

## Final Paper – The New and Improved Me

Well, my involvement began as an assignment from my boss to evaluate the course for benefit to our employees. I was coming back to work on a limited duty status still recovering from spinal surgery, so he asked if I would evaluate Bruce Roemmelt's course and present recommendations to the Fire Chief. Being a lifelong student of leadership, knowing something little about the class content, and knowing Bruce personally, he being my first Station Captain when I arrived at Station 3-Fire as the new apprentice in February 1989, I agreed to the task for two reasons: (1) my boss asked me and it just one more way for me to contribute to the organization, and (2) I selfishly wanted to engage in a new experience and absorb all the wisdom and fresh points of view not previously encountered.

So, what has this course meant to me? In a word, it has meant renewal. The course has re-fired my passion engine for learning about leadership and has inspired new motivation to apply the things I have learned from Emotional Intelligence and the 7 Habits. I have come to know leadership learning as common sense with a vocabulary. Collectively, both of these compilations of thoughts, philosophies and principles spoke to me about the human spirit and the inner self; a common sense among all humans. And, each does so using its own set of terms, the vocabulary.

In one of our earlier assignments, we were asked to share three quotations. The first of my three quotations came from Aristotle: "We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but rather we have those because we have acted rightly." For me to experience self-awareness, self-regard, and self-actualization of Emotional Intelligence, or personal vision, personal leadership, and personal management of 7 Habits, I must act rightly, and only through my action will have those principles. I will challenge myself to act rightly, to make choices, to find the compassion, responsibility and service within myself, nurture an empathic view of the world, and treat others with humility and dignity.

The second quotation came from Galileo: "You cannot teach a man anything, you can only help him find it within himself." The manner with which the course was presented and how I was required to engage the material called to mind Galileo. The course sensei and fellow students helped me find within me the motivation to live the Habits and the capacity to be a star performer. I will continue my journey to self-awareness, self-regard, and self-actualization.

My final quotation came from Tom Petty: "If you don't run, you rust." Tom says it plainly, if we stop moving, we will rust away. I will continue to move, to run with the knowledge and understanding I have gained over these past four months and create new and lasting habits. Covey points out that a habit is "the intersection of knowledge, skill, and desire" (Covey, 2013, p. 55); this course and participants have provided me with the knowledge and the skills, now I must provide the desire. And not just one time acts, I will continually work on knowing what to do and why, how to do, and want to do.

Another meaningful (actually, all of the assignments have been meaningful) assignment had us create a personal mission statement using the Franklin-Covey website. I found creating my personal mission statement to be thought provoking, introspective exercise. I have included aspects of my personal mission statement here because it is some of what the new and improved me will look like going forward.

I will be inspired by the potential outcomes my performance may lead to, and want my performance to positively impact the lives of those around me – friends, family, co-workers, and the citizens I serve. I will be proactive, beginning with the end in mind; putting first things first; thinking win/win; seeking first to understand and then to be understood; synergizing with others around me; and sharpening the saw regularly and frequently.

I will invest more time and energy in the professional development of others, and truth be told, have already exposed some of my subordinates to Emotional Intelligence and the 7 Habits to great success. As a supervisor, I am responsible for evaluating the performance of subordinate employees. As a Battalion Chief, I supervise other supervisors. One aspect of the annual performance evaluation process is to establish individual performance goals for the employee to achieve during the year. One goal I started using for each of my subordinates involves reading the 7 Habits and then completing some of the application suggestions at the end of each section. This goal was so impactful on one of my subordinates that he established the same goal for one of his subordinates. Upon discussing his progress during one of our meetings, he reported to me that the results he was experiencing with his subordinate were impressive, like a light switch being turned on. He observed positivity and motivation levels increasing from shift to shift; a renewal; as I had observed in my subordinate.

I will strive to prevent those times when I am not at my best, knowing that it is okay to have a bad day every now and again, but I will not dwell on the negative, rather I will quickly recover and reengage positivity. I will not allow a negative tide to suck me down and give up. I was taught a long time ago to leave the campsite in better condition than the way I found it. I intend to leave my Department in better condition than it was when I arrived twenty-six years ago.

I will be committed to something greater than myself while serving others; whether my service benefits co-workers or the citizens of the community. My actions will be born from a sense of duty to those around me, that others' lives should be better because of my presence.

My professional journey through the fire service has been for the most part been eternally bound to a principle-centered sense of duty that will be much more so continuing toward its eventual finality, a happy and hard-earned retirement. Before saying my farewells, though, I will be part of a movement that seeks to remove all divisions of the cavalier and bravado mindsets from which our fire service is currently besieged. I continue to encourage

others to reconnect with our mission; to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the community through selfless service. The fire service is more than just a job or occupation, it's a calling, a noble one at that, and anything other than selfless service is unacceptable.

Additionally, and most importantly, I will continue to find enjoyment in my personal life through me sharing life's experiences with my wonderful wife. It doesn't matter what that experience happens to be, so long as we are together while that experience brings us joy, excitement, fear or sadness. I love to engage with nature, to be out of doors and observe, hear, smell and feel what the world has to offer. I love to fish the streams, rivers and oceans. I love to run through neighborhoods, wooded trails, and cities. I love to walk with my wife along the beach, and just sit and watch the waves. At the end of the day, I love the stillness, to read a book, to let my mind process the day's adventure. People never say I wished had I spent more time a work, so I will make the time to do the things that I love to do.

In closing, what this course has shown me is how to be a better version of me. I know a fair amount of stuff about leadership, but knowing stuff is such a small aspect of leadership. Doing stuff is the most important. Action brings leadership to life, although I have not always acted in ways I should have or wanted to, for fear of something. I have been given freedom, the freedom of choice. So, rather than react to conditions and feelings, I will respond proactively, driven by my values.

#### Works Cited

Covey, S. (2013). *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Rosetta Books, LLC. Retrieved March 2, 2015

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## What This Class Means To Me

What did this class mean to me? Well, it meant taking a lot of my free time and it took a lot of effort. But I did learn quite a bit about myself in the process. I learned that I do some things the right way, but I also learned that there is quite a bit that I need to work on. Much of what this class is about, I found out that I already knew, either through learning it in a class or through life experience. I've had bosses that ran the gamut of being excellent leaders, horrible leaders, or somewhere in between. Each had a different way of doing things and some that I found to be excellent, did things differently than others that I also thought were excellent. I don't think that there one right way to be a good leader, just find what works, while staying true to your own set of values. I also found that I already knew most of this, I just didn't realize it, or didn't know the catch phrases.

I found that treating other people the way I would want to be treated works in most cases. I know that's not always true and sometimes you have to tailor your leadership style to fit the people that you're leading. The important qualities, to me, are fairness, consistency and integrity. Building people up and making them feel like they have a voice and can affect change are also very important. Transparency from the top down, employees start to mistrust management if they feel like important decisions, that directly affect them, are being made behind closed doors. That breeds an "us against them" mentality, which can erode the morale of the entire workforce, leading to poor productivity and a higher turnover rate. I prefer to be on a first name basis with everyone. There are some who believe that this would lead to becoming too friendly with people you are supposed to be in charge of, and could make it harder to keep discipline in the ranks. There may be some truth to that, but I also believe that it works the other way too. If you have a personal relationship with a superior and genuinely like them, you'll try all that much harder not to put that person in a position where they have to reprimand you or possibly fire you. Just my personal opinion on that one.

Working in EMS, there are never situations that would require us to blindly follow orders without question, we're not sending men into combat and possibly their deaths, so the separation between superiors and subordinates does not need to be that great.

As far as what I'm going to do on a personal level after this class, the biggest change I want to make is figuring out where I want my career to go from here. I need to sit down with my family and talk about what it will mean to all of us if, for instance, I want to go back to school. We need to decide as a family if it is feasible and would it be worth it in the end. My family comes first, always, but providing for them the best that I can is also high on the list. Having the time to spend with them is very important and depending which direction I go, the extra money might not be worth it if I have less time with them. This is something we all need to decide on.

Prioritizing is next on the list. Putting the big rocks in first, is a great way to look at things. Figuring out what is most important and addressing those things first will lead to better organization in my life and hopefully less stress. Don't sweat the small stuff.

Setting goals. I find that writing my goals down on paper helps me to stay focused and I'm less prone to stray from those goals. This doesn't only apply to my work life, but to my personal life too. One of my biggest goals is to get healthier. I've already started by setting a diet of 4-6 small, balanced, healthy meals a day. It's tough to stick to on work days, but I'm trying. I am exercising every day now and have a goal in mind for the end of June, 30 pounds. Quitting smoking! This is proving to be the toughest one of all. I have tried just about every quitting aid available, but each time I start again. I've talked to my doctor about using Chantix again, and will be starting it soon. My family has said that they will be supportive and try to help me to stay on track.

