



Dear Chief

By Jeff “Chief” Urbaniak
COLUMNIST

DEAR CHIEF: I’m the boss in a rubber molding plant where we mainly make tires. I’m tired of people constantly crying for help. My company pays these people quite well so you’d think they can earn their paycheck despite the long and hard hours. I’m the boss and don’t need to be getting my hands dirty. How can I adjust my people’s attitudes?

FED UP BOSS



DEAR FED UP BOSS: If workers are constantly asking for help, it requires you to properly analyze their work environment. This may require a manpower study that evaluates work tasks that results in viable human resource formulas for hiring the correct amount of workers. If a manpower study reveals they should be capable of performing their routine tasks without help, then you probably need to weed out your complainers and replace them with people who have the right attitudes

Tie people’s boots when boots need tying

and are willing to give 100%. If the study indicates their grief is justified, then get them the help they need. Doing so may be a little costly up front but the improved efficiency will pay back dividends as time goes on.

And look, sometimes as a boss, you simply have to jump in and help. Some days could be more strenuous than others and there’s nothing wrong with a boss taking notice of a weary employee and lending a helping hand.

I offer you advice to read up on Army General Matthew B. Ridgway. He understood about servant leadership and how teams consist of everyone--both leaders and followers.

When he took command of a demoralized U.S. 8th Army during the Korean War, he immediately went to the front and visited with his soldiers. Once, on a wet, dark morning, he stood beside a road as a group of tired Marines moved by carrying heavy loads. One young Marine, too laden to bend down, was tripping over the laces of his boot which had become untied. In the dim

morning light, he called out to a group of soldiers who were standing near by, “Hey, would one of you sons-a-bitches tie my boot?” The commander of the 8th Army knelt in the mud and tied the Marine’s boot.

General Ridgway did not do it for show, nor because he was a general. He tied that Marine’s boot because he was a soldier first, a member of a team, a soldier who had the impulse to help a fighting man, a man in trouble. He did what he needed to do at that precise moment to increase the chances of the team succeeding.

That’s what successful leaders do for their people when the going gets tough or when someone stumbles or struggles. Great leaders tie people’s boots when boots need tying.



For an opportunity to have your question, issue or concern addressed in the Dear Chief column, go to www.DearChiefAdvice.com and submit your comments or email them to Jeff@DearChiefAdvice.com.