "Arrows goes forward only after pulling in backwards, every human being will get happy only after facing the difficulties in their life path. So don't be afraid to face our difficulties, they will push you forward"—unknown. Thank you for your support and dedication.

POINTS OF INTEREST

- Submissions to the newsletter should occur before the 20th of each month
- Feel free to submit photos with your submissions
- Have a strong opinion about a topic of concern to our fire department? Feel free to submit a piece for review and possible publication in the newsletter

5TH QUINQUENNIAL ANNIVERSARY



Congratulations to Ms. Alisa Collins for reaching her 25th Anniversary with the Valdosta Fire Department. An integral part of why our department runs as smoothly as it does, we all send our congratulations and a hearty thank you for all that you do for us.

ATTA BOY—DONE DID GOOD



Email from our Mayor:

I just wanted to let all of you know how much I appreciate your hard work and dedication to the citizens of Valdosta during the Storm. I have received numerous compliments on you. Some of you went without sleep or had very little. Some of you were out in the worst part of the storm, endangering your life, while trying to take care of others. There are not enough words to express my appreciation for the way you all handled yourselves during this trying time.

Thanks so much,

Mayor

John Gayle

From Facebook:

The Georgia State Firefighters Association (GSFA) has recently recognized Lieutenant John Herpin for being selected as a recipient of the 2017 Life Saving Valor Award. This award is presented to fire personnel who have performed a meritorious act that resulted in a life-saving event. Lt. Herpin was presented this award during the 2017 Georgia Fire Service Conference awards ceremony held August 26, 2017, in Athens, GA.

"I would like to start by saying that I am honored and humbled to have been selected for this award and this recognition," said Lt. Herpin. "On the night of April 20th, 2017, my crew [pictured above: FF Jamie Sapp, FF Nicholas Bishop, Sgt. Isaac Harris, and Lt. John Herpin] and I were able to accomplish what every firefighter dreams of, saving the life of a child from a fire. With my crew effectively handling the fire attack, I was able to find and remove the child from the structure. I could not have made the decisions I made that night without trusting their ability to handle the fire attack. I owe my life and my abilities to those that have trained me, as a member of FLAMES the core values are C.O.D. (Courage, Obligation and Diligence). Thank you again for the honor of being selected for this award." GSFA is proud to recognize Valdosta Fire Department's Lieutenant John Herpin as recipient of this GSFA Life Saving Valor Award.

The Valdosta City Council recognized Lt. John Herpin of the Valdosta Fire Department for being selected as a recipient of the 2017 Life Saving Valor Award. The award, presented annually by the Georgia State Firefighters Association, is given to fire personnel who perform meritorious acts that result in life-saving events. Lt. Herpin was presented this award during the 2017 Georgia Fire Service Conference which was held in Athens, Georgia, in August.



D.J. Michek added 3 new photos — with Jay Carter. 2 hrs

We at Xaxby's in Lake Park really appreciate everything our first responders do for our community. I feel like our first responders are often underappreciated and are not given credit where credit is due. I would like to thank all Police officers, Fireman, and EMS for all the sacrifices you make just to make sure we are safe. Station number 5 of Valdosta Fire Department I hope you enjoyed your lunch on us, the pleasure is all ours. Thank you again.

EMPOWERING BUGLES—NOTES ON LEADERSHIP

Who is Leading Who?

By Steve Keating

One of the main responsibilities of a leader is to fire their people! Not actually fire them but fire them up.

Fire them up as in motivate them, challenge them, coach them, help them grow and help them succeed, again and again. If you're in a leadership position and you're not doing those things on a daily basis then you are simply not leading.

If you're in a leadership position and you're not actually leading then you're hurting the people you're supposed to be helping. You're also not helping the organization that has placed you into that leadership position and provided you with the opportunity to lead.

Don't make the mistake of assuming that your position makes you a leader. The only thing, the one and only thing that makes you a leader is leading. If you find yourself in a leadership position while lacking the skills required to truly lead then it is YOUR responsibility to seek out the help and training that you need to be a successful leader.

Don't wait for someone else to make you a leader, don't expect the help you need to come to you. If you're going to lead others then you must first lead yourself so lead yourself to the coaching you need to become a true leader.

If you're following someone in a leadership position who lacks the skills to lead then you have three choices.

You could just complain about it. You could point out their failings at every opportunity and become a drag on the entire organization. I've done that and it didn't really work out well for anyone, especially me.

