



## THE HOMEFRONT



# Rooted IN relationship

By Gail Ostrishko

Relationships are the single most influential factor determining personal and professional success. They are the core of our connection to the universe, and instrumental to emergency responders' capacity to connect and collaborate when crisis calls. No other profession engages purpose, passion and potential in such a competitive and collaborative manner.

People in this profession literally live together, blurring boundaries and leaving their families for days, risking their lives to serve others. Families are often the fuel for this professional prowess, providing the support and the foundation for fire fighters' ability to fully engage and randomly recharge.

Everyone needs support climbing the ladder, both literally and figuratively, requiring relationships rooted in connection, reflection and direction. Each of us brings unique attributes as individuals, which contribute to creating a collective culture.

We are not typically taught specific skills and strategies for building and succeeding in personal and professional relationships. It requires conscious effort and consistent practice connecting, reflecting and directing our energy and effort into effective interactions.

### Connection

All humans have a need to be connected with others. Common ground is the core that brings and holds people together. From simple, short term experiences based on geography and common interests, to deeper long term connections based on values and commitment to common goals, relationships evolve over time and shape us into who we are. People come into our lives for a reason, a season and a lifetime. It is up to us to understand this, and to cultivate the connections we need to discern and develop the quali-

ties of relationships we desire and deserve. No one has ever succeeded in isolation. Success is always shared

### Reflection

I can only imagine what it is like being the life partner, significant other, parent or child of one of these unsung heroes, knowing every day that this could be their last. Only those

and to each other as colleagues and confidants, offering the opportunity to see ourselves as others see us in order to evaluate our effectiveness.

### Direction

Where are you going in life, and who do you want to take with you? These are significant questions that often go unanswered. We get so busy, taking care of business (busy ness!)

becomes obvious. Nowhere is this more true and more fascinating than in the Brotherhood of fire fighters and first responders. Serving others is not what they do, it is WHO they are, and they do it valiantly, consistently putting their own lives at risk without question.

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Your connections and conscious direction define your personal and professional lives. Consistent reflection along the way insures the opportunity to evaluate and evolve a manner that is true to who you are.

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who consistently connect and honestly reflect can wholeheartedly embrace this direction in life. I am thankful that so many embrace the opportunity, and realize it would not be possible without the consistent support of loving friends and families. We must be willing to hold the mirror up to ourselves

we forget to chart our course. The fact of the matter is, most people spend more time planning their vacations than they do planning their careers! Yet as adults, we define ourselves through what we do as professionals, and we judge others based on their choice. BE who you ARE and what to DO

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