This class has given me some good tools to use to help me achieve what I want to with my life. The trick will be to utilize what I have learned. Sometimes it feels like life gets in the way of dreams, but it doesn't have to if you don't let it. I think this class has helped me to see that.

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## Putting it Together...What it all means to ME

"What this class means to me?" When I started this class I thought I had a lot of stuff figured out. I did the readings, they made sense, yet I did not understand. Nothing really hit home until I began to experience and live it.

It wasn't until I hit the wall so to speak that I realized I had been digging myself into a dark hole. I didn't realize the amount of emotional and irrational baggage that I carried. This not only took a lot of emotion out of me in my professional life, but also my personal life as well. I wasted a lot of time and energy needlessly. I did not even realize that I did not even deal with the loss of my father let alone anything else that the job brings.

At the beginning of the class I was in a very dark spot in my life. Even though I was promoted, I had too much on my emotional plate, too much baggage so to speak. None of the tools that I had used worked. Everything I felt was falling apart. Personally my relationship was at a standstill. Professionally my work relationships were non-existent. I had never dealt with much, just skated through it. I put stressful events, as I was taught by so many older firefighters and medics, in their place, not really discussing them with anyone at all. Bring all that together with a sudden paradigm shift in our work place, I was a "hot mess" as the kids say.

I finally lost my cool, I was no longer able to contain my emotions. Like a waterfall things came flowing out. Maybe some of it was the readings and developing new tools, a learning curve. Mostly it was the very poor way I was taught how to deal with stress, "men don't cry" from growing up to the old school thought of bury those bad calls and feelings, cause if you don't remember, than it doesn't exist.

This class and my stress implosion came together at nearly the same time. I am not one to think about fate, or karma. I do believe some things happen for a reason. Jesus puts things in our life to learn from. When we stray or get off from our core beliefs there are things that slap us in the face, sometimes a little extra hard. I had a few days to think about some things. Mainly this was where I wanted to be in my life, whether or not I wanted to continue my full time career as a paramedic, a firefighter or if I wanted to pursue other avenues and different adventures. One thing kept coming to mind. I really enjoy my career. I am good at it, I expect people to rise to the challenge, and I must do the same. Albeit a different challenge then I have ever come across, I found myself thinking back to the seven habits, I have run too long, destroyed many relationships from my lack of knowledge in the subject. Now I must change myself, I must do better handling things, I must not be afraid to communicate and take more personal challenges. I must not put off until tomorrow what can be done today.

I found a new respect in the readings. I began to understand what the authors where saying. I read over the material again and again, each time learning something new. Each time

thinking where in my life I could have applied this technique to have changed the outcome to a more desirable one. Now the challenge was on. Developing new tools and applying them was and is difficult. I used to have only two, either argue my point until nobody wanted to hear it, or let folks run all over me to avoid that confrontation.

Thinking about where I want to be in my life, where I want to go and how I want to get there. It is time to walk the walk after learning the talk. Learning the tools was the beginning. Applying them first in my test ground, the sixteen year old daughter...well that was fun. I could almost see her head spin when I started using the "I" statements. She seemed confused. I kind of found it funny. The most important thing was it worked. I got message across in a better and more effective way. I began to see changes in her behavior. She began to do more around the house to help her mom and myself out. She began to work harder at school. A lot of my personal stress was being alleviated. This transitioned into professional life.

Utilizing the tools at home I found myself rested and more efficient at work. I still expected the same from my colleagues. I now know of more effective ways to deal with their issues. I can better serve their needs. I communicate with them more effectively. I can often times get them to work together for the common goal. I have always helped them. Now I am helping them learn new tools of communication.

What I want the new me to look is a vast difference from what I wanted before. I tie this in with leaving a legacy. When I was younger I only cared if people would remember me by saying, "Mike, he was a hard worker and hard charger." Realizing now I left out a few things.

Yes I still want to be remembered that way. I also want them to include, he listened intently, came prepared to do the job, and led us to be better people.

How to get there. I believe I must get back to my core values. God, family, self-care, and career. My entire adult life I have put my career first. I would say EMS really doesn't love you back. Often times you only get spit or puked on. Harming the ones that cared most for me, family. I have begun to take the vacation time off to spend time with them, to do things that I want to accomplish outside of work. To recharge. Someone asked me the other day why I was taking so much time off and if I had planned to quit. I laughed and said, "I am getting my priorities together." They looked at me puzzled. This person looked very confused. They have been with the agency for ten years and also were recently promoted. They only knew the old me, the person who worked eighty hours a week. We sat down and spoke for about ten minutes. He shared that he thought I was getting ready to quit and that was what other members of management thought the same when they saw the time off requests. I jokingly said. "Only if it does not get approved." We spoke about where I was in life, the need to be there for my family and the need to recharge. I told him about my new plan. We spoke about how much time I had put into the work.

I shared with him I had missed a lot of opportunities, that most of the on the job learning came at a cost. The way I was and subsequently teaching how to deal with stress was very backwards. I shared that I am going to learn how to build my relationships and fix damaged ones. He stated an understanding and I saw a light come on. "We commonly spend way too much time at work", he said.

Putting first things first. Starting with giving all credit to god. I plan on attending church more often. It has been a while since I have gone to church. I still believe in the lord and all the teachings. Making the time to get there will be a priority.

Family is my next priority. Our time seems to dwindle. Everything seems to want to keep us apart. Long shifts, overtime, grocery store runs. It seems that there are not enough hours in the day to make time for family. This is very important that I get a better handle on time management for the family.

Self-care is the third on my list. Since I have been putting everything else in front I neglected to keep my saw sharpened. I slipped both mentally and physically, especially over the last two years or so. I eluded to before that I did not deal with the death of my father in a productive way. I also have not dealt with the stressors from work very effectively either. I am working on a plan that will include my three top priorities. This in turn will help with stress.

Career is the last of my four top priorities. I feel by balancing the top three this will fall into place. Utilizing the tools that I have learned for both my family and work family will only add to success. Building relationships and fixing damaged ones will prove to be invaluable. This will help alleviate stress and irrational thoughts.

Utilizing the tools I have learned throughout the class has helped me become a better person, father and leader. The most important part of life in my opinion is relationship building. I have never realized how important it is or how to do it correctly until now. The quadrant two activities prove this. Without the skills to build, patch and keep relationships other areas of your life will fall apart. Only through quality communication can relationships thrive and grow.

I have learned that utilizing these tools I now have a new powerful way to communicate.

I have an understanding where I made mistakes in the past and can fix the relationships that I have broken. I will also have more time for the most important people in my life, FAMILY.

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## The Final Paper

Everything is always changing, everything. The way I think, the way I think I use to think, my priorities, my emotions, the way I think about my emotions, and the way I think about everyone else's emotions. This is one of the things that I took from the class. So many times I would start off writing or doing an assignment and while I was doing the assignment, the way I would think would change. I had "aha" moments. There are many times since I started this class that I had to talk to my employees and I would reflect on the things I have learned. I would take into consideration what their emotions were before a conversation. To look for the reason why. To look for the paradigm.

The EQ. I am not sure that I will master the EQ, but that is the point. Before I started this class, someone who had already taken it told me that I would be learning more about myself than I ever thought I would. I did not believe them. How is that possible? The EQ book can be a hard read, at times it is a little dry. I learned a lot and had a many reflections of real life experiences that I had and mistakes that I have made. There are times in my job when I am having a difficult conversation with an employee were I think "what are my emotions, what are the right emotions, what emotions are being portrayed, what are the emotions that the other person is experiencing?" These questions help me self evaluate and to keep myself in check. I have also learned to ask others what emotions they think I am experiencing or portraying.

How humbling it is to ask someone else what they think of your emotions. This is very true during an emotional conversation or after an emotional event. If you ever want to have a real down to earth slap in the face reality check, ask a very honest person that you work with for a true evaluation of your emotions. I was told that I appear weak when I apologize for something that I have to do and that is out of my control. That I anger quickly and am very emotional about thing I care about when I first deal with a very recent event. I handle things much better the next day when something big happens, I may need to wait a day or two. Something I read in a book about Just Culture was that your true emotions will be shown for about 90 seconds after hearing bad news. After that, you make the choice to continue to show those emotions or to move on. I have had better feedback after waiting a day or two after an event. I did not know that going into the class.

