




LESSONS LEARNED FROM A PUBLIC HEALTH CAREER

A vibrant, close-up photograph of a field of wildflowers. In the foreground, several white daisies with bright yellow centers are in sharp focus, surrounded by tall green grass. Other flowers in shades of purple and pink are visible in the background, slightly out of focus. The sky is a clear, bright blue, visible through the gaps in the foliage.

HOW TO SUCCEED DESPITE YOURSELF

A Reflection On My Career – What the Hell did I do
right and how did I do it?



LOVE YOUR JOB! YOU MUST HAVE PASSION.

If you're in this for the money, get out now. If you dread going to work, get out now. If you can't wait for 5:00 PM, get out now. You Will Not Succeed If You Don't Absolutely Love Your Job. You should also love your family for putting up with you and your demanding job.



LEARN ALL YOU CAN ABOUT EVERYTHING.

There will be times when you question why you need to know or do certain things. Learning everything you can about what you and your agency does will be rewarded – although not necessarily monetarily.



THE AFDO FAMILY. MCAFDO, AFDOSS, WAFDO, ET.AL.

These organizations definitely played a role in advancing my career. Not just the educational aspects, but also the collegial aspects that will become critical at some point. They can absolutely save you. They can also give you hangovers.



GET A MENTOR AND BE A MENTOR.

I learned from supervisors, managers, and colleagues.
You can even learn what not to do from some of
these individuals.



RECOGNIZE YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

There are a number of online courses that can assist you. Many you already know. Be bold enough to strengthen your weaker areas, and use your strengths to assist others. Having a great tolerance for alcohol isn't necessarily a strength.



VOLUNTEER TO ASSIST WHENEVER YOU CAN.

You will gain invaluable insights, and also learn important things. I became a Senior Manager with the State because of the assistance I provided my boss with budgeting. No, it wasn't in my job description and, no, I wasn't brown nosing.



DEVELOP OTHERS WHENEVER YOU CAN

Training and Assisting others will not only improve your skillsets, but will also make the organization strong. You will also make life long friendships.



WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

There are about five generational and a multitude of cultural differences in the workplace. Accept and embrace those differences. Variety is the Spice of Life!



CHANGE

Embracing Change, Managing Change, and Change Management are Essential to Workplace/Life Satisfaction. Change for change sake is usually disastrous and is known to cause substance abuse.




THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, THE MORE THEY STAY THE SAME

In looking back at more than 100 years of AFDO History, it was apparent that despite vast technology increases, we are still working on issues that were problematic in the 19th and 20th centuries. The problems are the same, but they now cost more due to inflation.



PROBLEMS

When problems of any kind are encountered in the workplace, be honest and forthright. You are best served when you can offer a potential solution to the problem. Don't suggest that your boss retire even if he's the problem!



MANAGING IN A REMOTE WORK ENVIRONMENT

Technology has enabled us to work smarter and more efficiently. But not everyone is capable of working remotely. Understanding the benefits/risks is vital. I had a colleague that died while working remotely from a bar. He fell off the bar stool. True story



POLITICAL SAVVY

To be fully successful, especially as a manager, you must know the internal and external politics that impact our work. You must know the organizational and political realities, and recognize the impact of any alternative actions that are taken.



POLITICAL WISDOM

Never tell the boss what you think they want to hear! Give them an honest assessment EVERYTIME. A good boss will appreciate your candor. A bad boss....you might want to think about another job.



WISE WORDS

Know when to hold them, know when to fold them,
know when to walk away, and know when to run.



WISE WORDS FROM MY MENTORS

Don't pee in your Post Toasties.

Don't get all wrapped around the axle.



MORE WISE WORDS FROM MY MENTORS

- Snot slinging fits will get you nowhere.
- You can't ride two horses with one ass. You might straddle them for a while but the outcome will result in great discomfort and a hard landing.
- Don't bring a knife to a gunfight.
- Baker, you were like a one legged man in an ass kicking contest (had to do with an appearance before the Texas Legislature).
- If you get on that horse, you'd better ride.
- Politics is filled with half wits trying to make the rest of us whole.



When you retire, you get to shoot the snakes in your life. Thank you for your attention.

