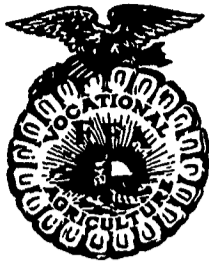


From Local Ag Teachers:



Thoughts in Passing



The article this week was written by Adolph Bensinger and submitted by Stephen M. Leiser, instructor of vocational agriculture at Solanco High School.

Ten or 15 years ago a speech given to a rural audience on developing leadership may have seemed odd or unnecessary. I assure you, leadership today is as important as the cattle report or conservation. The farmer must be made to see the light, he must speak up, he must have laws passed in Congress that benefit him as well as the person living in the urban part of America.

Why should the person with no knowledge of farm life have laws passed pertaining to agriculture by which the farmer must abide? Probably the most important reason the farmer must acquire leadership is to operate his farm as a leader should. In past generations the farm was the typical family farm in which the farmer and his family ran the homestead. Today, due to larger and highly-mechanized farms, the farmer finds it necessary to hire outside help. To keep good employees, the farmer must have good leadership qualities as well as good labor management. Some farmers have the ability to supervise employees, keep them happy, and yet accomplish a tremendous amount of work. Some do not seem to be capable of inspiring and leading others. To be a good labor manager the farmer must be a good leader!

With these reasons why a rural American needs leadership, let me continue on the subject of

developing a good leader and his leadership qualities.

To be a good leader you must first develop self-reliance. "Trust yourself," wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Every heart vibrates to that iron string! Say yes to life, be a voice, not an echo!" No one can make the best of himself without self-reliance.

How can you acquire self-reliance? What can you do to develop a strong self respect that makes each day of life an adventure instead of an excursion into fear? I would suggest two steps:

First, recognize that you are absolutely unique in this world. It is a staggering fact that of all the billions of people in this world there are no two alike. Therefore, you are unique; but because you are unique you have a contribution, a strength and an opportunity to give the world something that no one else can give! Therefore, again you must trust yourself because it is your life and some others. You must have a unique position in life . . . you have a unique destiny to achieve!

The second is to discover your strong points and develop them. Certainly no one can do everything or know everything. But each of us can do one, two, or many more things well . . . perhaps better than anyone in the world.

Therefore, you should place your talents or your gifts or skills high in your scheme of things . . . you should learn even more about them . . . you should develop them so thoroughly that you will

permeate into them. For as to develop these strong points more completely, you grow in stature, in your mind and in the minds of others. When you can trust yourself to do or to know these things well, others will place their trust in you.

Enrich your life by concentrating upon your strong points: for by doing so, you develop the self-reliant character that will cause others to admire, respect, and even envy you.

If you are of average intelligence, and apply the principles that I have just mentioned to your own life, it will not be very long before your employers notice the stronger, more independent employee he has. He will want to put your self-reliance and self confidence to use. He will want to make you a leader instead of one of the herd. Quite possibly he will advance you to a supervisory position. It is here that your leadership will be thoroughly tested, and it is here that the following virtues will serve you well.

1. Be consistent
Keep the promises you make . . . Keep the rules you impose
Do not change your opinion from day to day
Do not issue orders or give



Stephen M. Leiser, vo-ag instructor at Solanco High School, discusses a point with Adolph Bensinger, FFA member.

instructions and cancel them without good reasons

Do not lose your temper or make a fuss over nothing. If you do you will keep others in perpetual fear of putting their feet in their mouth. If you expect others to be efficient, be efficient yourself.

2. Explain anything puzzling
If you have to issue an order that seems unpopular, a few

minutes of explanation will save your face. Quite often an angry person can be made cooperative by a few words of quiet explanation.

3. Praise good work
Praise, do not flatter anyone. Flattery is not a leadership quality . . . it is one of weakness. Flattery often cheapens praise

(Continued On Page 15)

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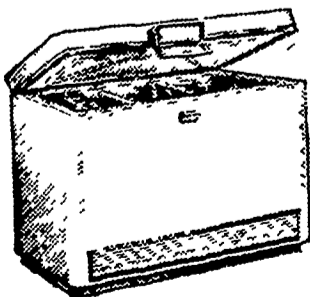
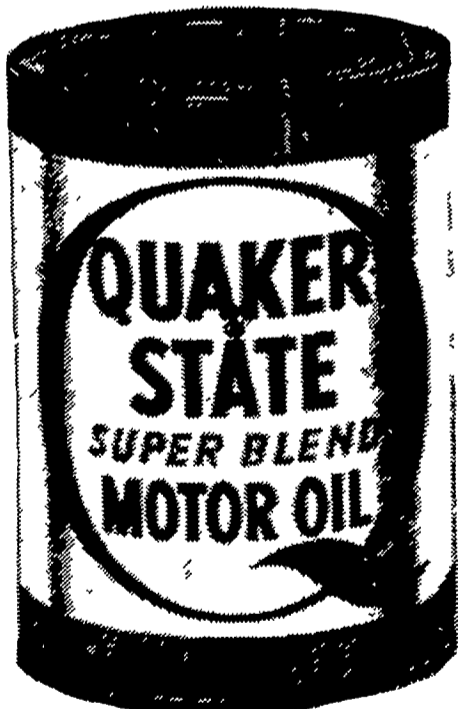
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