I now have a multi-pronged approach to talking with people and doing my job because of this class. I know that I am more patient and still struggling with being patient. I spend more time with my family, this is obvious to them since December. I spent more time at home in the month of January than I have in a single month in several years. This not only took self-reflection that was experienced in the beginning of the class, but hard work too. Many of the 7 habits helped me get the time off at home. I had to begin with the end in mind, think win-win, and be proactive. This did not happen by chance.

What will the new me look like? More patient, more approachable, proactive with problems and solutions, and the guy who tries to stay ahead of the curve. Stress relief at home and work is making me a more patient, happier leader. You have to be approachable. I have learned to be more human and appreciate your fellow man. I have learned to put everyone's safety first. This seems obvious, but I think I forgot along the way how important it really is. There was a bad call recently where a child has a poor prognosis. The first thing I did when I found out was to find out how the crew is doing. We seem to take physical safety seriously while forgetting about the mental health of you crews.

I am fortunate in that I got to go the Gathering of the Eagles conference for the last two years. This conference has helped me be at the cutting edge of the Emergency Medicine and has influenced me to be one of the most informed and aggressive medics in the system. Since I am passionate about EMS, I have brought many things to the system and I am very proactive in making positive changes in the system. I get to help change employees minds about why and how EMS is done here in Durham. This is huge. I can take ideas and ways of doing things that are 5 to 10 years away and make them a reality now in our system. After this class, I can take leadership to another level and do things that I have never heard of and many here may have never seen. I can be the proactive leader that takes problems that are important, but not yet urgent. One of the ways things have been done for years is to wait until the important, but not urgent, problem become urgent to take care of it. Several years ago, our director was only replacing 1-2 trucks a year because at the time it wasn't urgent. Now, we have so many trucks that are worn out and have been run into the ground. This is important and urgent. It may take us 3 years of replacing a quarter of fleet each year to catch up to where we should be. I will not have the reputation of doing such thing. When I drive around and see problems in the field, I have started to take care of them immediately.

This too is a behavior that has changed in me over the last few months since starting this class. One of the unusual to me habits to form is synergy. While riding an ambulance, you and your partner are the crew. Period. That is how I have done things for years. I am comfortable running critical calls with people that I may not be familiar with while having very little verbal communication. Fast forward to now, I am struggling but finally anguishing that I need to work with others to accomplish goals. It is has been hard for me to work with others because I have always had a perceived view of them as independent leaders who always accomplish their goals on their own. I have learned that is not how it is. While trying to accomplish goals on my own, I have failed and fallen hard. Now I am starting to force my way into their sphere and work with them. I am uncomfortable, however I have seen wonderful results. This motivates me to keep pushing and to work with others that I do not know, moving ideas that will take all of us into the 22nd century.

Right now, I am dealing with an important, but not urgent problem. While showing our academy our ambulances, I passed on showing them our pediatric immobilization devises due to their rough shape I perceive them to be in. No one here argues that they are not important,

but replacing them is not high on the list of problems. So, I am getting our staff to write down the condition and problems they have with them. Take pictures of how worn out they are and the dirt that will never be cleaned. Then I have to work with 2 supply officers that I do not know well to come up with a solution and price to replace. Then, more synergy to get it approved, ordered, placed, and the employees trained on how to use the replacement products. This might sound like the way it's done, but I am new to being an officer and it is new and somewhat scary to me. I do not want to fail. Others will see my efforts. Now I know that I will be judged by these efforts than the end resolute. This is just one project that I am taking on, I know that it is a new direction that I am taking and it will be part of who I am becoming.

Personally I am trying to be a better leader at home. My wife and I have been married for almost 12 years, we have 3 children plus a foster child. I am sure that I could be a full time father, husband, and home owner and put in as many if not more hours than I do work. At the beginning of this class, I did not spend much time at home and did not put much value on the things that I should have always valued. In November and December many of us put down that we were going to spend time at home and with our families. This is something that you have to apply the habits on to accomplish. No doubt that this is a work in progress that will have to take work for it to work. I have learned over the years that you have to work at your home life constantly. The problem is, when you have a career it takes away from your family life if you let it. Every now and then you get a kick in the butt to get you working at it again. This class was a gentle kick in the butt in the form of an "aha" moment that many of us had in the beginning of the class. For that I am thankful.

Now, how do you get from where I was, to where I am now, to where I want to be and stay? First, I had to make the decision that I was going to make being home with family a priority. Easier said than done, working like I have been accustomed to means OT money. I would have to have a hard look at the budget to get it in a place that we would still be comfortable without some of the luxuries that we enjoy. If you ask my kids, playing with daddy in the snow is a luxury that money cannot buy. I had to use synergy with my wife to make this work. Then I had to slowly reduce some of the extra projects that I am part of at work while continuing to keep my performance at the same level if not higher on the others. Learning to say "no" to well paying OT and "no" to the other shift leaders that have personnel needs that I can fill.

Scheduling paid time off. Easy right? I have 350+ hours of unused time to burn. That is a lot of days home. We work 12 hour shifts. I had the Christmas season off with my family. I got to eat Thanksgiving with family. I just spent a week out of state celebrating my grandfather's 90th birthday with family I haven't seen in years. I meet children that are part of the family that I have never seen.

I have fallen back into the rut of working OT for a good chunk of March, I did apologize to my family and was able to get most of April off. We are scheduling fun things to do together in April. I am learning and making mistakes along the way. The way 2015 is looking, I will have

50-60 more days off than I had in 2014. We are going on a 2 week trip across the county to states that we have never visited before in June.

This is a change that the class has given me. How my attitude will and has changed just because of a happier, more rested home life. That, along with other attitude changes will start the snow ball of my leadership development over my career. I have 20 more years before I can retire and I most certainly will be a leader for that duration. What I do, the mistakes I make, influences like this class with change lives including mine for years to come. In a way, this is hard to wrap my head around. Don't mind the ranting, I am in the middle of an "aha" moment. Years after your retirement from public service, you have lead a class that is having an influence on someone that will be leading and be an influence for generations to come.

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## FINAL PAPER - Learn, Grow, Lead

This class was definitely a huge eye opener for me. This class, the books, and exercises contained a wealth of information and I will be completely satisfied if I retain most of it. I will be even more excited when I am able to apply the tools I have learned throughout this class.

I once believed I was a well balanced individual with a lot of positive attributes and I also did not see the need to change much about the way I handled my life. This class has shown me how to build on my strengths, and where my weaknesses are, and how to improve them. There are many skills I have learned and a few of those I have taken to heart. I have discovered how important it will be to improve my communication skills, including my active listening skills. I've also learned the importance of improving life's conflicts with win-win solutions that mutually benefit both parties in the long term, rather than what I tried in the past, with the alternative solution only benefiting me in the short term.

In my future career, my future personal life and, my future social life, I plan to implement the skills I've learned in the class to enhance the impact I have as an employee and family man. I have already applied active listening skills and more effective communication at work and at home. I have seen a positive reaction in both situations. Active listening has also improved my communication and assessment skills as a paramedic, which improves the quality of my care. Being able to communicate more effectively has led to more win-win situations. I have started applying win-win situations at home with great success, especially with my children. I plan on using these new skills in other aspects of my life, including work place situations. I imagine using win-win resolutions to conflicts at work will bring improved relationships and a better work environment.

I will use these new skills, including the win-win situations to build better relationships with my family, my wife, friends and, my coworkers. By participating in more recreational activities with my family and friends, we will build lasting memories and this will allow me to make deposits in their emotional bank accounts. I will take more vacations and make better use of my time off and include my family and friends in my to-do list. By leading, participating and excelling in projects geared toward improving situations at work will also improve relationships with my peers and my supervisors. I will continue to work hard and use the skills I have learned to advance my career, earn a better living and, share these benefits with my friends and family. Part of advancing my career includes taking advantage of all the educational opportunities that are available to the EMS community. Most of the classes, seminars and, conferences available to EMS and others in the public service arena are either free or close to it. This will make it easier to improve my weaknesses and, add to my strengths by taking classes in the fields I feel I need improvement while attending seminars and/or conferences in subjects I feel confident about.

The new me will grow out of the new life and paradigm I have developed from the material I have implanted into my knowledge base. I have already experienced the positive impact from the core values I have learned when it applies to my home life. I have found it easier to be a better role model for my children and a better partner with my wife.

We still experience some of the same conflicts at home, but the solutions come easier and have much better results in the long run. I have also put more effort into family outings that focus on the children having a good time. As most parents know if you can keep the children happy, the parents normally follow suit. I plan on following this endeavor to show my children how important they are to me and let them know they are loved. I have also started to do more little things for my wife to know that I still think and care about her the same or more than I did when we first met.

