

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE FLIGHTDECK

- LIFE LESSONS LEARNED THROUGH AVIATION -

by Jerry Tobias

"I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw."

Proverbs 24:32



ALERTING SYSTEMS

...ADDRESSING THE REAL ISSUES



The avionics technology found in today's modern aircraft cockpits is amazing. Flat panel (glass) screens have replaced most of the "round dial" instruments of yesterday. Because of their digital capabilities, these screens give flight crews access to much more information than was previously available.

One new innovation that such technology makes possible is the Crew Alerting System (CAS). This notification system typically annunciates warning (red), caution (yellow), advisory (green) or status (white) text messages on dedicated display screens (note the text messages on the third screen from the left in the cockpit photo above). Large amounts of real time information concerning the aircraft and its onboard systems can be presented for the crew's awareness and, when necessary, their corrective action. The CAS on the last airplane I flew, for example, could display 292 different systems alerting and status messages.

One difficulty with the CAS, though, is that - although the messages are prioritized by major groups (warning, caution, advisory or status messages) - they are *not* prioritized within each

group. Instead, the *newest* message is always displayed at the top of the stack of messages within that particular group.

This can present a problem, especially with the typically large number of potential "caution" messages, because the messages at the top of the group might actually be the result of more important root issues that are "buried" somewhere within the message stack.

Crews must be certain, therefore, that they identify and respond to the root problems first, and not waste time trying to correct problems that are actually just *symptoms* or products of other issues.

This principle also applies to life, to business and industry, and - very obviously - to the field of medicine. Treating a headache with aspirin or other pain medication does not solve the problem, for example, if the headache is the result of a tumor or other serious anomaly.

Consider, also, all of the general health issues that can result from prolonged stress. These health conditions cannot be resolved unless the *source* of the continued stress is addressed. Ignoring the source would be a bit like putting a band-aid on top of a bullet wound. It might cover the part that is most visible, but it certainly would not take care of the problem.

The same thing is true of emotional and behavioral issues. One easy-to-spot example is anger. Anger is usually a symptom, not a primary issue. Anger management techniques, therefore, are meaningless unless and until the root of anger is addressed.

Anger is typically about self. It is often accompanied by a mindset that says, "I'm mad about what happened," or "I don't like my circumstances," or "I am mad about the fact that I can't change my present situation or can't control my future," or "I don't want to go through this," or "I don't think that I can't handle this," or "I might fail or look foolish." That thinking - all of it - is centered around self and rooted in fear...fear of circumstances and/or fear of man.

Most other root issues also produce additional issues. Sin, for example, produces guilt and conviction. Unforgiveness produces resentment and bitterness. Selfishness produces envy and jealousy. Unbelief produces hopelessness and despair. Fear, again, produces anger and insecurity.

The list, of course, could go on and on. The point, though, is that if we don't take the time to stop, determine and deal with the *real* issues in our hearts, the negative products of those issues - even if temporarily suppressed - will continue to reappear on a regular and troubling basis.

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger...be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:31-32

THE BOTTOM LINE? Negative issues often stack up in our hearts. The solution? It's called "grace," God's unmerited favor. God, by His Life and His gift of and provision for forgiveness and relationship, has made it possible for *every* issue in our lives (both root problems and their products) to be resolved. Following His plan for redemption restores that relationship and allows us to trust Him to effectively guide our response to every issue that appears, incident by incident and day by day. There could never be a better corrective action procedure than that! ■

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