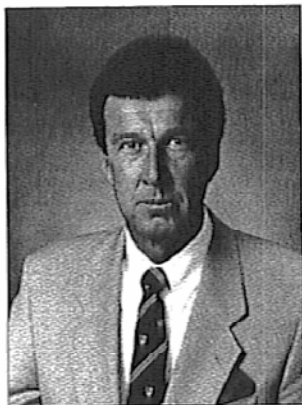


Traits of the Admirable People in Our Industry

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I haven't actually counted them, but there must literally be hundreds of "self help" books on the market. Such books are perhaps — not surprisingly — good and often best sellers, since they operate on the principle that "trust me, if you read me, you will be better (somehow)." This betterment is usually directly related to the reader's net worth, or the size and/or functioning of a certain part of the anatomy. Can you say "South Beach baby?" Our industry — the broad field of geotechnology as related to ground treatment, improvement and support — has more than its proportionate share of "characters," and indeed there are very few active participants in our field who are grey and/or faceless, as far as character and/or ego are concerned. It is often overlooked, however, that "character" and "ego" are words which are not interchangeable and which reflect entirely different personal qualities: people who have character rarely have an inflated ego, while people with large ego's never have true character.

Our industry demands physical mobility of its participants and few of its most active practitioners have managed to avoid repetitive elevation to the ranks of "Chairman's Preferred," "Platinum Elite," or "You Obviously Don't Have a Family at Home" status with our major airlines. Such people travel to conferences, committee meetings, projects, dispute resolution boards and the occasional "retreat" weekend (normally, of course, with the same people they travel to meet anyway for the otherwise stated reasons). They therefore meet a lot of people. There is an old saying (favored by old geologists) which runs to the effect, "the best



geologist is the guy who has seen the most rocks." A parallel judgment can be applied to the observer of people and their behavioral traits. With notable, well-recognized, and very few exceptions, our industry is served by people who are admirable to some degree and in certain ways. The observer of such traits would doubtless recognize the following admirable qualities in his dealings with this moral majority. A person having none of these traits would, by inference, classify himself as not admirable: the lack of these admirable traits most probably explains that list you keep of "the only 10 people I don't get on with in this industry."

The following list of qualities can be identified:

- Admirable people are efficient, organized and effective. This permits them to advance as individuals, and greatly facilitates the jobs of their colleagues, especially on a project-by-project basis, such as when serving on a technical committee. Such people benefit any process, even when the process involves a serious dispute between two parties.
- Admirable people are dependable and reliable. They don't let you down, they follow through and they do on time what they say they will without being "chased." They return calls promptly and don't reverse the charges. A leader can't lead the charge if he can't trust his troops well enough

to turn his back on them.

- Admirable people have honesty and integrity. They follow a code of ethics in their personal and professional dealings which embodies their own unique blend of training, teaching, genes and upbringing. They "play the game," and occasionally bend rules, but never break laws.

- Admirable people are consistent and constant in their behavior (at least in public!). With such people, we don't have to worry "which Tom (Dick or Harry)" is going to turn up today — the funniest guy in the world or his sociopathic alter ego? Such constancy creates the essential ambience and foundation for mutual openness and trust in all dealings. You know what to expect at all times from such people.

- Admirable people are great in a crisis. It can sometimes be alleged that the reason certain people are super-calm in a crisis is the fact that they are simply unaware of how disastrously severe the crisis is! However, the more accurate benchmark is the other idiom that "you judge people in adversity." Given the nature of our industry, we each get a lot of opportunities to judge the presence of this quality.

- Admirable people are polite and respectful. The acid test of this is not at the preconference icebreaker, but at the height of a particularly tense and difficult negotiation in an adversarial environment. Truest colors are not necessarily seen through a rose-tinted wine glass, in veritas: think instead of trying to get an airline upgrade on a Friday night in La Guardia.

- Admirable people don't smoke.
- Admirable people are not satisfied with paradigms and constantly challenge them, not to cause chaos,

(continued on page 52)

but to improve standards. This ongoing insurrection against "paradigm paralysis" is fueled by the concept of seeking or providing "gamebreaking" performance in any given situation. Mediocrity and inertia are anathema: consistent excellence rules.

- Admirable people are not pretentious, but are approachable, genuine and show proper humility. This does not preclude them being allowed to dress well, have "nice things" and drive a fabulous car: the general rumor is that we only pass this way once and we don't get to take clothes, cars etc. with us at the end.

- Admirable people make the most of their talent: to not do so is to deprive friends and peers of the benefits of the special gift that that particular person has been given. Talented people invariably still have to work hard to be successful: they

don't rest on their laurels. They know, from experience, that the harder you practice the luckier you get. Care should always be exercised, however,

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to ensure that the talent in question a) is not over leveraged (i.e., know where to stop), and b) is not exhibited at inopportune times – no one really wants to be informed about the diet and feeding habits of a shellfish when about to enjoy a half dozen Oysters Rockefeller.

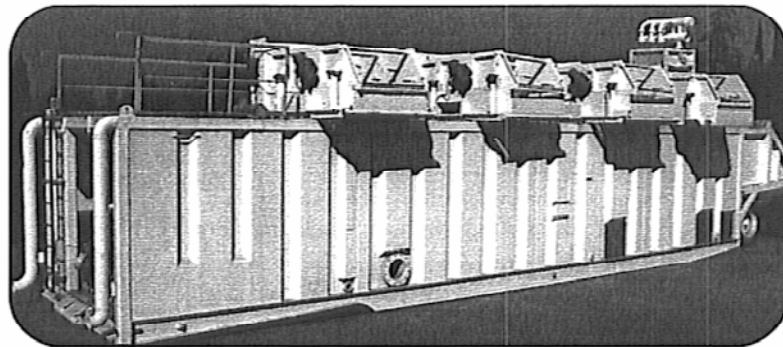
- Admirable people are positive and radiate an attractive aura. Negative people are depressing and consume other people's emotional energy. Care is needed in exhibiting or analyzing this "positive trait." Too much (false) optimism is grounds for wondering exactly what the person in question is smoking and, of course, admirable people don't smoke...(see above).

- Admirable people don't talk badly about others behind their backs, and not just because the victim invariably hears the comments sooner or later. Instead, the most damning indictment of someone who is less than admirable is the crushing silence, i.e., not damnation by "faint praise," but disembowelment by "no comment."

(continued on page 54)



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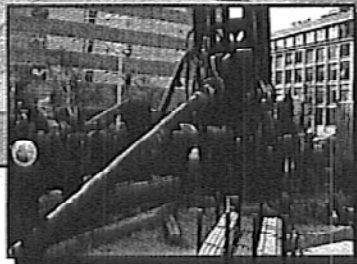
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- Admirable people do not talk loudly on airplanes or into cell phones. They do not need to impress a casual but captive audience about their net worth or their personal prowess with members of the opposite – or same – sex.

- Admirable people commit random acts of kindness, and consistently tell the truth.

- Admirable people can participate in a serious argument without losing their cool or creating offense. They are aware that just because an opponent has less knowledge on a certain issue, that opponent is not (necessarily) ignorant. They don't assume that the person arguing against them is (automatically) wrong.

- Admirable people admit when they are wrong, need help or have made a mistake. They put progress before pride, and success above all.

- Admirable people tell awful jokes.

- Admirable people know that the definition of success is "the progressive attainment of a worthwhile goal," and are wary of the "shooting star" phenomenon.

Food for thought.

