

CHAPTER 12: PREPARED

Preparation Can Mean the Difference Between Winning and Losing

Alvin York was a conscientious hero. At first, York, an uneducated mountain boy from rural Pall Mall, Tennessee, was a conscientious objector. He was later referred to as the greatest soldier of World War I. This happened because he was prepared.

York made a decision to change from a life of drinking, gambling, and fighting to a man of faith by giving his life to Christ. He was torn between fighting for his country and obeying God's laws. He worked through this issue and finally came to the conclusion that "If a man can make peace by fighting, he is a peacemaker." He was then prepared physically, mentally, and spiritually.

York performed the actions that made him a hero on October 8, 1918, during the battle of Argonne. During this battle with the German troops, York had to take command because all but eight American soldiers were dead or wounded. He was prepared for this battle because he had hunted or competed in weekly shooting contests for more than twenty years. Under York's command, eight American soldiers took 132 German prisoners. York's preparation and cool head saved his squad and won a major victory.

York believed that his trials and tribulations in the war prepared him for helping uneducated children in his community. He believed that his suffering in having to go and kill taught him the value of human life. All the temptations helped strengthen his character. He helped establish the York Agricultural Institute in 1926 to teach local children.

A person must be prepared to help his team as it faces challenges. This can be done by using the following tools:

1. Assessment

In order to be prepared, one must know what he/she is preparing for. Alvin York assessed his personal state of preparation. A person must determine the price that will have to be paid to get the desired results.

2. Alignment

Personal preparation demands good alignment. This makes success possible. Hard work alone is not enough to achieve good alignment. The right work must be done.

3. Attitude

Attitude is often neglected by diligent people. In order to succeed, the mental aspects must be prepared. When a leader shows a positive attitude about a situation, the teammates will usually have a positive attitude.

4. Action

Being prepared means being ready to take the first step when the time comes. One must have courage and not be afraid to try something new.

In order to improve preparedness, one must become a process thinker. This requires thinking ahead so that you will know what will be needed. A system or list should be created and the steps should be broken into tasks.

Research is needed in order to become familiar with the tools of the trade. Team players must become experts.

Learning from your own mistakes is the most important preparation tool. These mistakes should be written down, studied, and analyzed.

Ray Charles was told that he was not good enough to play in Lucky Millinder's band. After he stopped feeling sorry for himself, he practiced even harder. Ray Charles's preparation made him one of the greatest and most talented musicians that ever lived. Preparation is not a guarantee, but it puts you in a position to win.

Comments

Reading this chapter helped me realize the importance of being prepared. This quality is applied every day at MCAEOC Head Start. MCAEOC Head Start covers a large county with 22 Head Start centers. The Central Office Staff comprises the team leaders. The staff must be prepared in order to meet the needs of our staff, children, families, and the community. We must work together as a team by being prepared for any situation that arises.

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