You could, and should, attempt to lead up. By that I mean help fill the gaps of the person who is supposed to be leading you. You've no doubt already identified those gaps so try to use your own strengths to minimize the challenges those gaps cause within your company or organization.

I'll warn you that you may not get the recognition you deserve for leading up. Some people in your organization might even call you a suck up or worse. Even the person who is supposed to be leading you may be a bit leery about your motives but you'll be doing the right thing. I can say with a high degree of certainty that doing the right thing will eventually pay off; it might take longer than you want but you can't go wrong by doing right.

The third option you have is to flee. Just leave, go find employment elsewhere. This is not as good an option as it may seem. While you left a problem behind you have no guarantee that you're not just walking into another one. You also slow your own development by just leaving when the going gets a little tough.

You may get lucky and join an organization that provides you with a true leader who works hard to develop and mentor you. If that's the case then you've truly struck gold. The problem I have is with the luck part; I simply don't like depending on luck for my success.

I think most successful people would tell you that they made their success, they didn't just luck into it.

So I've written a bit here to leaders and the people who would follow them. I also want to say something to a third group. That would be the folks who put people who can't lead into leadership positions.

The truth is most organizations were able to "get away" with that for a long time. There used to be plenty of followers to go around and if an organization lost a few here and there they just plugged in some new people.

Not anymore!

One of the key considerations an organization must make these days is who is leading who. If you have good young talent being led by a non-leader in a leadership position that good young talent will leave. That's not a guess, that's not a maybe, they will be gone, period. And they are getting harder to replace by the day.

Whether you're in Human Relations or another senior position within your organization, if you're responsible for placing people into leadership positions then you better make sure you're putting actual leaders into those positions.

There is almost no bigger waste in business today than giving a bright, motivated potential superstar in your organization to a person in a leadership position who lacks the ability to help that bright, motivated individual achieve success.

There will always be some leaders who are better than others. You need to be certain that your best people are being led by your best leaders. That's the reality of the business world in which we live today; no organization can afford to have their top people led by people who are not leaders.

You may want to consider dealing with it before it's dealt with for you.

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About the Author: Steve is married to Vicki, they have two adult kids and two Cockapoo dogs. They split their time between Bloomington Minnesota and Sun City West, Arizona. You can guess which time of the year they spend in the Southwest.

Steve has over 30 years of sales and sales management experience and he speaks dozens of times a year on topics relating to sales, customer service, management, team building, leadership and business management.

1977 Graduate of University of Minnesota

Certified by Sales & Marketing Executives International as a Certified Professional Salesperson, Certified Sales Executive and Certified Marketing Executive

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Helping Someone with PTSD

Helping a Loved One While Taking Care of Yourself

When someone you care about suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), it can leave you feeling overwhelmed. The changes in your loved one can be worrying or even frightening. You may feel angry about what's happening to your family and relationship, or hurt by your loved one's distance and moodiness. But it's important to know is that you're not helpless. Your support can make all the difference in your partner, friend, or family member's recovery. With your help, your loved one can overcome PTSD and move on with his or her life.

How does PTSD affect relationships?

PTSD can take a heavy toll on relationships. It can be hard to understand your loved one's behavior—why they are less affectionate and more volatile. You may feel like you're walking on eggshells or living with a stranger. You may have to take on a bigger share of household tasks, deal with the frustration of a loved one who won't open up, or even deal with anger or disturbing behavior. The symptoms of PTSD can also lead to job loss, substance abuse, and other problems that affect the whole family.

It's hard not to take the symptoms of PTSD personally, but it's important to remember that a person with PTSD may not always have control over their behavior. Your loved one's nervous system is "stuck" in a state of constant alert, making them continually feel vulnerable and unsafe. This can lead to anger, irritability, depression, mistrust, and other PTSD symptoms that your loved one can't simply choose to turn off. With the right support from friends and family, though, your loved one's nervous system can become "unstuck" and he or she can finally move on from the traumatic event.

Helping someone with PTSD

Tip 1: Provide social support

It's common for people with PTSD to withdraw from friends and family. While it's important to respect your loved one's boundaries, your comfort and support can help the person with PTSD overcome feelings of helplessness, grief, and despair. In fact, trauma experts believe that face-to-face support from others is the most important factor in PTSD recovery.