While we were dating I would write cards and buy her flowers, etc. She has dropped hints lately that I do not do that anymore. I have started to make an extra effort again to show her how I feel and I know it has made us a stronger and happier couple. I know by putting forth this effort, it will also show my children how a well balanced couple should treat each other and what it takes to become a role model for their children. I now see that investing into the relationships with my family will result in a much brighter future for everyone.

I thought this class was just going to be about business ethics and how to be a manager. I quickly learned the class involved a lot more than just ethics and managerial skills. This class gave me the skills I need to become a respected leader. I have learned why important to lead with authority, but why it's essential to lead with equal respect for those I do lead and why it's fundamental that everyone is on the same page and understands the direction we want our service/company to head.

This class has revealed deficiencies in my personality and work life, but has also been able to guide me through the steps to correct and improve my deficiencies. I know I will appreciate the fact that this class has added multiple tools to my tool belt, by improving my communication and, by increasing the benefits from utilizing win-win solutions. This class has identified what is important, what can wait, and how to make plans that will lead to a brighter future. I hope that many of my other colleagues will be able to enjoy the benefits of this class in the future.

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## The New Me

It's a cold Sunday morning with freezing rain outside causing limbs on trees to sag and break. Seems no better weather than this to reflect in the last sixteen weeks taking this class and to ponder what the new and improved version of myself will be. In many ways, the changes have already happened, almost in some sort of sub-conscious way. I'll be talking with someone or debating something or addressing problems on my shift at work and I'll think to myself; that was straight out of learn, grow, lead right there! The new me will continue to strive for better communication in all parts of my life and I also want to really focus on some of the values from quadrant 2 such as quality work, better communication in all areas of my life, relationship building, and to make sure I am thinking in a structured, productive manner.

I'll first start out by describing what this class has meant to me. Well, it has meant something. Sure, I've picked up quite a few new tools along the way; I've read a lot of poignant and useful words, but for me, neither of those was the best thing about the class. I am fortunate in that many of my fellow classmates in this are also my fellow co-workers and colleagues. Taking some time to read their posts and papers, I am almost embarrassed to say that I have actually learned a lot about them. Many of them are people I would consider friends of mine, and some of the subjects we've addressed have led me to see different sides and different approaches from them I'm not sure I'd see in any other forum. It's also nice to go to work, see these folks and have another thing to talk about, break up the monotony of standard, casual work talk.

The class has also allowed me to prove something to myself. That close to ten years removed from actual classroom style work, I still got something left in the tank. Sure, I've taken numerous other classes over the years, but I can't tell you the last time one involved writing papers and thinking outside of my own little EMS world. These fingers still work on the keyboard, there's still some pretty good stuff swirling around my head. When the class first started, I will honestly say the I dreaded the notion of having to write papers again, sixteen weeks later, while I may not consider it fun, it's been nice to accomplish this and the sense of pride I have achieved from doing this, is in itself a reward. For that sir, I thank you.

I did something at work the other week that I thought was a little bold, certainly different, and maybe even a little daring. It was also a cold Sunday morning when the coffee was fresh and helping stimulate me into thought. See, the previous shift, I got into an argument with one of the night Lieutenants. He had differing ideas than I and it led to, in retrospect, an unnecessary and quite heated debate. So, I typed up an email to my shift, made sure each and every individual I supervise was added, and I fired it off. I recall very vividly, making sure I worded things carefully. For this was not a message to them about the problem I had encountered, this was a problem we were to discuss and confront as a single unit. I sent a clear "we" message, not an "I" or "me" message. I also asked that any one who responded to make sure to hit reply all, I requested they hold nothing back, and it worked. We, albeit

email, were all talking together about some issues. We were all sharing ideas and opinions. There was no mention of rank or chain of command; it was as if we were all in the same room at the same time talking. Considering the profession we are in, achieving that is practically impossible, but in some way, we did. I have seen some changes in behavior since, while we didn't solve all the world's problems, we held each other accountable and were reminded that we are a team with similar goals in mind.

I'm going to continue practices such as this to better my communication both at work and in my personal life. I'm going to continue to choose my words carefully, making sure to think before I speak, and to ensure that, as much clarity exists as I can possibly produce. Currently being in the market for a new home, I'm getting a lot of practice in doing so. Open lines of free and useful communication with my wife and realtor have further helped to enhance these ways. For instance, it's not my wife and I shopping for this new home, it's us taking on the challenge and commitment.

With better communication come better relationships. An area, which the new me will continue to learn, grow, and gain. As mentioned above, I have found that as detailed oriented I can be in my professional life, I have more to be desired in my personal life. I will be a better friend, a better family member, a better husband, and a better individual. There is a co-worker of mine in this class that I worked together, on the same shift with, for months. I did not know he had kids until reading some of his material here. As I stated before, this was embarrassing to me, how could I not know this? What other areas have I neglected with my family, my wife, and my closest friends? This is still a work in progress but one of great importance. I believe that whether it be at work or not, further solidifying bonds has no risk or negative outcomes.

There have been times when this class has felt like a bit of a burden. Life is always happening and sixteen weeks of it with other commitments can certainly cause some stress. Add to it other projects at work, more classes in the future including a weeklong class starting tomorrow, it all can feel somewhat overwhelming at times. The new me will exhale slowly and remind myself of one thing, keeping the saw sharp. Pushing myself to accomplish and achieve, resisting complacency, and leading by example is what the future holds more of. I'm beginning to and will continue to set goals such as investigating and eventually going back to school and getting my four year degree. I've started and will continue to set goals for my personal health such as losing ten pounds and staying active. I will continue to find proper balance between these things and my professional development, all leading to a saw that is as sharp as possible.

I'm going to continue to believe in my personal paradigms and to always re-evaluate the ones in need of some shifting. Each and every day I have on this earth will present new complications, new situations that may challenge my personal beliefs. It is important that I stay open to change, open to new growth, and open to new ideas that will



allow further and deeper development. I still find myself bending rules at times, only now when this happens, I'm not just blowing it off and convincing myself why this is okay. When these instances happen, I'm now questioning myself on why I'm allowing myself to behave this way. I have grown a much more responsible conscience. No longer will the voices of reason in my head be ignored.

One of the more enjoyable aspects of this class has been the "WTW" scenarios. While these scenarios may not occur daily, they certainly were real and not out of the realm of possibility. Most of my responses to these scenarios were pretty generic, somewhat expected if I were in your position. In retrospect, they were in some ways disappointing. I wrote what I felt like I needed to write, the obvious answers such as making sure to respect the chain of command, send employees home, follow my agency's policies and procedures. While I can't argue the accuracy of these answers, I'm going to continue to hypothesize such occurrences and try to be more creative in ways to address and handle them all while complying with policies and procedures.

Lastly, I intend on continuing to solve problems, not by addressing them when they happen, but striving to predict problems and preventing them from ever happening in the first place. No longer will I ever underestimate or justify something that happens as a non-issue or considerable safety concern. If I see it, if I feel it, it's probably worth further investigation and action. While stupid rules are in fact at times, stupid, it does not mean myself nor the employees I am responsible for should be allowed to bend nor break them. I will also hold my leaders to the same standard. No rank, nor title, nor position should be immune to the policies especially when it comes to safety.

Bottom line I continue to be a work in progress. To say that I woke up this morning new and improved would be accurate, however I am far from perfect. I appreciate what this class has exposed myself to, both as a supervisor and as a person. I know that I have implemented many things gained from this experience and I will continue to do so in the future. No matter how much of a pain at times it was, the end goal was one thing; professional and personal development. As they say, if was easy, then it probably wasn't worth it.

I am proud of myself and I hope my leaders will be as well. I look forward to other opportunities such as this in hopes to gain and grow even further. I appreciate the time and effort you, Bruce, had committed into this also. I look forward to the next group you get from Durham County EMS and greatly anticipate being on the side of encouragement and support for them while they tackle the responsibility this class poses.

As for right now, my coffee has gotten quite cold and in need of a refill. Keeping in mind first things first, it's time to get a fresh cup. Good day sir!

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## Finding my Voice - And what it all means to me

I have to admit, when I first started this class I was a skeptic. I tend to be when it comes to what I would term "touchy feely" topics. I tend to be walled off and do not let very many people inside. I am introverted by nature. Which, if you review some of my assignments might sound contradictory when I say I have problems with impulse control, frustration, or that I have no problem speaking my voice. All of that is, in fact, true. However, I do not tend to make the personal connections with people that other people do. I can and will stand up and tell someone what I think, but I have never truly given any regard to how what I think say and do affects people. I simply did not care. So, as you can imagine, I entered this class a skeptic. I remained a skeptic.

