

# Self-Analysis

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Gentlemen, though I am not a psychologist or a trained expert in the subject on which I am speaking, I do have a deep interest in self-analysis as it leads to self-development. I feel that, indirectly, it is a vital part of my present job, which is to recruit and hire young engineers and scientists for my company. To me, one of the most vital questions in evaluating a young college graduate is, "Will this man have the determination, the certainty of purpose, and the courage to analyze and develop himself?"

Perhaps what I look for is that the young graduate be "star-led and camel-borne." This phrase, "star-led and camel-borne," I lifted from a sermon preached in the Duke University Chapel by the dean of that great chapel. It is very apropos to self-analysis and self-development.

To get ahead, I think we have to be star-led: we have to hitch our wagon to a star. Outside ourselves we must have a point of reference which gives us something fixed to shoot at. We must have something definite at which to aim. Otherwise, we are going to drift rather aimlessly along from point to point without achieving anything important. During the past several years I have interviewed about two thousand college students. Most had their eyes on a star, but many had little idea of how to get on their way.

One big trouble is that, when we hitch our wagon to a star, we don't leave the rope long enough to reach the ground. When this happens, we end up dangling in mid-air and become confused and starry-eyed, rather than star-led.

Now, it isn't enough to be star-led. True, we must have a reference point to plan our direction. But, equally true, to reach our objective we must have a means of conveying ourselves along on Mother Earth. This is where the going gets rough. In following our star, we can't get too far off the ground or too high up in the clouds, even in this day of jet travel. That's where the "camel-borne" part of the phrase previously mentioned enters in. We can only get as far up in the air as the camel's back. There is as yet no space capsule into which we can crawl and be launched toward our personal goal. We have to stay grounded and undergo a rough ride to reach our destination. Not without enthusiasm would we go a mile on this camel. It is an uncomfortable, weary, slow way to travel, but there is no other way to progress. Many are going to climb down short of their destination and say "Surely, this is not the way to get ahead."

My parallel here is that "star-led" and "camel-borne" relate closely to self-analysis and self-development. We must have a star, or goal, set for ourselves and analyze our ability to reach that star. The "camel-borne" refers to our means of moving along to our goal and realize full well that we must have both a definite aim in life and a realistic means of getting there.

These two thousand students I mentioned previously have the goal. But most are not willing to climb on that ship of the desert and ride it out to the end.

All of us here today are concerned in varying degrees with developing ourselves. This development may have different implications and end purposes. Some may be more concerned with developing civic leadership, developing technical abilities, developing management techniques, or developing ourselves culturally. However,

I would like to limit this to developing professional abilities to improve ourselves in our jobs. It is hoped that this may help answer the ever-present questions of "Where am I going?" and "How am I doing?" concerning our jobs.

Before getting too far into the subject, let me add a few remarks about the business world. First, it is highly competitive. Each day a number of businesses are going bankrupt — similarly, a great number of employees are falling by the wayside. In a sense, they are also "going broke." Poor management of business and of personal lives often is the cause. Second, a substantial part of our work population consists of people with education beyond the high school level. In some oil companies, 15 to 20 per cent of employees are college graduates. Oil company operations are highly diversified and complex and may require as many as two thousand different skills. Over half of all employees are engaged not in direct production, but in distribution, services, clerical, professional, and managerial jobs. Third, the great majority of these people are vitally interested in advancing into the key jobs of their organizations.

Thus, we find that we are in a highly competitive business, that our associates and fellow-employees have similar backgrounds and interests, and that competition for individual advancement is keen, and getting keener all the time. The college graduate of today is considerably better prepared than was the graduate of a few years ago, and the number of graduates being turned out by our colleges is increasing year by year. If you are not fully utilizing your abilities and developing your capabilities, now is the time to get started.

How, then, can we develop our own abilities to do a better job? I believe that the first thing that we have to realize is that development is essentially self-development. Many companies have fine training programs, management development programs, and special classes and seminars to help develop its employees. All of these help; however, real improvement must come from within. A mere exposure to new information is not enough; we must want this information, assimilate it, and use it. Development is not something that a company can do to a person; rather, development is something that we do to ourselves.

So, I think that we must start at this point in our thinking — that development on the job is fundamentally our own responsibility. We can and should expect help, guidance, and counseling from our boss and our company. But, they can't do the job for us.

Now, some of us may think that it is a difficult chore to develop ourselves in our particular company. It is always easy to say that the boss's attitude is not conducive to development, or that the professional climate within an organization doesn't promote individual improvement. True, the path is easier for us under ideal working conditions. Some of us have better company opportunities than do others. However, it is necessary to remember that a company is not staying in business for the purpose of running a training program. It is easy for us to expect too much from an organization in the way of development. After all, they hired us to do a job, and do it well.

In analyzing and developing ourselves, major emphasis

should be placed on our present job. If we consider our present job as an unimportant step on the upward ladder to success, then we might as well forget about self-improvement. The basic step in our approach must be analyzing and developing ourselves in what we are doing now. It is a primary requirement that we must learn to do our current job superlatively well, with advancement as a secondary objective, to come when and if available and earned. Byron points this out like this: "The present, only, is within thy power, so therefore now improve thy present hour."