How to support your loved one

Knowing how to best demonstrate your love and support for someone with PTSD isn't always easy. You can't force your loved one to get better, but you can play a major role in the healing process by simply spending time together.

Don't pressure your loved one into talking. It can be very difficult for people with PTSD to talk about their traumatic experiences. For some, it can even make things worse. Instead, let them know you're willing to listen when they want to talk, or just hang out when they don't. Comfort for someone with PTSD comes from feeling engaged and accepted by you, not necessarily from talking.

Do "normal" things with your loved one, things that have nothing to do with PTSD or the traumatic experience. Encourage your loved one to participate in rhythmic exercise, seek out friends, and pursue hobbies that bring pleasure. Take a fitness class together, go dancing, or set a regular lunch date with friends and family.

Let your loved one take the lead, rather than telling him or her what to do. Everyone with PTSD is different but most people instinctively know what makes them feel calm and safe. Take cues from your loved one as to how you can best provide support and companionship.

Manage your own stress. The more calm, relaxed, and focused you are, the better you'll be able to help your loved one.

Be patient. Recovery is a process that takes time and often involves setbacks. The important thing is to stay positive and maintain support for your loved one.

Educate yourself about PTSD. The more you know about the symptoms, effects, and treatment options, the better equipped you'll be to help your loved one, understand what he or she is going through, and keep things in perspective.

Accept (and expect) mixed feelings. As you go through the emotional wringer, be prepared for a complicated mix of feelings—some of which you'll never want to admit. Just remember, having negative feelings toward your family member doesn't mean you don't love them.

Tip 2: Be a good listener

While you shouldn't push a person with PTSD to talk, if they do choose to share, try to listen without expectations or judgments. Make it clear that you're interested and that you care, but don't worry about giving advice. It's the act of listening attentively that is helpful to your loved one, not what you say. A person with PTSD may need to talk about the traumatic event over and over again. This is part of the healing process, so avoid the temptation to tell your loved one to stop rehashing the past and move on.

Some of the things your loved one tells you might be very hard to listen to, but it's important to respect their feelings and reactions. If you come across as disapproving or judgmental, they are unlikely to open up to you again.

Tip 3: Rebuild trust and safety

Trauma alters the way a person sees the world, making it seem like a perpetually dangerous and frightening place. It also damages people's ability to trust others and themselves. Anything you can do to rebuild your loved one's sense of security will contribute to recovery.

Express your commitment to the relationship. Let the person know you're here for the long haul so he or she feels loved and supported.

Create routines. Structure and predictable schedules can restore a sense of stability and security to people with PTSD, both adults and children. Creating routines could mean getting your loved one to help with groceries or housework, for example, maintaining regular times for meals, or simply "being there" for the person.

- CONTINUED ON PAGE 5 -

HEALTH AND WELLNESS—CONTINUED

Minimize stress at home. Try to make sure your loved one has space and time for rest and relaxation.

Speak of the future and make plans. This can help counteract the common feeling among people with PTSD that their future is limited.

Keep your promises. Help rebuild trust by being trustworthy. Be consistent and follow through on the things you say you're going to do.

Emphasize your loved one's strengths. Tell your loved one you believe he or she is capable of recovery and point out all your loved one's positive qualities and successes.

Encourage your loved one to join a support group. Getting involved with others who have gone through similar traumatic experiences can help some people with PTSD feel less damaged and alone.

Tip 4: Anticipate and manage triggers

A trigger is anything—a person, place, thing, or situation—that reminds your loved one of the trauma and sets off a PTSD symptom, such as a flashback.

Sometimes, triggers are obvious. For example, a military veteran might be triggered by seeing his combat buddies or by the loud noises that sound like gunfire. Others may take some time to identify and understand, such as hearing a song that was playing when the traumatic event happened, for example, so now that song or even others in the same musical genre are triggers. Similarly, triggers don't have to be external. Internal feelings and sensations can also trigger PTSD symptoms.

Talking to your loved one about triggers

Ask your loved one about things he or she did in the past in response to a trigger that seemed to help (as well as those that didn't). Then you can come up with a joint game plan for how you will respond in future.

Ask what your loved one would like you to do during a nightmare, flashback, or panic attack. Having a plan in place will make the situation less scary for both of you. You'll also be in a much better position to help your loved one calm down.

