



Privilege and Responsibility: Reflections on a 40 year Career

With so much global change and innovation going on, some readers seek understanding to make sense of it all. I try to meet that need with my blogs and articles. However, based on reflections of my childhood followed by a forty year working career, I write this piece about my feelings and emotions resulting from having had the fortune and opportunity to make contributions. I have been privileged to have had many and diverse opportunities to learn about managing organizations, but it comes with responsibilities.

Privilege

It has been a privilege to have worked for excellent and prominent organizations including FMC Corporation; the management consulting arms of Deloitte, KPMG, and EDS (now part of HP); and with SAS. All of these employers for me were an inspiration to me because of their core values and their ability to help their customers anticipate opportunities, empower action, and drive impact. They did this with a strong commitment to customers, skilled employees, and robust technologies.

It has been a privilege to have had career experiences implementing enterprise performance management (EPM) and business analytics systems. I have been fortunate to have worked with so many talented colleagues. Life is fun when one's work is interesting. Given my quantitative nature, the emergence of business analytics is a thrill ride.

It has been a privilege to mentor younger co-workers and employees of other organizations. Having a true mentor is a pleasurable experience. I myself had a mentor in the now deceased Bob Bonsack who I worked for at Deloitte consulting. All of my hardcover books I have authored have been formally dedicated to him.

It has been a privilege to travel so often on business trips to many international countries and cities in every continent and to meet so many professionals, many of whom have become more than acquaintances – they are friends.

It has been a privilege to present talks and seminars at conferences, to be interviewed by the media, and to write published books, articles, and blogs. It is motivating to receive feedback from listeners and readers who say my points were spot-on and relevant to them. It is a further privilege to be sought for my ideas, opinions, and guidance.

It has been a privilege to have been personally trained on enterprise performance management methods by the luminary Professor Robert S. Kaplan of the Harvard Business School and Dr. David Norton.

It has been a privilege to have been selected as an exclusive author and on advisory boards for organizations including an advisory board with Professor Kaplan for the International Monetary Fund.

It has been a privilege to have been raised by hard working and loving parents, who operated a classic mom and pop delicatessen in Chicago; and to have a close-knit extended Greek-American family. It has been a privilege to be married to my wife Pam and now enjoy having two grandsons.

It has been a privilege to have received financial scholarships and attended outstanding universities: Cornell University for an industrial engineering and operations research degree in 1971, and Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management for an MBA in 1974. My education provided a strong foundation to continue learning – which I do to this very day.

It has been a privilege to be a member of teams starting with high school and university sports, including being elected as captain of my football team at Cornell; and continuing with participation on teams as a consultant and with my employers. There is always shared pleasure in accomplishing things with others.

It has been a privilege to have my 1970 junior year university statistics course project accepted in the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York as the oldest computer baseball game. The reaction of my friends I tell this to almost always begins with their saying "Wow!"

Responsibility

While being fortunate – perhaps lucky – to have experienced these privileges, responsibilities come with privilege.

Responsibility involves working hard and always giving your pursuits your best effort. It leads one to make contributions that make a positive difference for others.

Responsibility has demands to represent your employer or organizations you are associated with and to be viewed with integrity.

Responsibility means treating with respect customers, partners, co-workers, the media, and all others one interacts with.

Responsibility requires one to set a good example to younger people who look to you and are developing their own career knowledge and values.

Responsibility demands one to use one's talents to their fullest potential.

Responsibility involves giving back.

Musings on Leadership

There are many flavors on leadership and hundreds of books about the topic. One type of leaders are those who are at the top of an organization chart. My flavor has been thought leadership of managerial methods for organizational improvement and transformation. Each type of leadership involves responsibilities and ideally a pursuit of excellence.

Leadership means trying to do what one believes are the right things, making bold choices, and accepting the consequences.

(I wrote this based on listening to a speech at a sports conference by Kirk Cousins, a quarterback of The Ohio State University football team. It made me think about privileges I have been given and responsibilities.)