

“He that Cannot Obey Cannot Command”
3rd Quarter Prepared Write-up
By Stacy J. Burdette

Ben Franklin’s quote, “He that cannot obey, cannot command,” is an important aspect to leadership training. Leadership, according to businessdictionary.com, has several parts. First, is that leadership establishes a clear vision. Next, that vision is shared so others follow willingly. Also, leadership provides knowledge, information, and methods to realize that vision.

The first part of the definition states that there is a clear vision. As a leader, one must follow that vision. If one statement is being made and not followed by anyone making the statement, then a set of beliefs is not truly being created. For example, the Jaycee Board states that increasing membership is an important goal to maintaining the organization, but the same board might not assist members toward that goal, or even work on it themselves.

The next part of the definition discusses communication. When vision is not shared for others to follow willingly, confusion is created. Confusion leads to chaos and loss of interest. It is important for leadership to create a feeling of security. When the leaders are following what they are stating should be done, then the same members feel more secure, and are more likely to understand, and therefore follow and stay. For example, a particular Jaycee chapter might stress community service involvement, yet projects are seemingly in other areas. As long as it is communicated why, then confusion is not created.

A third part of the leadership definition states that knowledge, information and methods are provided to realize the communicated vision. What this means is that leadership will be able to guide others through their experience. For example, every Jaycee has the opportunity to run a project, but must write a Chairperson's Planning Guide (CPG) and present the project to the board through the Vice President of the particular area. If no training is provided, then most likely members will shy away from running a project, even when there are ideas.

In conclusion, the quote by Benjamin Franklin, "He that cannot obey, cannot command," is an important aspect to leadership training. Those in leadership who are good at it, are striving to do what they believe in, and teach others to do the same. They also have natural skills, even when some of it is learned. Therefore, this quote is a truth in leadership.