I should probably provide some background for this. You see, about 4 years ago I separated from my ex-wife. I spent two years at what I will consider the bottom of the proverbial barrel. I was angry, depressed, drinking too much and just an overall miserable bastard. Fast forward two years and I am starting to tread water again. It feels like I can breathe again, and I can feel myself starting to live again. About this time I meet a wonderful woman. She seems to like me and I seem to like her. Talking leads to more talking, which leads to dating. Dating leads to more dating, which leads to living together. Now we are engaged and in the process of buying a house and selling an old one and moving on with our lives together.

Sounds like a concise and easy story right? Well, it was not. It took time for me to get over some of my emotional baggage. Trust issues, abandonment issues, and a pretty stone cold drinking problem to boot. I remember one night she was at work and I was at home. I started in with my usual routine of bourbon. She called me and I was pretty well in. The conversation was cordial, and then she abruptly got off the phone. When I spoke with her the next day she explained to me the following: she did not like to speak to me when I was drunk. She liked me when I was sober. When I was drunk I was not someone she wanted to speak to. She was clam, and patient, and did not once insult me or make me feel belittled or stupid. Which in turn made me reexamine my entire outlook on what I was doing with myself in the first place. I spent the next week at home rethinking my belief system on why I was drinking. I was drinking before for depressing reasons, mainly because I was depressed. Was I still depressed? I did not think so. Part of the reason I had felt so depressed was because of the situation I was in with my ex-wife. The more depressed I was the more I drank, and the more I drank the more depressed I became. Funny how that works. So I sat down and took a long hard look at my life and reasons for being drunk. I did not like what I saw or who I saw for that matter. I felt happier when I was sober and with this wonderful woman. She explained to me she liked me better sober, and enjoyed spending time with me. So, I stopped drinking and tried it one more time. It all worked out in the end.

Looking back at this I believe I put something into action without knowing what exactly it was I was doing. I felt a certain way about things and that cause me to have a certain reaction. This then led to certain outcomes. I thought I was miserable, therefore I drank, and became someone unpleasant to be around. This was the example I was given. I then changed how I felt about myself and my situation. I was no longer miserable, I was actually happy. This changed my view on drinking. I did not need or want to drink. This in turn changed the entire outcome. I did not turn into the unpleasant drunk I had been and was able to have a happy and productive relationship with a caring and beautiful woman. I had, in fact, applied Rational Emotional Behavioral Therapy and not even known what I had done.

So, fast forward to the beginning of class. Here I sit a skeptic. I read the books and do the assignments. Class progresses and I start to think back over the last year or so and I come to realize that I have been doing some of this already. REBT, impulse control, prioritizing what is important and modifying my responses with my version of I statements. Then the realization hits me that this does in fact work. I am no longer a skeptic. This class has allowed me to identify the aspects of myself and my life I had been working on and had made changes with already. By doing this, it also allows me to continue to focus on the positive changes I have made and continue to make those changes. It names the foundation for a better me, and firmly cements that foundation in place.

This means several things. First and foremost it means a much more positive and productive home life. One of the things I identified in class is the fact I spend way too much time at work working overtime at the expense of friends and family. My personal relationships have suffered because of it. Understanding this, identifying this and above all acknowledging this has allowed me to move forward and make the changes I need to for a more productive personal life. My fiancé told me about a conversation she had with my father recently. He stated that he had seen more of me over the past several months than he had over the past several years, and he was happy about this. Some of the applications I had made at home were starting to pay off. My personal health has also improved. I've stopped drinking and begun to focus more on being healthy. It helps to have a fiancé who is a "health nut". She's introduced me to a healthier diet and a healthier lifestyle. The wedding is progressing and we have recently made an offer on a house. This offer was accepted two days ago. We will be moving soon. I have also stopped working 80-100 hours a week. The benefits to my overall sanity have been countless. My stress level is lower, and my patience is higher.

I intend to use these skills in my personal life to promote a more effective and positive me. I find as my positive relationships prosper, then doors begin to open up for me and things begin to happen like I believe they should happen. It is the foundation for a strong and fulfilling life. Once these foundations are in place in my home life, and they are beginning to be, then I can apply them in my professional life as well. I was one of the recent promotions in my organization. I intend to use these positive skills to allow myself to interact with my coworkers and allow myself to grow and to help them grow professionally as well. I believe

that a good leader will lead by example, and I intend to set that example. I intend to help my coworkers and family focus on what is important and to emphasize that in their personal and professional lives. This class has allowed me to identify this skill set. By identifying this skill set it has provided me with the opportunity and the knowledge to now use those skills.

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## Learn Grow Lead

Wow what a ride this has been. I have never taken an online course of this length. When we started I did not know what to expect. Shortly after the first week I went to California for a 2 week class. There was some down time but not much after going out for dinner and networking with others in the class. I pushed through trying to keep up with where we were in the class and make sure that my work was being completed on time. That was a rough 2 weeks. I made it though and felt very confident afterwards.

We have had all kinds of changes here at DCEMS. I was promoted to Lieutenant shortly before this class started and was just finishing up a Leadership academy that the county started last year. The leadership academy focused on everyday non-management employees who wanted to learn about leadership but more important how to lead even though you are not a manager. It gave you the tools to inspire others to do better and to want to see success. It also focused on improving each department in the county government and introduced me to some people that I never even knew of and also some that I had talked with on the phone from time to time. It was a great experience.

I again was not sure what this class had to offer me but I was adventurous and wanted to show the leadership here that I am willing to work hard and willing to support the goals of my administration. I am not the most educated here and do not ever pretend that I know all the answers. If I don't I will tell you. I have learned a lot about myself and about other things in this class. For one I am not the most computer savvy person. I am always learning and by enrolling in this class that has helped me tons. I hunt and peak along and try new things out and look for ways of doing things. I am an independent person but also know how to seek the help from others when needed.

I have learned a lot about myself here. I have found how I can resolve some of the issues that I have had in the past. It is hard to admit when you are wrong but I believe in honesty and have no shame at all when I need that little expert advice. I continue to learn each and every day of my life and my job is no different feel bad for those who think that they don't need the help of others and how it must feel to be isolated because of your actions in the past and how not seeking help when needed can make life and job more difficult. Walking around with the know it all tag on you back cannot feel very good once you realize it. Some people never will. Some people should just take note and admit that they are wrong but instead will argue to the moon that they are right.

I have learned to bite my tongue sometimes. It all depends on who you are talking with and how far you really want to take the subject. It can be hard to admit when you are wrong but it can be even harder to just admit to someone that they are right even though they are not. I wish all of us here at DCEMS could participate in meetings like I experience with the tactical team. You see when someone is wrong anyone can call you out. I have seen and even done

this myself where the sergeant is called out and shown where they did something wrong. Then it was discussed and there were not any hard feelings. Most of us in public safety are not used to this and I know I am not unless it is with the SET team. I could not imagine walking into a meeting and being asked a question and then turning to someone with higher rank and telling them that they are wrong or that they did something wrong. The backlash that would come down on me. Of course there are best ways to do this but when you ask for someone's opinion or thoughts don't get upset when they tell you something that you may not want to hear. If you don't want the truth don't ask and especially me because I will be sure to tell you in a very professional way.

I envision myself as being a great leader in time. I think I have a good foundation but there is always work to be done. I like my style. I don't walk around looking from behind corners to try and catch people doing something wrong. I have much more important stuff to do than this. It is not hard to find someone doing something that you could write them up for but instead I like to tell the crews that are under me that, if you do something and I see it I will take appropriate actions. I am not trying so don't put either of us in this situation. If you break something let me know immediately so I can find a resolution. Yes I may have to write you up but that is not the goal. Just culture is what I like to practice and have been doing so for some time now even before being promoted. I like to be a good role model and will not ask of anyone if I am not willing to do the same myself.

I continue to grow as a leader and have learned how to take a breath before answering questions or responding to questions when I am upset or angry. I have learned this from this class. I understand the magnitude of how things can be taken in the heat of an agreement and how sometimes the words don't come out like they should. I want people to respect me for who I am and not the position I hold. I want them to feel comfortable with me and my actions and know that I will listen to their concerns and will act upon the ones that are important. I will give straight answers. We are all human and we all make mistakes and when we lose sight of this that is where we get in trouble.

I will put to use information that I have learned in this class about being more productive. I am not one to sit around on my phone at work and Facebook and such but I do get on and research some of the different groups about tactical medicine and other medical treatments. I believe in order to supervise you must know yourself. So much has changes in the 25 years that I have been in EMS. It has been hard to keep up sometimes and I like to challenge myself with learning new items as well as going back and reviewing stuff that has come along in the past few years.

