

BALANCING TOMORROW, TODAY™

by Dr. Stacie



Have you ever heard people talk about a company that was such a great place to work it made you want to go right away and get a job application? Have you ever heard people talking about how they liked their co-workers but couldn't stand their company, organization, or boss? How employees think and feel about their place of work has a huge impact on the organization's success. If you own a business, run a business, or are a leader in a business or organization of any kind, *your thoughts and actions establish the character of that organization.* You shape your organization's tomorrow with every behavioral choice you make today. That is a pretty daunting responsibility for the average Joe (or Josephine)! But I have a trick to help you get through it. And that is why we are going to look at balancing tomorrow's *character*, today – *in organizations.*

When I say I have a "trick" to help make the right choices to shape your organization's character, I really mean a tool that you can rely upon to help you build the character you want your organization to have...even when you are stressed, caught up in putting out those proverbial fires, and were on your last nerve an hour ago! It is a simple approach that can have dynamic results.

When you are in the thick of the daily activities involved in running your business, managing people, and leading your organization, it is easy to lose sight of your personal actions and how they impact others. We often get so caught up in achieving our objectives that we forget about who we are and where we are going as people. Yes, it is people who run these organizations and businesses, people just like you and me, with families, bills, laundry, and all the cares that you and I have, *plus* they have the vision of providing a service and the responsibility for the livelihood of those he or she employs in the process of providing that service.

There is a lot of worry in running an organization. Worry about business' future, meeting daily targets, finding and keeping good employees, meeting payroll, making profits, and the list goes on and on. Not losing your humanity in the midst of these concerns is what I want to focus on. Running an organization is a great opportunity to build your character and help others build theirs as well. If you can take the time to treat others with dignity, respect, and compassion with all you have going on, then the rest of us can too!

Alright, so what's this trick or tool I promised, you may be wondering? It is simply this...choose a *character strategy.* Remember that a strategy is the one strength you choose to rely upon to win your success. So your character strategy would be the one character trait you choose to rely upon to build the character of your organization.

Let's look at an example of a character strategy. I have chosen "a servant's heart" as the one trait I want to rely upon to guide the character of my business (other choices include an open heart and mind, compassion, empathy, thoughtfulness, or any other character trait you can think of).

Just as an organizational strategy serves to guide you toward your vision, your character strategy helps you build the character you want your organization to have, even when things are chaotic. You use your strategy to check your actions. You continually ask yourself, "Does this choice rely upon my strategy?" If it doesn't, don't do it! It is that simple.

Looking at my example of "a servant's heart" for my company's character strategy, I would use it like this: if one of my employees, let's say, did not perform an assigned task to my satisfaction and I was upset, I'd have a choice of how I reacted. To build tomorrow's character, today in my organization, I would check my reaction against my character strategy. If my reaction was to chew that person out for screwing up, I would check that reaction against my character strategy of "a servant's heart" and realize that reaction was off strategy and choose one that was more appropriate for the kind of organization I'm trying to build. A response that relied upon my character strategy would be to sit down with that employee and find out what additional information or support I could have provided to enable him or her to have successfully completed the task. As a leader I serve my employees, so I teach them to serve each other, and we all serve our customers, not because it's our job, but because that is where our hearts are.

Here it is again, how to build tomorrow's character, today – in organizations by having a character strategy:

- Choose the ONE character trait you want to rely upon to build the character of your organization.
- When in doubt, check it out! Make sure all your actions, choices are on strategy.
- Off strategy means off limits! If your actions or choices do not support your character strategy, don't do them.

Remember, balance and character development are a process...not a destination.

Next issue, in response to your requests, we'll look at how to simplify tomorrow's life, today!

Dr. Stacie Morgan is the author of **The Leader's Guide to Strategy in Crisis**. How to unlock the power of strategy (New Strategy Press). For more information visit her website at www.balancedmanagement.com or e-mail her at stacie@balancedmanagement.com.