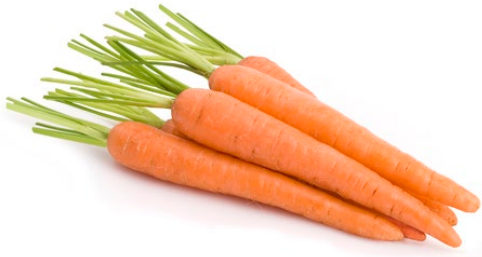


Leadership Barometer 160 Appreciate a Carrot **Robert T. Whipple, MBA CPTD**



A Carrot? That's a strange title for a business-oriented article. Well, there is method in my madness, because this article is about growth.

Carrots:

- look kind of boring, but they are bright, solid, grounding, and nutritious.
- grow deep and you cannot fully experience their quality until harvest time.
- grow deep and are not shallow.
- are rarely the star of the show, but they add needed color and texture.
- have greens that are very nutritious. You can eat the whole plant (in contrast with trees).

Plants grow in both directions

When you think about it, all plants and trees grow more or less symmetrically in both directions. We usually consume the part of the plant that is above ground and give little thought to the roots. This article urges us to think about both. We see the part above ground while we normally do not see the roots.

We need both

In some plants, we are more interested in the root than the vegetation above ground. The leaves of the carrot help us when carrying a bunch. Some people eat them with great glee in their salads. Most people are only too happy to toss the tops into the recycle tray in the kitchen. The most desired part of the carrot is not seen until it is harvested.

Trees grow up, and most of us ignore what is going on underground. The vegetation provides needed shade and oxygen to make our planet more habitable. The fruit or nuts provide a means of nourishment as well as a means to procreate the species.

It is vital to understand and appreciate the role of the roots as well. Without them, the whole tree would die or topple over in a windstorm.

How about growth in people

The metaphor works for people as well as plants. When we grow, we mature in a way that is constructive when dealing with people or problems. Helping other people is the equivalent of providing shade and oxygen to them in their time of need.

If we use Emotional Intelligence, we think we are growing up toward the sun rather than down into the soil. In reality, we are doing both at the same time, just like a carrot. Both the seen and unseen parts of EI are operating. How we handle feelings inside as well as how we express them are both important.

What is growth?

Growing means learning to share and look for win-win solutions to problems. It means sacrificing some of what we have so others can live better too. It means not resorting to tantrums or bully-like behaviors to get what we want. And it means caring for others in ways that are tangible and recognizable.

When we grow, we seek to give people credit rather than assign blame. We look for and usually find the good in others. It is the old “glass half full versus half empty” argument. Growing allows us to squeeze more life and pleasure from our everyday activities.

Try to grow in every way like a carrot. Enjoy better relationships with other people. In addition, be well grounded and support your roots.

Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD, is a consultant, trainer, speaker, and author in the areas of leadership and trust. He is the author of: *The Trust Factor: Advanced Leadership for Professionals*, *Understanding E-Body Language: Building Trust Online*, and *Leading with Trust is Like Sailing Downwind*. Bob has many years as a senior executive with a Fortune 500 Company and with non-profit organizations