I have discovered that reading is a good thing. I never was much for reading but I found that if you find things that interest you it makes it much better. I have read several books in the past year and I really enjoyed it. It was a struggle at first to keep up after a day or so of not reading

but I have found that it gets easier the more I read. I like nonfiction books and will sometimes settle for a good article or two and then try and spin off of these for my next readings.

Learning to listen can be a very hard thing to do especially since we are all so busy now days. Taking the time to pay attention to what others are saying and given them the courtesy to let them talk and not wonder if you are listening or not. I know there have been times when I would interrupt someone when they were talking to me and think that I have the answer and ready to express my answers. This is obviously not a good trait to have much less as a leader. I have been in the other person's shoes and it does not feel good. Once I realized that I was doing the same thing I tried to develop a plan on how to fix it. If I am in the office and someone comes in to talk about something I make sure I cut any distractions off and shut the door. I want them to feel that they have my upmost attention. I try not to interrupt them as they are talking and will get my pen and paper out and take notes so I can refresh my memory of what we have discussed.

Other things that I have learned are how to prioritize things and how I go about my business. I like to make noted on important task so that I make sure that I get them done first and am not playing catch up all the time so when I am off I can spend time with my family and get some of the things that I would like completed around the farm done. I try and get one thing complete at a time and put my best effort towards each project.

I have learned to say no when I need to. I have found that if you don't take charge and learn how to say no in a polite way that people will continue to ask of you and put more work on you. Having the ability to say no has helped already. I can also say not at this time but I will be willing as soon as I finish up what I am working on. I might even have to say thank you but I don't think that I am the best on for this topic and you might want to ask??? This way I don't get pushed further into a hole and have to work harder to figure out what they want and how it needs to be done. Don't get me wrong. I enjoy a challenge but sometimes there is just not enough time to have to try and complete several task.

First things first... I need to remember that life is about ME. I need to remember to take care of myself physically and mentally. I have a family to worry about and I need to make sure that I am with them for a long time. Work is great and I really enjoy what I do but I also enjoy my family and want to spend that precious time with them. Balancing work and family can be hard and we all slip from time to time. This month is going to be Hell on me. I am taking a couple different classes and helping with the academy several days that I am off. I will need to spend some time next month recharging my emotional bank and by doing that I mean some good ole family time. I think first I will take my wife out on a date and then plan a kid day and then I will wrap it all up with a full family day.

The main thing for me to remember is to continue to put the lessons that I have learned here to continuous use. I will need to go back and review the lessons from time to time and re-

evaluate where I am in my life and make the needed adjustments as necessary. I know that I can't do it all the time but to make a good effort is the key.

I will also look towards my co-workers for strength and guidance along the way. I hope they will do the same as we can kind of share our thoughts as we enter new eras in our profession. Thanks for the help during this class. It has truly been a pleasure and a great learning experience.

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# The New Me

I am writing this paper to detail how this class has changed me as a person and as a leader.

I was a bit skeptical at first that I would get much from any online course. I am more of a hands on, interactive type of student. I usually have to work with things a few times to comprehend what I needed to learn. I have attempted this class once before. I broke a couple of fingers and a couple of bones in my hand. I couldn't finish the class because typing with a cast in place didn't work. I went to my Chief and asked to be put back in the class as I wanted to finish something for once in my life. I have always had a hard time finishing things. I am becoming more set on finishing everything I start since going through this. I might finish it all at once, but eventually I will finish the project I start. The Chief allowed me to take it again and I gave it a shot.

I started by doing the EQI. I was not surprised by the evaluation given to me. I have always had low self-regard, low assertiveness, and have been lacking in optimism. I usually do a lot of things alone. I have always been picked on for being skinny, not being able to pay attention, not being able to sit down, and for being a "nerd". I couldn't play sports because of my flat feet. My parents put time into my brother the baseball star. I existed as "the quiet one" or the "bookworm". I found EMS as a way to get into Medicine and become someone better than the nerd I felt like I was. I knew that I wanted to be part of it for as long as I lived. The training for it stimulated me to be a better person and understand the experiences of life better. I didn't realize that my past-time would really become my life's work for the next thirty one plus years. My Mom asks me to this very day "When are you going to give up playing with ambulances and police cars and get a real job?" I guess I never will have a real job in her eyes.

I started reading the EQI. I tried my best to grasp the information given. I had to read each section a couple of times then put it on my phone to hear it. As previously stated, I don't sit down much. Reading the book was laborious but I caught on. I had to read some of the items multiple times. I started using some of the things I learned from it to make me more aware of my issues. I began to realize that I had a multitude of changes to make over the period of the class. I also realized that those changes had to stick over my life time. I had to realize in order for me to change, I had to follow plan to change. I knew it was going to hurt but like pulling a bandaid, the hurt will last only a short time, it's the wound that takes time to heal that might sting some. I knew doing the things temporarily would only be a bandaid and the wound would still be there after the bandaid were gone. I can say I am more emotionally self-aware, I am more realistic about my goals and achievements, and I am trying to be more optimistic. I also realize that being assertive is a big issue. I have become more assertive than I have in the past. I no hesitation in taking charge, saying what I need to say when I need to say it and in the proper form, and standing up for someone else. I realized that I have to keep my emotions in check when doing some of this to be taken seriously. I believe that I have come a long way in the EQ realm. I have worked hard to change. There may be times that I fall back into a rut. I will simply dig out of it as I have done before with my new tools given to me to use. I had no tools before this class.

I then took on the 7 Habits of Highly Effective people. I have heard many things through the internet about Dr. Covey and found his Youtube postings fascinating. I am going to detail how each section of his book has affected me and helped me.

The Paradigms and Principles section made me look within myself about how I felt about me and things around me. The Paradigm video reminded me of when I lost my son. I remember people telling me to calm down and that Steven was in a better place. I have tried to find that "better place" ever since. I can say I never have found it. I can say that one hour in my life then has changed me for the rest of my life. I have come to realize that the same type of paradigm shift had occurred in my two failed marriages. I began to realize that my patience was an issue. I realized that my humility was an issue. I realized that I tried to change the people rather than looking at changing my habits and my ideas. As you said it in an email, I was right and they were always wrong. I never saw where I made the mistakes and I had the issues. I now realize that I have made many. I have a new relationship with someone and I am trying to be different. I try to create a positive, nurturing environment anytime I can. I try to exhibit a positive attitude about how I feel and how she makes me feel. I consider her feelings a lot more and I get a lot of the same in return. Our paradigm is that we love each other no matter what the situation is.

The Private Victory section has helped me be more proactive and goal oriented. I am in charge of an EMS Academy. All of our new hires have to go through the course, regardless of their previous experience. We have hired and trained one half of our staff in just under two years. I started out trying to figure out how everything would come together, basically flying in the dark. This course has helped me plan better and have a goal in both the Academy and my life. I am on time for more meetings by planning my time better. I am on time for more dates and social occasions with my significant other which makes my home life better. I make better decisions for myself because I have a better understanding of who I am and where I stand on things. I have positive self-talk to help realize I can accomplish things and do things better. I try to exemplify that to my Academy as well. I am steadily ridding myself of the negative ideas about things and looking at the positive and becoming more of a positive role model for them to follow. I am also not as set in my ways and listen to both sides of an argument before passing judgment. I have to when I function as a Police Officer so why not apply it to everyday life? I realize that fairness is all part of that piece.

The Public Victory section helped me with my "Emotional Bank Account". I realize that my word and my actions are who I am. I realize that if I am unfair, unrealistic, or discourteous, I will damage the reserve built as trust between the other person and myself. I realize that with my significant other, when I tell her I will be home in thirty minutes, that's like a promise to her. Every time I am late, is just like breaking a promise. I have to take her feelings into account. It is not just about me doing my job or being caught by someone to talk to. She should be the most important thing in that thirty minutes to get to. I didn't realize I was being unfair and appearing to be uncaring. I then have to apologize and after so many apologies, I end up completely losing. The course has also helped me also go from a lose /win person to a win/win person. I don't let people step on me or use me to get what they want from me. I am better at negotiating a win for them by helping them with what they want. I win by getting the same type of interaction from them in return. I now understand about seeing everyone's point through empathetic listening and taking the time to understand everyone's point of view so good cooperation

which creates synergy. We have a successful Academy because of synergy, empathetic listening, and common respect for each of us involved in building it.

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# What 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leadership has done for me!

I am writing this paper to detail how this class has changed me as a person and as a leader.

I was a bit skeptical at first that I would get much from any online course. I am more of a hands on, interactive type of student. I usually have to work with things a few times to comprehend what I needed to learn. I have attempted this class once before. I broke a couple of fingers and a couple of bones in my hand. I couldn't finish the class because typing with a cast in place didn't work. I went to my Chief and asked to be put back in the class as I wanted to finish something for once in my life. I have always had a hard time finishing things. I am becoming more set on finishing everything I start since going through this. I might finish it all at once, but eventually I will finish the project I start. The Chief allowed me to take it again and I gave it a shot.

