



## Remarks of Tim O'Donnell from the Fall Conference

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Tim O'Donnell, president of PWIA, is retiring this October. He made the following remarks at this year's Fall Conference that he would like to share:

"This will be the last time that I get the privilege of opening the conference because I'm retiring in October, after 40 years in the environmental industry. So, if you'll permit me, I am going to get a little personal this year.

In my 40 years, I've been a consultant, I worked at the DER In the early '80's in abandoned mine reclamation, my first landfill job was with Waste Management, I've been with Republic Services for decades now and I've represented PWIA for many years. I even sat on the SWANA board for a term. The only thing I haven't done was practice environmental law, but I probably could with all the time I've spent with attorneys! Many of you are in this room!

I like to say that you get out of this Joint Fall Conference what you put into it, so here's what I'm going to put into it this year:

I have 10 "building blocks" that I've learned from our wonderful industry, in our wonderful state from you wonderful people in 40 years of trying to pay attention. Building blocks are foundational, many times they are under the surface, and they are critical for structural stability. A career, like a building, will survive a long time only if it's built on a strong foundation.

So, here's a bit of my foundation.....and this is in very deliberate order:

- ◆ If things are going well at work and bad at home, life is bad. Conversely, if things are going badly at work and good at home, life is good. Take care of home first, you will never regret it.
- ◆ Humility is a door and arrogance is a wall. Meet

people where they are, don't expect them to come to you. Servant leadership is real, and it matters.

- ◆ If people like you, they will help you. It's costs nothing to be nice.
- ◆ From a very wise woman that I happen to live with, "Bloom where you're planted". Too many times we try to fabricate a career path. The best approach in my experience is to be great in the role you're in and the career path will take care of itself.
- ◆ Do the things when you're not looking for a promotion or a new job that will make you the obvious choice when you are.
- ◆ Curiosity is a very valuable attribute. The leader should be the one who asks the most questions.
- ◆ And as a leader, the most important question you can ask is, "What do you think we should do?"
- ◆ Titles don't mean anything on a lifeboat. All that matters is the mission. Does everyone on your team know what the mission is?
- ◆ Encouragement is powerful, and it's free!
- ◆ There are no bad teams, only bad leaders.

.....and here's a bonus:

- ◆ The moral high ground is a force multiplier. Never, never, never compromise your integrity.

Thanks for that, those are some of the foundational principals that have made a difference in my life and my career, for what it's worth."

Thank you Tim for your contribution and dedication to PWIA!