Another essential factor in development is that our aims and goals must be compatible with those of our supervisor and of our company. For instance, you may aspire to be an artist. But, if your company has no place for an artist, it is clearly evident that frustration is going to set up a barrier which can't be overcome. Just to satisfy our desire the company isn't likely to create a job for an artist, so we have to be flexible enough to re-adjust our goals — or we have to seek other outlets for our talents.

So far, I have talked about three basic fundamentals that must be considered before self-analysis can be started. These are:

- (1) Development is primarily self-development.
- (2) Major emphasis should be placed on developing yourself in your present job.
- (3) Our individual aims and goals must be in keeping with those for whom we work.

These form the framework for self-analysis and self-development. If these factors are realized, then we can concentrate on ourselves as individuals.

What is the proper approach to self-analysis? My approach is borrowed from my company's own management development program, and I would like to refer to it as a "self-analysis by objectives" plan.

The first step in this plan is the "Stop, Look, and Listen" part. Stop long enough to find out what your present job really is. Look at where you are in your organization. Listen to your inner self to find out how you are doing and if you are truly accomplishing what you want to get done.

The second step is to analyze your present job. Determine more clearly exactly what your duties are and what your supervisor expects out of you. How do your assignments tie in with the over-all objectives of the company? What are you expected to contribute to help achieve your supervisor's goals? Before you can accurately analyze and appraise yourself, you must fully understand your present duties and responsibilities, and how your work contributes to the over-all objectives of the company. Make a check list of your job duties, and review this list with your supervisor if necessary. However, as a note of warning, be sure to list what you are expected to do on the job — not just what you want to do.

The third step gets down to brass tacks. Appraise yourself personally in all phases of your work. Search yourself thoroughly, step by step, to find out how you are doing. This is no place to fool yourself. Benefits will result from your true sense of reality, not from illusions or escape. If you are falling down in some phase of work, this is the time to admit it. The real question here is not only "Am I satisfying my boss?" but also "Am I satisfying myself?" Are you giving more to your job than the minimum effort?

The fourth step is to set up objectives necessary to guide and direct your improvement. Determine in what areas you need to improve and set up a realistic self-improvement program.

In setting up an individual plan, it may be helpful to divide your program into two categories: those areas

requiring technical proficiency and those areas requiring personal improvement. It may be difficult to always draw a sharp line between technical and personal development, but even an arbitrary division may be helpful in determining how to improve your abilities.

Technical training is largely the mastering of computations, an understanding of materials and processes and the underlying rules and regulations of the industry. Each of us, for our own good, should pursue some plan for continued technical improvement. The world is changing too fast for us to stand still; and we must be able to adapt to changes, or we will be a dubious asset to our company.

Since continuing education and study is an absolute necessity in our development, we should develop a plan of personal study to keep abreast of changes. Extensive reading of appropriate books, magazines, and periodicals is a common source of new knowledge. More formal approaches through night classes, correspondence courses, and short courses may be desired from time to time.

It is relatively easy to analyze ourselves from the technical standpoint. It is much more difficult to determine in our character or personal traits those defects which could be avoided or corrected. Yet, it is common knowledge that more of us fail in this area than do in technical competence.

Let's examine some of the characteristics which contribute most to an individual's progress. These factors have been set forth by Mr. K. S. Adams, Chairman of the Board, Phillips Petroleum Company, in an address entitled "Why One Employee Makes More Progress Than Another."

(1) Determination. Certainly one of the most important factors contributing to a person's advancement is a burning desire to succeed — a willingness to make personal sacrifices to accomplish work. This "drive" is responsible for progress in the face of odds which may discourage others.

(2) Leadership. Any one who progresses very far must show leadership. This requires an ability to get along with people. It requires consideration for others. A leader must be a good listener, inspire confidence, and be just with criticism and quick with praise.

(3) Self-confidence. Few men who have made progress have not had self-assurance — a confidence in his own ability and judgment, a willingness to accept responsibility and make decisions.

(4) Analytical Ability. The higher level jobs require the type of mind which can separate the wheat from the chaff. Developing the ability to recognize the essential, weigh facts, and base courses of action on relevant details is required.

(5) Originality. Originality is a most important trait. The man who can generate ideas is valuable. Those who have new ideas and puts them into practical use is bound to progress.

(6) Self-expression. Our man must have the ability to express himself in written and oral communications. Of what value is the new idea which dies in the mind of its creator through lack of ability to explain it to others? The failure to cultivate the art of self-expression places limitations on many who otherwise could have progressed much farther.

(7) Loyalty. It is difficult to visualize an individual who would progress very far in an organization if he does not have loyalty — a deep and abiding faith that he is performing a worthwhile service that deserves his wholehearted effort and support. "Blind loyalty?", you may ask. No, on the contrary, anything but that. It is simply the same type of loyalty and cooperation which we all expect to receive from our fellow man.