

Article #4

We are Family: It is Better to Focus on Doing the Right Things Not Simply Doing Things Right

As we strive to identify the factors that are most critical to building a strong economic base in this state and promote civic engagement among a diverse population, it is apparent that we need to remain focused on desired outcomes. Among elected officials it is important to remain focused on promoting priorities that benefit as many constituents as possible not just partisan preferences or following historical processes. Among individuals it is important that they learn to focus on not only their own goals and objectives but also expanding their knowledge of practices, preferences, and experiences of individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

As we promote the development of effective leaders, we should advocate a mentality that embraces the concept of We versus just Me. This mentality recognizes that regardless of self-confidence, it will be necessary to be persistent and interact with others to be successful in achieving personal goals and objectives. This mentality also embraces problem solving planning as leaders seek to expand their knowledge of details so they can make informed decisions and accept responsibility for outcomes whether positive or negative.

A common experience we have all had is growing up in a family, some as both a child and a parent. The details of our family experiences differ significantly depending on the decisions of the parents and the impact of their decisions on their children. A review of the many studies done to examine families reveals several family characteristics that are common among “healthy” families. Several of these characteristics are:

- There is family love and pride that is shared and promoted among all family members via social gatherings, helping each other out when needed, and regular communication with each other.
- There is parental love and pride in giving birth to and raising children. “Healthy” parents continually promote the growth and achievement of their children by serving as a model they can emulate, respecting their sons/daughters even when they disagree with specific behaviors, promoting interaction with and respect for older family members, and providing a strong education foundation by sharing what they have learned over the years before and after their children enroll in public schools.
- Some parents seek to promote social interaction and civic engagement by adopting religious principles among family standards. For instance, it is easier to build respectful interaction with others if we treat them the way we prefer to be treated. This is often referred to as the “Golden Rule” of “doing unto others what you have them do unto you” and church members are often viewed as extended family members.

- Open expression of pride and congratulations to children when they demonstrated growth and achievement in designated areas such as personality and behavior, academic achievement, and financial achievement.

Not all young men have the opportunity to grow up in a healthy family and thus are slower at embracing the knowledge, behavior, and skills needed by today's leaders. However, in the absence of a medically diagnosed brain dysfunction, they are fully capable of acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in achieving personal and career goals and accept responsibility for leadership. The HAWK Institute Leadership Academy is designed to effectively address the obstacles that young Black men face who have not had the benefit of positive parents and family members to accelerate their progress. The Academy makes sure that Black males receive mentorship from successful Black men, provides expanded awareness of their cultural legacy, helps young men develop financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills, and the self confidence to both plan their future and assist others in planning theirs. As civic leaders they are taught how to "do the right things" and not limit themselves to following existing and/or historical processes

The HAWK Institute
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