

TOP ~~10~~ 11 - BEING AN EFFECTIVE QA MANAGER

**Lab
Manager
Perspective**

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North Texas Municipal Water District**

10. OK TO REMIND

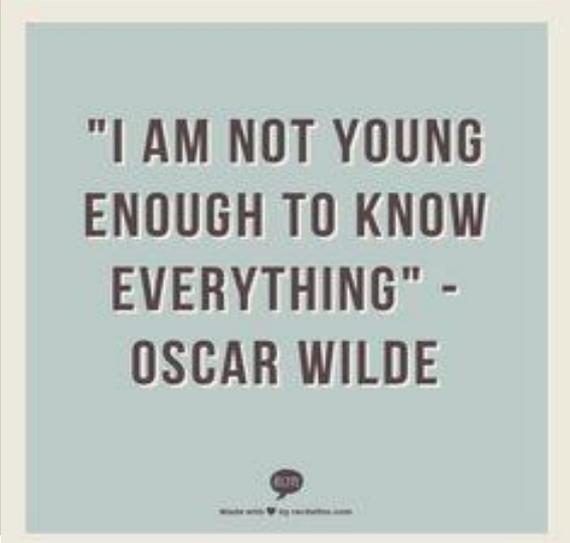
OK (encouraged) to remind management of due dates, SOP reviews, audits, etc.

- Do not nag
- Give regular status updates
- Meet regularly with the Lab Manager



9. OK NOT TO KNOW

- You are not expected to know *everything* about QA/QC
- You are not expected to have done *everything* in a lab
- Know where / how to obtain answers



"I AM NOT YOUNG
ENOUGH TO KNOW
EVERYTHING" -
OSCAR WILDE

8. TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

- Understand TNI Standard (as applicable)
- Know method requirements
 - EPA methods
 - *Standard Methods for Examination of Water and Wastewater*
 - 40 CFR 136 requirements
 - State specific QA/QC requirements
 - Program requirements independent of method (ex: Lead & Copper Rule)
 - Other State requirements (ex: Texas lab approval vs lab accreditation)
- Know how to do technical writing
 - SOPs do not need to be a Master's Thesis
- Seek out training opportunities

7. BAN “TNI REQUIREMENT” STATEMENTS

- Do not state “TNI Requirement” unless an absolute requirement
 - Best Management Practice” and “Industry Standard” may be sufficient
 - Explain reason for process/protocol
- TNI Standard states *what* to do not *how* to do it
- Trust is destroyed if a “requirement” is not a requirement

6. ADMIT MISTAKES

- We are all human
- Learn from mistakes and try not to repeat them
- Accept responsibility and move on

Everyone
makes
mistakes,
but admit
your own
before
you point
out someone
else's.

4ketoquote.com

More: [FROM 4KETOQUOTE.COM](http://4ketoquote.com)

5. ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS / CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

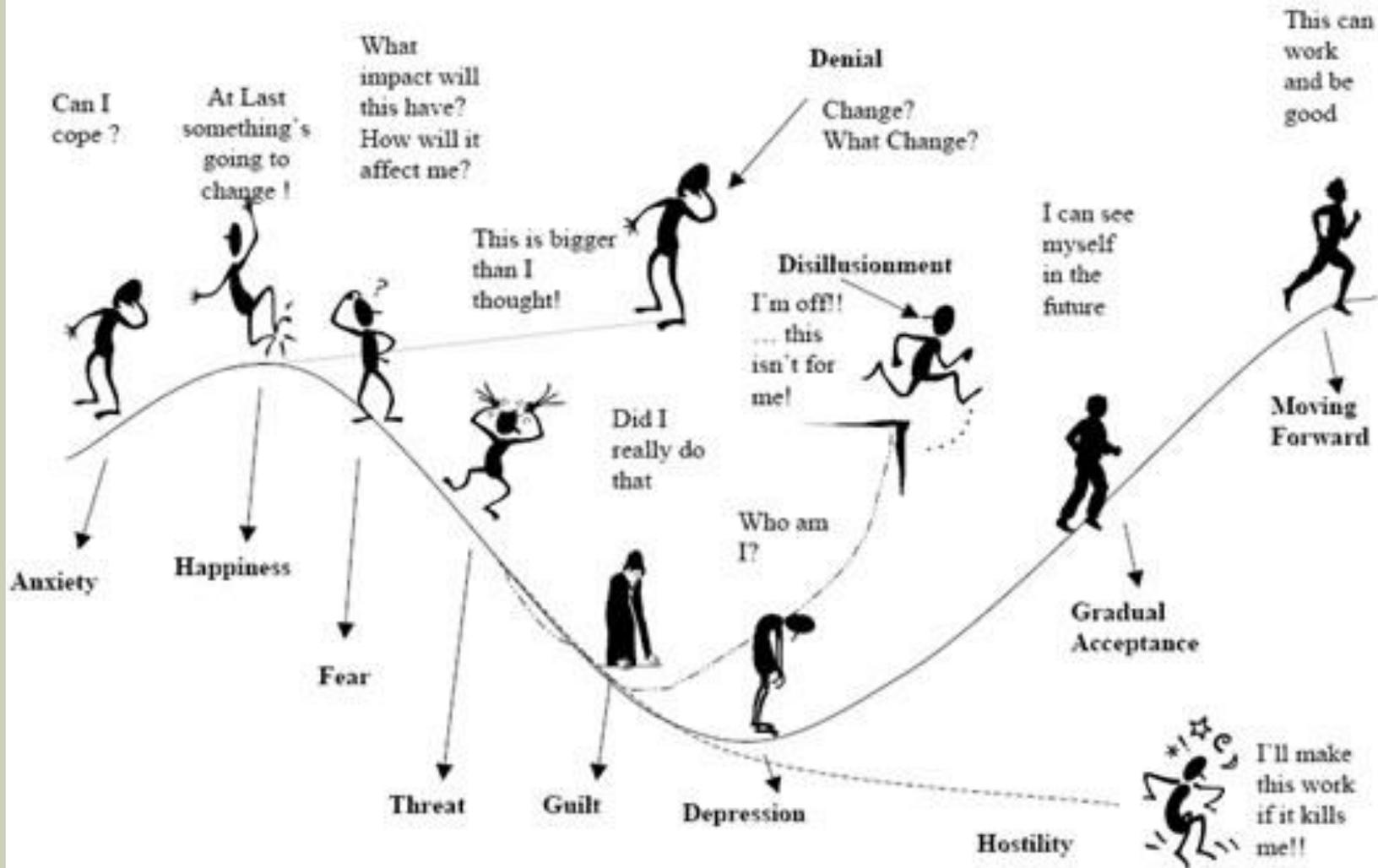
- Develop a thorough understanding of RCA
 - Identification of Root Cause
 - Implement Corrective Actions
 - Follow up on effectiveness
 - Serve as facilitator
- Focus on systemic issues that allow human execution errors to occur – not the human execution
 - Often cited insufficient training w/ retraining of employee
- Resources
 - TNI Brown Bag (<http://www.nelac-institute.org/content/eds-home.php>)
 - American Society on Quality (<http://asq.org/index.aspx>)
 - Mind Tools (www.mindtools.com)
 - Multiple Root Cause Analysis books

