

Coach, Captain See Leadership as Key to Overcoming Adversity

What do an NFL quarterback and the captain of a ship have in common?

No, this isn't the setup to a one-liner. Ponder it and you'll realize that the common denominator for both — and anyone who wants to overcome opponents and achieve success — is leadership.

Archie Manning, former NFL quarterback and father to three sons, including two NFL quarterbacks Peyton and Eli, addressed attendees at the 2014 Cattle Industry Convention in February in Nashville, as did Captain Richard Phillips, whose cargo ship, the *MV Maersk Alabama*, was taken hostage by Somali pirates. His harrowing story was shared in the major motion film "Captain Phillips" released in 2013.

"Leadership is the one constant to prevail over any challenge," stated Manning, who noted that leadership is a term that is much discussed but little understood. He added, "With teamwork and leadership, you can accomplish anything."

Manning offered three points to remember about being a leader:

- 1) **Think like a leader.** He says this means being prepared and being determined, as well as "seeing obstacles as opportunities."
- 2) **Set goals like a leader.** To this, he references a Yogi Berra quote, "If you don't set goals, you can't regret not reaching them."

But on a more serious note, Manning says, "I look at it this way — if you don't manage your goals, someone else will manage them for you." He suggests writing down your goals and said a Texas study revealed there is a strong correlation between success and goals. The most successful of the surveyed group were those in the 3% who

had written goals. Those in the 27% with unwritten goals were marginally successful, but those without any goals didn't know success, according to Manning.

- 2) **Act like a leader.** Manning calls leadership an "action" verb and says, "Everyone can be a better leader. Put the word 'I' away, be part of the team." He also cites the Peter Drucker quote: "Managers do things right; Leaders do the right things." Manning also notes that everyone goes through tough times, he says, "The question isn't will you face adversity, but what will you do when you face it? Will you get bitter or better?"

He concludes, "Your challenges may be great, but your ability is great.... When you do what is right, what is hard, and build for the future, you are a leader.... The bigger the challenge, the greater the opportunity for success."

Finding the strength within

Captain Richard Phillips knows a little something about overcoming challenges. While at sea in April 2009, his cargo ship the *MV Maersk Alabama* was taken hostage by Somali pirates. In 2013 a major motion picture titled "Captain Phillips" told the story of the incident, and Phillips has also authored a book, "A Captain's Duty," about his life as a merchant mariner.

During his keynote address to cattle convention attendees, Phillips recounted many of the details that unfolded from the time the pirates got on board until his dramatic rescue by a Navy SEAL team, and he emphasized the importance of leadership during stressful situations.

As a captain, Phillips said he views his job as being responsible

24/7 for the ship, crew and cargo. From various experiences in his career at sea — not the least of which was his life-threatening experience with the four armed pirates — Phillips said he has three points he wants others to also realize:

- You are much stronger than you know.
- Nothing is lost until we choose to give up.
- A dedicated, focused team can accomplish anything.

Phillips endured many things as a hostage and, in retrospect, he said, all of these principles are true. "Somewhere within us, we find the strength to do what must be done," he says.

Of his ordeal, Phillips said, "I vowed I wouldn't give up." He worked to stay calm and says, "No one solves a crisis by being panicked."

Phillips alluded to a larger metaphor for life, noting that we are all riding on ever-shifting seas. He emphasized seeing tough times through and working together, saying, "If we come together as a dedicated, focused team, we can overcome any obstacle."

He cited a stanza from the poem "See It Through" by Edgar Albert Guest:

*"When you're up against a trouble,
Meet it squarely, face to face;
Lift your chin and set your shoulders,
Plant your feet and take a brace.
When it's vain to try to dodge it,
Do the best that you can do;
You may fail, but you may conquer,
See it through!"*

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