I started by doing the EQI. I was not surprised by the evaluation given to me. I have always had low self-regard, low assertiveness, and have been lacking in optimism. I usually do a lot of things alone. I have always been picked on for being skinny, not being able to pay attention, not being able to sit down, and for being a "nerd". I couldn't play sports because of my flat feet. My parents put time into my brother the baseball star. I existed as "the quiet one" or the "bookworm". I found EMS as a way to get into Medicine and become someone better than the nerd I felt like I was. I knew that I wanted to be part of it for as long as I lived. The training for it stimulated me to be a better person and understand the experiences of life better. I didn't realize that my past-time would really become my life's work for the next thirty one plus years. My Mom asks me to this very day "When are you going to give up playing with ambulances and police cars and get a real job?" I guess I never will have a real job in her eyes.

I started reading the EQI. I tried my best to grasp the information given. I had to read each section a couple of times then put it on my phone to hear it. As previously stated, I don't sit down much. Reading the book was laborious but I caught on. I had to read some of the items multiple times. I started using some of the things I learned from it to make me more aware of my issues. I began to realize that I had a multitude of changes to make over the period of the class. I also realized that those changes had to stick over my life time. I had to realize in order for me to change, I had to follow plan to change. I knew it was going to hurt but like pulling a bandaid, the hurt will last only a short time, it's the wound that takes time to heal that might sting some. I knew doing the things temporarily would only be a bandaid and the wound would still be there after the bandaid were gone. I can say I am more emotionally self-aware, I am more realistic about my goals and achievements, and I am trying to be more optimistic. I also

realize that being assertive is a big issue. I have become more assertive than I have in the past. I no hesitation in taking charge, saying what I need to say when I need to say it and in the proper form, and standing up for someone else. I realized that I have to keep my emotions in check when doing some of this to be taken seriously. I believe that I have come a long way in the EQ realm. I have worked hard to change. There may be times that I fall back into a rut. I will simply dig out of it as I have done before with my new tools given to me to use. I had no tools before this class.

I then took on the 7 Habits of Highly Effective people. I have heard many things through the internet about Dr. Covey and found his Youtube postings fascinating. I am going to detail how each section of his book has affected me and helped me.

The Paradigms and Principles section made me look within myself about how I felt about me and things around me. The Paradigm video reminded me of when I lost my son. I remember people telling me to calm down and that Steven was in a better place. I have tried to find that "better place" ever since. I can say I never have found it. I can say that one hour in my life then has changed me for the rest of my life. I have come to realize that the same type of paradigm shift had occurred in my two failed marriages. I began to realize that my patience was an issue. I realized that my humility was an issue. I realized that I tried to change the people rather than looking at changing my habits and my ideas. As you said it in an email, I was right and they were always wrong. I never saw where I made the mistakes and I had the issues. I now realize that I have made many. I have a new relationship with someone and I am trying to be different. I try to create a positive, nurturing environment anytime I can. I try to exhibit a positive attitude about how I feel and how she makes me feel. I consider her feelings a lot more and I get a lot of the same in return. Our paradigm is that we love each other no matter what the situation is.

The Private Victory section has helped me be more proactive and goal oriented. I am in charge of an EMS Academy. All of our new hires have to go through the course, regardless of their previous experience. We have hired and trained one half of our staff in just under two years. I started out trying to figure out how everything would come together, basically flying in the dark. This course has helped me plan better and have a goal in both the Academy and my life. I am on time for more meetings by planning my time better. I am on time for more dates and social occasions with my significant other which makes my home life better. I make better decisions for myself because I have a better understanding of who I am and where I stand on things. I have positive self-talk to help realize I can accomplish things and do things better. I try to exemplify that to my Academy as well. I am steadily ridding myself of the negative ideas about things and looking at the positive and becoming more of a positive role model for them to follow. I am also not as set in my ways and listen to both sides of an argument before passing

judgment. I have to when I function as a Police Officer so why not apply it to everyday life? I realize that fairness is all part of that piece.

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# WHAT LEARN GROW LEAD 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY LEADERSHIP MEANS TO ME

Before the start of this class, I was reserve in some of my thoughts, feelings, and to a certain extent reserve in some of my thought processes and ambiguities for both professionally and at home. Since I now have had the privilege to participate and complete this program, I have a new vision and process outlook for both my profession and for my home life.

What I have gained from the Learn Grow Lead class has been a revelation to say the least. The small phrase changes like changing from “you” to “I” to “we” gives you the thought process of making things move without moving. This process has given me the ability to put myself in any of the 3 roles and to ultimately make a team effort with the “we” portion. Now I look at things from the other view, before I make a rash decision I think, “How would I react if I was told this”. Next, I envision how this decision would effect a team effort or approach. If I do not get a gut wrenching feeling, I move forward. If on the other hand, I do get that gut wrenching feeling, I re-think the decision and move from another angle.

The addition of trying to remain productive and still “command the ship” takes a critical fence ride. On one hand, you have to remain the commander or supervisor, on the other hand, you have to remember how the line staff views command and either starts or continues/changes the “rumor mill” or “scuttlebutt”. This is done all while keeping the patient “customer” in mind first. I have realized that some people do not like change, of any kind. This presents the opportunity to utilize the “win-win” and the “sharpen the saw” areas. When change is presented and naturally, opposition is first in the list, we must provide a win-win situation for the opposed parties, so they can buy-in to the change. I have told my crews that EMS is a part of medicine and medicine is changing on a daily basis, and expect changes. Having the line staff reduce the gossip helps, until it, so out of hand it is almost impossible to stop it. I have realized that people that do not want to accept changes, good or bad will do what they can to stop it. This is where I take a step back and sharpen my saw, to get a better bite on things and have the ability to “show” the people that not all change is bad.

Although I do not understand why people do some of the things they do, and I have to just sit back and think sometimes, how I can help the overall though process and help the staff understand how to make work productive and fun. One of things I have told my crews since I have been supervising is this “you should have fun while at work”, this does not mean horseplay all day but when you go to work be proud of being there and have fun while doing it. Next is “happy people come to work” when I was doing the scheduling for my shift, it was rare that I had a call-out or had to shut down a unit due to short staffing. I have learned that if you treat staff like people and let them know up front that I do not like doing my job “write-ups, counsel sessions, written warnings, and disciplinary actions” and if the staff does what they should do, then I do not have to do my job. I also hear the older supervisors and I have heard this in supervisor classes as well, how you “cannot be friends outside of work and supervise at work”. This is a personality gate, if it is known up front that yes, we are friends outside of work, but when we cross the door, I am your supervisor and I will do my job, it is nothing personal. I have seen that I am harder on my friends that I supervise due to one, trying to give some personal development for promotions. Second, to show that I will do what I have to when it comes to my job and my profession. I am proud to be at the level I am for the time I have been in the department. I catch a lot of opposition from the staff that has been in the department for “way” longer than I have, but when I come in, I give 110% from start of shift to the end of shift. My thoughts are I am here for a minimum of 12 hours and I will give it my all for the time I am there.



My quadrant II changes I have made and will continue to tweak are scheduling and following the made schedule if any way possible. I have started doing a daily routine that allows for interruptions that are going to happen no matter what. It does not seem to matter what shift if working, or if it is day or night, it happens. My problem I have now, is saying no when appropriate. I am the vehicle person and I feel like it is my responsibility to ensure that every aspect of the vehicle(s) are correct above the current standard. This includes the North Carolina Office of EMS inspection. Currently we have seven new vehicles that are due for inspection this week. It just hit me today, that I have spent all of last week dealing with these vehicles, and only two of them are ready for inspection. During this process, we have had a "committee" who wanted to be there to arrange and stock the new units, although I did not see any of these people at all last week, especially when I was doing this alone at anywhere from nine at night until after midnight trying to get these completed. This forced me to do something I usually do not do; I let out my emotions that you can imagine was not a happy emotion. I try to keep my emotions in check especially at work. This was the end of the straw though, I told the ones who wanted to complete the task that I did not want anything to do with this, since I do not ride on the truck, I should not have an opinion on where anything is placed for their needs.

