

Y.R.P. – The Cure for CEO Disease

In the end, people appreciate honest criticism far more than flattery.
Proverbs 28:23 NLT

CEO disease is a very well supported phenomenon where the higher you ascend on the corporate ladder the less self-aware you become. What happens when you're at the top of the food chain, in particular, is the standards for performance are murkier. You are usually in a much more visible role and quite often people are afraid to speak truth to power. The more visible and high profile you are, the more flatterers and “yes” men you are going to have.

Though flattery feels good and having “yes” men and women around you boosts your ego, it won't help you grow as a Christian, a leader, or a person. Proverbs 28:23 says, “In the end, people appreciate honest criticism far more than flattery.” In the beginning flattery makes you feel good, but in the end, it really does no good. In the beginning honest criticism doesn't feel good, but in the end, it does good and helps you grow. It helps you see your blind spots and character flaws.

If you are young, rich, and popular you may have CEO disease. You may have people around you that make you feel good, but really aren't doing you any good. Here are two things we can do to make sure we are growing and not sickened by CEO disease.

First, be transparent. Keep it 100. Most people around see your flaws and failures. Own up to them. As you are transparent about your shortcomings, people will have the freedom and permission to be truthful around you.

Second, have truth-telling friends. Have friends that will keep it 100 with you. Give them permission to hold you accountable. Have pastors and leaders in your life who will be truthful with you and care nothing about your status, wealth, popularity, or power.

1. How can I be more transparent with people I trust and love and that love and trust me?
2. Who in my life can I trust to be truthful with me? Have I surrounded myself who are riding on my coattails and are “yes” men and women?

P2R (Point 2 Remember): “Whatever you do in life, surround yourself with smart people who'll argue with you.” - Coach John Wooden