4. NETWORK

- Be professionally active
- LinkedIn
- TNI committees
- Industry related organizations
 - American Water Works
 - Water Environment Association
 - American Society on Quality
 - State laboratory group
- Know other local / national Quality Assurance / Quality Control Managers



3. UNDERSTAND CHANGE MANAGEMENT



2. UNDERSTAND CHAIN OF COMMAND

- QAO is not the Lab Manager
- QAO needs to influence / support management decisions
- Assignments and deadlines need to go through lab supervisory structure
- Give management time to discuss changes with staff
- Failure to follow chain of command can:
 - Create distrust between management and QAO
 - Create conflict between staff, QAO and supervisory structure

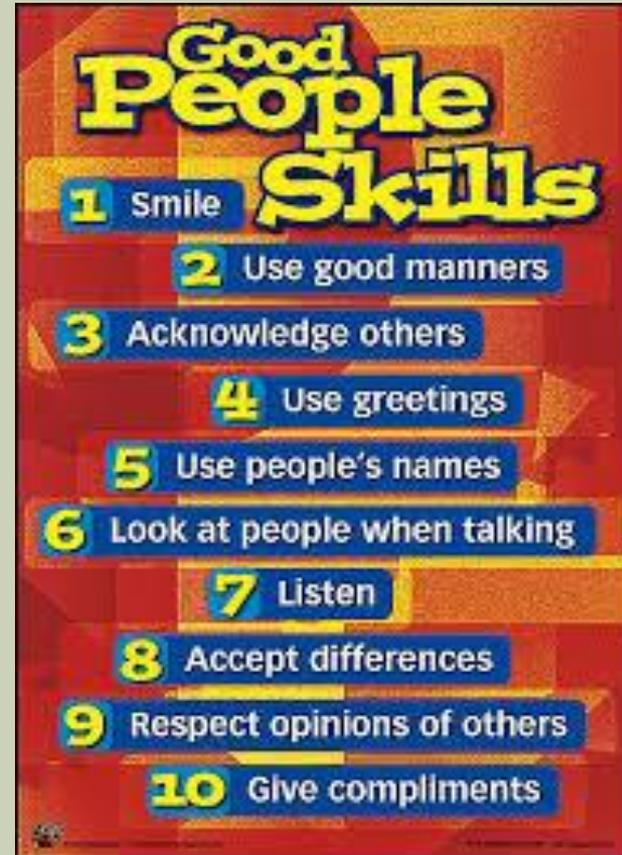


1. SERVE AS INTERNAL CONSULTANT

- The lab is your customer
- Serve as a resource for knowledge and training
- DO NOT BE A POLICEMAN WITH A BIG STICK
- Provide management with feedback on program effectiveness, potential ethical dilemmas, trend analysis, potential process improvements
- Communicate, Communicate, Communicate
 - Active listening
- Do not be discouraged if recommendation is not immediately implemented
 - Balance between regulatory requirements, staffing, work loads, budget
- Focus on continual cycle of improvement
- BE PASSIONATE ABOUT WHAT YOU DO

BONUS: PEOPLE SKILLS

- