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## *Risezine* Vol. 4 Number 3 Winter 2009

Welcome to **RISEZINE** my electronic magazine (ezine) that can help you solve problems in your business and your life. It is my desire to share with you my life experiences and those I gained from the twenty years I spent as a Judge of the Denver, Colorado County Court participating in the transformation of lives. I'm convinced that the lessons I learned from those experiences will heighten your knowledge, sensitivity and outlook on the issues you face in your business and your life. I am honored to share your precious time with you.

### **“TRUE NORTH ON YOUR ETHICAL COMPASS”**

There's a train rolling into Washington, DC this weekend. It has a passenger who is going to make history on Tuesday, January 20, 2009. The inauguration of President Barack Obama is the culmination of his campaign to renew our faith in the principles our forefathers laid down in the preamble to the US Constitution. “We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union...” President Barack Obama said today, “[T]he American revolution didn't end when the guns were laid down when the British were defeated. Starting now, let's take up in our own lives the work of perfecting our union. Let's build a government that is responsible to the people and accept our own responsibilities as citizens to hold our government accountable.”

While we join the new President in his quest, many people are losing their way and are trying to find their true north on the compass. True north, which is really magnetic north, is when all the effects of the big magnet inside the earth act on your compass. What takes you in one direction or another is your internal compass. Your internal compass can point you to the ethical destination or it can point you in the wrong direction. We want to remove the pale of recent government officials whose ethical compass pointed “South.”

First, let me be clear, I am not the Paterson who stood at the lectern with his wife by his side and confessed of extramarital affairs (that was the

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governor of New York) for one thing, you will not find my wife standing at the lectern beside me as I confess an extra-marital affair. If someone is standing at a lectern in front of an audience this large saying that I committed that kind of ethical breach, it will be my minister delivering my eulogy. My wife will be in jail!

One week before Election Day 2008 Alaska Senator Stevens was convicted on seven felony ethics violations for failing to report \$250,000 in gifts and services as required by the US Senate's Ethics Code. He was not re-elected, but the vote was close enough for a recount. What does that say about his compass? In my 30 years in law, I saw many whose compass was not pointing true north. I developed the program "Judging Your Ethical Compass" to help organizations magnify ethical behavior through tools I identified from those experiences. In this *RISEZINE* I'm going to discuss my **3 C'S FOR ETHICAL BEHAVIOR**. Rather than standing in the bright lights of a news camera for either of the two types of ethical breaches, personal failing or professional malfeasance, walk in the light shining on the road facing true north on your ethical compass with my **3 C'S FOR ETHICAL BEHAVIOR**.

### **THE FIRST C IS COMPETENCE.**

At a recent program I delivered for government purchasing officials one participant identified the most prevalent indication of ethical violations as "the lack of purchasing knowledge and the mistakes created out of ignorance". **Competence** is the linchpin of ethical behavior and its first requirement. There is no substitute for possessing the skills necessary to superior performance of your professional responsibilities. If additional training is necessary, it is your responsibility to secure it. In our knowledge-based technological environment, everyone must prepare for change. Avail yourself of every opportunity to increase your skill set to become a more valuable asset to your organization. As one attendee noted, "know your business or ask yourself how would you look in that orange jumpsuit?"

### **THE SECOND C IS TO BE CONFLICT-FREE.**

When I sat as chief presiding judge in my court, "Curt Frazzle" was a part-time judge and practicing lawyer. One day while "Curt" was sitting on the bench, he had the court clerk pull the file of one of his law clients who had a pending traffic case in another courtroom. He set a fine in that traffic case, put the client's pre-dated check for that exact fine amount in the file, marked the case closed and had the clerk register the payment. The clerk reported that to me and I fired the part-time judge. That part-time judge's compass pointed south and I directed him out of the court system. That judge placed his monetary personal interest over his professional duty to be conflict-free. If you observe an ethical violation how you respond will demonstrate the direction your ethical compass is pointing.

### **THE THIRD C IS CHARACTER.**

Character is the aggregate of traits that form the nature of a person. The Chief US District Judge for Colorado resigned in October when it was reported that he frequented prostitutes. He compounded his ethical failure when it is alleged he tried to pay the prostitutes hush money to keep them from testifying against him and they reported his attempts to the local newspaper. Where was his compass pointing? Ask the prostitutes. The integrity of the judicial system, as is true in all professions, is grounded in the display of good character traits.

T. Alan Armstrong said, "Champions do not become champions when they win the event; but in the hours, weeks, months, and years they spend preparing for it. The victorious performance itself is merely the demonstration of their championship character." By implementing the **3 C'S FOR ETHICAL BEHAVIOR** we maximize the probability that our internal compass will point True North.

My full day training, half-day workshop, keynote address or coaching can ensure your staff organization or group magnifies the **3 C'S FOR ETHICAL BEHAVIOR**. If you or someone in your organization needs inspiration, motivation or guidance in keeping your ethical compass pointing true north, contact me at [Beau@PleaseRise.com](mailto:Beau@PleaseRise.com).

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