

ORANGE PEEL

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LEADERSHIP...FROM THE BOTTOM

I know that kind of sounds funny but sometimes that is just what we need. Leadership from the bottom refers to the example that the probationary firefighter, or the intern, or the recruit or whoever can set by doing his job to the fullest. By pulling more than your share you can show that old salty veteran that it is okay to be excited about your job. After all this is the greatest job. Isn't it? Leadership from the bottom doesn't mean walking into the firehouse like the world's greatest fireman just because you read a Pressler or Fredericks article. Leadership from the bottom doesn't mean whining and complaining because you are stuck on the medic while someone junior to you is riding the truck.

What does "Leadership from the Bottom" mean? It means accepting the work that is given to you, completing it and asking for more. Leadership from the bottom means doing all of the little probationary things like putting up the flag and cleaning the toilets, even though you are no longer on probation. It means doing those things and then helping the rest of your crew with their work. Leadership from the bottom means training when no one else on your crew wants to.

Leadership from the bottom means showing the same intensity and enthusiasm on medical aid calls as you would on fires. Leadership from the bottom means NEVER, EVER letting the nay Sayers and the burnouts diminish your love for the job. Leadership from the bottom means never acting like you've "been there, done that." Because it doesn't matter how many fires you've fought or calls you've run. What matters is how you do on the next one. Leadership from the bottom means that when you are no longer at the bottom you remember that you were once and that you treat the new person on the bottom with respect. Leadership from the bottom means that when you are in a position to lead others that you do it by your actions and not by what it says on your T-shirt or by the color of you helmet. Leadership from the bottom means that no matter where on the ladder you are you can always teach and you can always learn. And finally, Leadership from the bottom means NEVER FORGETTING those who have gone before us and have given their lives doing what they love. Leadership from the bottom means by doing your job right you will honor their memory.