

Practically applying the character quality of

sensitivity

vs. Callousness

"Perceiving the true attitudes and emotions of those around me."

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The new married guy

If you have made any attempt at all to incorporate these character qualities that we talk about every month into your life, you will find as I am finding that each quality hits each of us differently.

My opportunity to learn about sensitivity comes as a newlywed. I got married to the best woman in the world on October 12, 2002. Of course, as it was for many of you at this stage, life is perfect right now. But I am discovering a strange truth: she operates a lot differently than I do. I'm not just talking about personality, I'm talking about basic wiring. We respond differently to almost everything.

Since I am a "fixer," I am always looking for ways to immediately address whatever problem or concern my wife voices (that's what a good husband is supposed to do, right?). I am finding that, in many cases, it's not "fixing" that is necessary. Rather, my best response is, word-for-word, this month's definition: "Perceiving the true attitudes and emotions of those around me." Now, I know you are saying, "I could have told him that." Granted, I've heard this set of circumstances voiced by many before now. However, what I am recognizing



The best woman in the world and the luckiest guy on earth.

ing is how my sensitivity at home **sets the tone** for my ability to be sensitive outside the home. If my attitude becomes, "Oh well, I've had a hard day. She'll understand my lack of sensitivity," I will soon

find myself doing the same thing when talking with a potential client or coworker. Home is character training **for** the other activities in my life not a respite **from** good character.

Believe me, if you can nail this month's "Commitment to Sensitivity" with your spouse, you will be miles ahead when you face a sensitivity challenge with a coworker, a friend, or with other family members.

Could sensitivity result in employee termination?

Pain is not always a bad thing. Remember the growing pains you had when you were a kid? Has your organization experienced the same kind of pain? As a business leader, you more than likely shoulder much of that pain on your own.

Consider the following example. An organization is forced to terminate a tenured

employee. Many within the organization consider this individual a friend. And yet, because of the leadership style this individual uses, the organization is suffering. So the \$64,000 question is this: in order for the individual in leadership to be sensitive to the needs of the organization, is he or she forced to be insensitive to the now former employee? The answer is NO. Here's why. When we think of sensitivity, we think of "being nice." Yet, if we truly apply sensitivity as a character concept, we then recognize that "perceiving the true attitudes" requires perceiving negative attitudes, emotions, or behavior as well as positive ones. The aforementioned leader has to balance sensitivity with discernment and evaluate what is best for the organization. In demonstrating sensitivity to all parties, termination becomes the only option. In the long run, the terminated employee will recognize that it was a demonstration of, not a lack of sensitivity that created new direction for future and career. If you as a leader can emulate this kind of sensitivity, you will be more likely to maintain relationships in the midst of future growing pain.

Commitment to SENSITIVITY

- I will carefully listen to others.
- I will watch facial expressions.
- I will put myself in the shoes of others.
- I will notice tone of voice.
- I will show that I care.