Here is the new me; I will be a top notch supervisor that keeps of track, on time per the made schedule of tasks, complete assignments per priority and make sure that they are efficient and accurate. I will start taking time for me and my family, to bring us closer as we should be. I will try to start showing my emotions to my family (maybe), I have never been real good at that one. I will remain proactive, while keeping first things first, and utilize the win-win to get the crews synergized and keeping in mind that I must understand before I can be understood from others views. This will allow me to become a better listener and remain proactive and productive while remaining neutral for some topics that become one of those "this is where I should shut my mouth" situations. This class has shown me many windows to make me a better person and a better supervisor. I hope I can continue to utilize the new tools I have gained in my toolbox to make me a better person overall.

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# LGL Final Paper

It has been a long class, more so since while taking the class my organization has gone through major changes. Not only has my organization gone through major changes, I have personally gone through changes. Initially I scoffed at the notion of this class I have never been one from all the self-help type of things. I have heard of the 7 habits for a long time, but always thought they were more of a hokey book, that those without guidance needed. One of the things that people say are good, just to look like they understand. Over the course of the class I have found that none of this is true. With a wife who is a psychologist, I have picked up a few of her books and have a few psych courses over the years, I found that most of the things in the 7 habits and EQ edge hold true because they are based in science and experience. Both of which are valuable tools when taking into consideration people's emotions and how you handle your own emotions. I will admit as much hesitation I had with the 7 habits, I had no hesitation with the EQ edge, and just reading the first few chapter in the beginning was enough to hook me. One of the things I have already prided myself on is my ability to read people. This skill came about from being the shy kid growing hanging back in groups instead of being in the spot light. It allowed me to pick up on facial expressions, body language and the things not spoken in conversations. It has served me very well over the course of my life and in the job. One of the other and probably most influential parts of my life that this class has helped reinforce is all the advice my father has given me over the years. He is a doctor, and he is a great man. Spending just one day with him while he rounded in the hospital taught me more about patient care in all the training I have had to date. He is a very respected by his colleagues and in his field. Over the years he has taught me many things I have found in the 7 Habits in one way or another. He is the one I go to when I need advice on everything from work to home. This course for me means that even when I didn't think my dad was given me great advice he actually was giving me advice that has stood the test of time. This means more to me that I thought it would. It also means that I may need to start changing the way I do things if I want to advance in my career. I have spent most of it just doing what is necessary for me to get by. Occasionally I would do more, if the situation required it but for the most part I stayed below the radar. I know now that to advance I need to step up. I need to set an example for those who are under me.

One of the memories I have of my younger years was when I was in elementary school. For whatever reason I did not think I was cool enough or bad boy enough at the time. So for whatever reason I decided that instead of being called Christopher I would shorten it to Chris. I even wrote a note to my friends, letting know that I was changing who I was to be a much cooler version of myself. If I remember correctly this lasted all of a week before I either forgot about it or realized my friends liked me for who I was. Over the years this has seemed to be a common theme for me, in that I constantly try to better myself either to fit others expectation, when I was younger, or to fit my own. Now that I am older I have come to final conclusion

that personality wise I am a unique individual who others like. If other don't like me for who I am it is either they don't know me yet or they just don't like me and that is their problem and not mine. This class has helped me get to know my coworkers and little bit better and get a glimpse into how their mind works from reading their post and seeing what kind of videos they post. The new and improved me will be more proactive at work. I will take the lead on things such as cleaning the stations and washing trucks, with the hope that by doing so others will follow my lead. For me I have stayed behind the scenes most of the time, it is time for me to get out front and lead to the best of my ability. I know that I will mess up on occasion, but without failing every so often you will never truly be a good leader. I will also start taking more classes so I can finally finish my bachelor's degree. One of the things I need to do to improve is seek out good role models in the organization and get their advice on how to improve. I need to stop being as passive as I have been and get a little more correctly aggressive. Overall the class was a very important one for me to take. It helped me see things that I was not doing to the best of my abilities. It also helped me see where I can improve my quadrants and where I feel comfortable with changing.

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## What this class means to me.

On the surface, I did this class to help improve my leadership.

I also wanted to take the journey to explore my inner workings and see if there was a magic bullet to make me a better leader.

Unlike others in the group, I came to the party on my own accord just to see what was involved. I paid for it myself and my grades only go to me. I also did it because I enjoy your style and have always valued your contributions in Prince William. I knew that it would not be a waste of time nor money.

The material was not new. I read Covey the first time in the early 90's and then re-read him a couple of more times. Working through the material again in a more structured and thoughtful format made for a better understanding and a more practical application of the material. One of the things that I appreciated most was reading the others postings and analyzing their insight into the same problem. Frame of reference is everything. It was interesting to see the focus of others and where they felt their strengths and weaknesses were. This allowed me to spin the focus around and view my perspective a little differently. That is something you can't do when you just read the book on your own. Even though I would often leave my work until the weekend, the fact that I had an assignment every week was somehow comforting. Regardless of what was going on at work or at home, I knew that at some point in the week I would have to retreat to my computer and do something that was outside of my normal routine. The mental break and the academic exercise became an anticipated and rewarding activity. The writing was the best part – because I would start without a direction, but very quickly my thoughts would gel and the words would tumble out onto the paper and my thoughts would become clear. When I would go back and read them, I would glean wisdom even from my own words about myself – things that I would never otherwise have taken the time to notice.

## What the new and improved me is going to look like.

Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, I don't think the new and improved me is going to look dissimilar to the old me. As I churned through the exercises and made sense of the reading and investigated the other student's viewpoints, I came to realize that my management style isn't so bad. I was looking for a magic bullet and what I found was that the ammunition I was using was of pretty good quality already.

The biggest thing that I am going to change is attention to detail and time management.

One of the things that I realized in the class was that my experience and to a lesser degree, my education has prepared me well for the role that I have now.

Reading some of the other student's materials made me realize that some of their struggles existed because of where they were (a junior officer with a lot of responsibility but little control) or what their priorities were in life (new family or budding career). I was able to manage assignments and capture some of the material differently because I'm

old and grizzled and had seen much of what the scenarios presented at an earlier point in my career.

Probably one of the biggest changes that will be found in JC 2.0 is the focus on peer development using Covey or some other management text. I just hired a new clinical supervisor and a new educator for the critical care transport program. I will pull some of the pearls from this class and use the 7 Habits book as required reading and try to massage this new management team into a more uniform and higher functioning team that just allowing them to go it alone.

## The Quadrant 2 activities I will do to get me to the new and improved me.

One of the behaviors that I had perfected before this class was the ability to ignore a ringing telephone, but I still understood that I needed to prioritize what was going on in my world to make sure that I didn't neglect anything that was important, but not urgent. To tackle this, every Monday morning I pull out some 8 ½ x 11 cardstock that I printed a two-by-two matrix:

Week of 23 Feb 15	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important		
Not Important		

I write all the things I want to do that week. Some of it are actual things that I need to do that I pull from my calendar or items from my email, but the longer I do this, I find that many of the things that I put on there are contemplative and do more for my personal or professional growth. I find that the urgent things end up on my calendar and the important things end up on my matrix. The items on my matrix are often things that matter in the long run but have little tangible benefits today. Writing is always on the list. Touching base with an old friend I haven't talked to in a while is on there. Long-term goals for both work and home end up in the matrix. I actually took time to schedule a vacation for this summer.

Similar to the matrix, but much more immediate was that I started making lists. I keep a running list of all of the tasks that I need to complete. If I'm at my desk I use index cards but if I'm on the road, I use OneNote on my phone. Some of these items get

moved to the matrix.

For small items, it might be a couple of word like "hire Lisa". For large items (or even projects) I break it down into several key action steps under the larger item heading. "New NICU MD orientation" followed by "rework new hire orientation", "get with Liz", "AAMS best practice?", et cetera.

I use the list more to remember all of the things that come up throughout the day that need my attention. As my day progresses, and more and more items are added, I start to allocate priorities from A (very important/urgent) to D (unimportant/not urgent). I know – it has Covey written all over it...

I then just work my way through the list. I find that I have to reprioritize the list a couple of time throughout the day. When I complete a task on the list, I draw a line through it so I can still read it, but know that it has been accomplished.

At then end of the day, before I leave the office, I take my list and anything leftover gets moved to a new list for tomorrow. On Monday, leftover items might bet to the matrix if they are important.

Finally, in keeping with Quadrant 2 activities, I have stopped leaving my email open. I check email when I get to the office, again mid-morning, after lunch, mid-afternoon and one last time before I leave for the day. It may not be earth- shattering, but it is improving my time management and my productivity.

## Summary

I need to stay on course. I've tried to incorporate many of the habits into my day- to-day activities, but I've also dropped a couple of them already. Even with my best intentions, it's not easy to be Covey. I know that I will reread the books again in the future (maybe the near future) and find new wisdom that I missed the previous times. The discipline of having to participate each week has made this worth the price.

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