

The Most Valuable Currency You Can Give Is Energy

People often argue that the most valuable currency you can offer someone in life is TIME. While I agree, I will also add that when you're inside the firehouse, the real valued currency is energy. Energy is the standard you set, it's the tone you carry, and it's the force that ultimately shapes culture. I would argue it's the x-factor, or separator for how "good crews do not happen by accident." They are cultivated! And the best officers I ever worked for understood this instinctively.

Let me break it down.

I believe that the privilege of promotion is the unparalleled responsibility to create an environment inside the firehouse where people want to operate at their very best. I believe that can only happen when the company officer consistently shows up to the firehouse with the right energy.

We've all seen it. The car pulls into the back lot. The captain steps out, grabs a cart, loads their gear, sleeping bag, and straight-lines it to their room. No conversation. No greetings. No presence. Just straight to the door.

"Oh man, it's going to be one of those tours, I can feel it"

Truth #1: Energy is Contagious

If you walk in tired, disengaged, or distracted, the crew will feel it. If you walk in excited to be there, curious about the day, and ready to work; they will feel that too. Energy is contagious! It always has been and always will be.

If the officer arrives with intention, the crew will have direction. If the officer arrives with energy, the crew will feel the momentum. But if the officer arrives flat, "oh man," the house is going to feel it. I'm talking about emotional contagion. The psychological phenomenon where people automatically and unconsciously "catch" or "mirror" the emotions of others. And in the firehouse, this isn't just theory, it's reality!

Take a second and think about the officers you've worked for. The ones that stood out. Good or bad. What did it feel like to be around them? When they were engaged, didn't the whole crew feel more locked in? When they were curious about training, didn't it make you want to step up too? And on the flip side... when they were flat or disengaged, what was that shift you felt? I get it more than anyone. Sometimes our energy is not always at its peak. We are human beings. We are not robots. If you do this long enough, you will eventually bring your work home, and your home to work. It's the truth. It is undeniable. And for those who tell you differently, take whatever pills they're taking, because that's make-believe land.

So start by giving yourself some grace. This is a working mindset after all! We are all human beings, and sometimes our energy will be low. We are not going to get it right every time. But

here is the best part: Every shift is a reset. And every shift is an opportunity to try again and get the environment right. This doesn't mean every day needs to feel like a motivational speech. It just means recognizing that what you bring into the firehouse, intentionally or not, becomes part of the environment everyone else must operate in. Which brings me to my next important truth.

Truth #2: Energy is not about volume. It is about presence.

Every time you walk into the station, you are depositing something into the account of your crew. Sometimes it's encouragement. Sometimes it's discipline. Sometimes it's accountability. But every single day, whether you realize it or not, you are depositing energy. And over time, it's that consistent, steady presence that will build trust. And trust is everything.

The question every officer must ask themselves is simple: What kind of energy am I bringing with me today? Because whether you realize it or not, you are always bringing something into that firehouse. So make sure it's something your crew can build on.