

Leadership Principles From One of The Founders of The Incident Command System, by KD5BJ

Recently I heard Scott Mann talking about his dad, who passed away early July. His dad, Rex Mann, was a retired firefighter working for the US Forest Service for 42 years and a community leader. With his leadership and kindness, he touched the life of so many no one can count. I was privileged enough to be invited to the streaming of the Memorial for his life.

For two hours several people who had worked side by side with him revealed, some among tears, the qualities and achievements of Rex Mann to save forests and to help his fellow men, all while creating new leaders, highly inspiring everyone to higher standards in every challenge, purpose, and project. He is one of the creators of the Incident Command System that he and others developed to bring some order during chaotic and wicked wildfires.

Always humble, he avoided publicity and authorities when they visited a fire. He preferred to stay with his fellow firefighters, right beside them. But one day, his superior told him he could not avoid Pres. George W. Bush who visited Squires Peak fire in Oregon.

President Bush asked him how the family was and he said his wife was a school teacher and his two boys were serving overseas, in Iraq and Afghanistan. The President asked all but his detail to leave and asked more questions. Then he switched and asked about the fire and the cause of its fury. Rex Mann said something like this: "It would be easier to see it, but Mr. President I will try my best to tell you." Again, the President surprised him, and his detail, by saying "Ok, then, I want to see it."

And so they went, and he showed the President one side of the forest that was barely burned on one side of the road and the other totally enflamed on the other side. Rex explained one side, the one spared by the fire, was cleaned of underbrush and well maintained. The other, the one burning like crazy, was left "natural" without any cleaning of the underbrush because of lawsuits. This caused Pres. Bush to Urge Congress to Act on Healthy Forests Initiative to protect forests from wildfires, and therefore human lives, and from insect infestation.

One thing led to another, and to make a long story short, Rex Mann was invited to the White House. He was passionate of the American Chestnut Tree, functionally extinct, and dedicated his life to helping saving it. And walking around the grounds of the White House, President Bush explained how many presidents planted a tree. And because of his passion for the American Chestnut, and to thank him for his great service, President Bush planted, as his own tree, an American Chestnut tree after that visit. at the White House.

Rex Mann proved not only to be a strong leader, but also a great American Patriot, much concerned of the challenges that our Country is facing right now, especially about our division and conflicts between groups. Ex Pluribus Unum is not even considered any more.

It is impossible to talk about in a complete manner about this leader and American Patriot here. The story is simply too long. But here are 10 principles that could help each and all of us as we

lead out families, businesses, our County and neighbors, and, of course our ARES, during deployment or at home. These principles are timeless, like his son Scott says, born from decades of wildland firefighting and life experience. They emphasize humility, resilience, and community-centered leadership, and allow leaders to leave tracks for others to follow and learn. Here they are.

- 1. As a leader, you are never allowed to give up.**
Leaders are not permitted to quit. When faced with challenges, step back, reflect, and refocus—but always move forward with resolve.
- 2. Never allow yourself to think you are not going to succeed.**
A leader must never allow themselves to think failure is inevitable. Optimism and perseverance set the foundation for success, even in the most daunting circumstances.
- 3. Take on the toughest problem facing you and deal with it right now.**
Confront challenges head-on. Address the most pressing issue when your energy is highest to prevent it from compounding
- 4. You are to remain strategic, not tactical.**
While understanding tactical realities is critical, leaders must maintain a strategic perspective to drive lasting, impactful decisions.
- 5. Surround yourself with good people.**
Build teams of competent, trustworthy individuals. By empowering others, you foster loyalty, respect, and a shared commitment to excellence.
- 6. Put some thoughts in the bad things happening.**
Effective leaders anticipate "what if" scenarios. Develop contingency plans for potential setbacks to stay prepared and resilient in the face of chaos
- 7. Be courteous and friendly to everyone you meet.**
In moments of crisis, manage your energy and emotional state. Stay grounded, focus on clarity, and exude confidence to guide others through uncertainty.
- 8. Stay calm when things are going to hell.**
In moments of crisis, manage your energy and emotional state. Stay grounded, focus on clarity, and exude confidence to guide others through uncertainty
- 9. Watch the flow of events.**
Even in chaos, there is rhythm. Take a breath, align with the natural flow of events, and immerse yourself in the moment to make informed decisions.
- 10. You have all there is.**
Assume you already have all the resources needed to achieve your goals. Resourcefulness and creativity are the cornerstones of effective leadership.