

Hi, this is Wayne Rivers at FBI, where *We Build Better Contractors*.

This week I want to talk about humility and why humility is such a valuable attribute. Comes from an article sent to me by someone, I really don't know who, from the Rochester Business Journal in April of '23. And the discussion, of course, is about humility.

But I want to start off with saying, I don't think humility is natural. I think it's something you have to get to because think about our audience that this vlog goes out to - an audience of successful contractors. And I think it's really hard to be humble in some cases. If you've compiled success after success after success over a period of many years, why should you be humble? In fact, this is going to date me a little bit, but back in the '70s, Joe Namath said, "It's hard to be humble when you get better looking every day." And Mac Davis even wrote a song. I mean, it was a top 40 hit, I think, and I think it was... It's Hard to Be Humble was the name of the song.

So yeah, sometimes it is difficult to be humble. But I will say this about construction. Construction does contribute to people's humility because it's a hyper-competitive industry. And so, on the one hand, it's hard to stay humble, but on the other hand, it's hard to develop too big of an ego because you don't win every project you go after, and you have setbacks and all that stuff. So, construction is a very humbling industry, unlike some others I could name.

Okay, so first thing, humility is reality-centered. Humble leaders know their own capabilities. They're self-aware, if that makes sense. The writer of this article talked about watching a successful CEO basically get fussed at by an irate customer. And the CEO was probably a very wealthy person, and the customer was probably a person of average means, but the CEO didn't let his ego get in the way. And he actually listened to this irate customer because, guess what? He thought he could learn something. That is a very humble person.

Two, humility is the opposite of pride. Overconfident people can get blind to their limits. They even can get to the point where they scorned the opinions of other people because they can't imagine that they would be wrong.

I remember as a young man working in retail, one of the owners of our establishment made the claim that she had never made an inventory buying mistake. And even as a young person, as a college kid, I knew that was the most arrogant statement I'd ever heard because everybody at every level makes mistakes, don't they? That kind of arrogance is blinding to successful performance.

The third thing, humility is not... This is C.S. Lewis quote by the way, "Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less." Terrific. If you haven't read C.S. Lewis, it's well worth the effort.

Fourth thing, humility allows us to accept both criticism and compliments. Now, think about that for a minute. Nobody likes to accept criticism, but we're bound to do it from time to time. But how many times in life have you said to someone, "Is that a new car? Love your outfit. That's a cool looking sport coat you're wearing" and the other person comes back with, "Oh, I've had this car. This outfit is old. Oh, this sport coat, it's just nothing"? I've always thought that that inability to accept a genuine compliment, a heartfelt compliment is because of a lack of confidence. And I think if humble people... Humble people don't have to lack confidence, do they? You can be a very confident person and still be humble. So, think about that. The next time somebody gives you a heartfelt compliment, say nothing but thank you. And I think your confidence will rise as a result.

And the fifth thing is humility is the key to learning. And what Tony Robbins referred to all the time is constant and never-ending improvement, CANI, constant and never ending improvement.

There's a story that the writer related about Abraham Lincoln. Now, Abraham Lincoln is considered maybe the greatest of all American presidents, in the top two or three at the very least. And he talked about Lincoln visiting sick people during the Civil War, and he's going up some... actually, he's sitting at the bottom of some stairs and a soldier who's been upstairs

with his buddies, attending to his buddies who are severely injured, comes running them stairs and kind of gets tangled up in Lincoln's legs. And he said to the president, "Watch where you're going you long-legged fool." Now, this is the President of the United States. He could've reacted in any number of different ways, but Lincoln was a humble man. And he said, "What's troubling you, young man?" Think about that. He took himself out of the equation. He put the total focus on the other person. That is a humble leader willing to learn. And I think that's a terrific story.

So, I'm going to leave you with this. Rob Hoover, one of our top consultants, said that... I'm going to have to read this, so I make sure I get it right. "Humility is a guiding principle to being a servant leader, having genuine curiosity and relating to other people." I could not have said it better.

This is Wayne Rivers at FBI. Let us hear from you in the comments. And *We Build Better Contractors*.