Tip 5: Deal with volatility and anger

PTSD can lead to difficulties managing emotions and impulses. In your loved one, this may manifest as extreme irritability, moodiness, or explosions of rage.

Understanding anger in PTSD

People suffering from PTSD live in a constant state of physical and emotional stress. Since they usually have trouble sleeping, it means they're constantly exhausted, on edge, and physically strung out—increasing the likelihood that they'll overreact to day-to-day stressors.

For many people with PTSD, anger can also be a cover for other feelings such as grief, helplessness, or guilt. Anger makes them feel powerful, instead of weak and vulnerable. For others, they try to suppress their anger until it erupts when you least expect it.

Watch for signs that your loved one is angry such as clenching jaw

or fists, talking louder, or getting agitated. Take steps to defuse the situation as soon as you see the initial warning signs.

Try to remain calm. During an emotional outburst, do your best to stay calm. This will communicate to your loved one that you are "safe" and prevent the situation from escalating.

Give the person space. Avoid crowding or grabbing the person. This can make a traumatized person feel threatened.

Ask how you can help. For example: "What can I do to help you right now?" You can also suggest a time out or change of scenery.

Put safety first. If the person gets more upset despite your attempts to calm him or her down, leave the house or lock yourself in a room. Call 911 if you fear that your loved one may hurt himself or others.

Tip 6: Take care of yourself

Letting your family member's PTSD dominate your life while ignoring your own needs is a surefire [recipe for burnout](#). In order to have the strength to be there for your loved one over the long haul, you have to nurture and care for yourself.

Take care of your physical needs: get enough sleep, exercise regularly, eat properly, and look after any medical issues.

Cultivate your own support system. Lean on other family members, trusted friends, your own therapist or support group, or your faith community. Talking about your feelings and what you're going through can be very cathartic.

Make time for your own life. Don't give up friends, hobbies, or activities that make you happy. It's important to have things in your life that you look forward to.

Spread the responsibility. Ask other family members and friends for assistance so you can take a break. You may also want to seek out respite services in your community.

Set boundaries. Be realistic about what you're capable of giving. Know your limits, communicate them to your family member and others involved, and stick to them.

Trauma can be "contagious"

Caring for someone with PTSD can lead to the potential for secondary traumatization. You can develop your own symptoms from listening to trauma stories or being exposed to disturbing symptoms like flashbacks. The more depleted and overwhelmed you feel, the greater the risk that you may become traumatized.

Authors: Melinda Smith, M.A., and Lawrence Robinson. Last updated: April 2017.

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Editor's Note: So much more information can be found at the website including: *Communication pitfalls to avoid, common internal and external triggers, how to help in a middle of a flashback or panic attack, and help for PTSD and trauma as well as general help resources and references*

VFD HURRICANE IRMA STORIES



The following VFD employees and recruits worked during Hurricane Irma to provide extra manpower:

Brian Boutwell

Ronald Skrine

Johnny Henry

James Clinkscales

Dereck Willis

Terry Clark

Darren Williams

Isaac Harris

Caleb Clark

Robert Mercer

Chris Stevick

Jeffery Thibodeau

Justin Ply

Matt Davis

Justin Smith

Ryan Strickland

Jeffery Talley

Nicholas Kester

Matt Courson

Chad Roe

Benjamin Bennett



-CONTINUED ON PAGE 7-

HEALTH AND WELLNESS—CONTINUED



VFD Fire Recruits

Richardo Garcia

Genna O'Berin

Aaron Brown

Adam Casto

Mark Scholte

Lukenze Absolu

Gregory Exum

Daniel Carder

Cody Healey

Seabron Williams

The VFD Fire Recruits assisted Public Works for two days filling sandbags.



The Citizen Fire Academy Alumni Team participated in their first community event by volunteering at Mathis Auditorium to assist citizens. Members present were:

Sarah Lowe – (Also a City of Valdosta employee)

Alvaro and Diana Angel and their son.

Wiregrass Georgia Technical College

We are thankful for the partnership between VFD and Wiregrass. Through this partnership the EMS Program Director, Dr. Anderson allowed two Paramedic students to work with VFD during the storm. This partnership allowed the department to have 3 extra EMT's available for medical emergencies. Nichols

Chambers was assigned to work in the crowded hotel district on Engine 6. Lela Zeth (pictured above front left) worked at Mathis Auditorium with VFD to assist with any medical emergencies. Joey Thompson worked with Battalion 1.