

Good morning, everybody. Dennis Engelbrecht, Digging Deeper.

I read a quote this morning, it's from Sir Isaac Newton. I don't know if the younger of you out there remember who Isaac Newton was, but he had a lot to do with the theory of gravity and a few other things that he discovered as a scientist and philosopher going back. But one of his quotes was the one I saw this morning, "If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." And that quote really hit me because each of us, whatever we've achieved or whatever we are trying to achieve and go out and achieve, we certainly don't do it alone. And what I've found more and more as I've gotten older and further along in business, is it's not so much what you know, it's oftentimes who or how you can get the knowledge of others and use that to get yourself ahead.

And what I've found is in construction, many of the most successful people are not necessarily the smartest, the best educated, or the most driven, although each of those in and of itself is a good trait. Nothing wrong with any of those things, but what the successful people often know is what they do know and what they don't know. And what you don't know is very important because if you try to fake it, that's where you oftentimes get failures and you fall down, and maybe you don't get ahead or whatever you're trying to do individually. But for what they don't know, the really successful people either hire complimentary resources if they're the boss of the business for the things they don't know, they hopefully hire people who know those things and can do those things and have those skills. But also outside of their business, they know who to call, who might know the answer to certain questions, and they have relationships out there to help get things done.

And one thing about if you're going to call on others to get their knowledge and help get things done, they need to want to help you. So why would people want to help you? Why would you be somebody that when I call on the phone, they drop whatever they're doing, and they give me an answer or give me the help that I need? And I thought about that a lot because certainly there's lots of resources out there, but everybody's busy. Why me? Why should they be helping me?

Well, who you are and how you have a lot to do with that. And I was thinking about it, who are the people that you want to help? Well, you want to help people that are, first of all, gracious. They're polite and they're asking for help. They're not a know-it-all, and they're not demanding necessarily of your time and your knowledge. They're gracious about it, and they're very thankful also when they get the help, and they get that knowledge. And I think people that you want to help are also people that are willing to help. So, when somebody calls on you if you're willing to help them and give them an answer, then that's somebody that you're going to be able to call on. I guess that's the essence of relationship.

Not as simple as, you wash my back, I wash yours, kind of thing. But people want to help good people. So being a good person, that helps you be able to call on those resources, but ultimately any individual can't know everything. So, it's oftentimes not what you know but who you know that helps you get things accomplished and helps you get ahead, help you get things done. And I think if there was one characteristic of the most successful superintendents, the most successful project managers that I've seen over the years, every one of them has a Rolodex of not just names, but relationships that they can call upon to get the answers for the things they don't know, to help them solve problems, to help them move things along, get things done. And again, going back to Sir Isaac Newton, "If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants," I think in construction and in life, nobody can do it alone. We need the help. We need those relationships. And you get those by building them over time.

Dennis Engelbrecht, Digging Deeper.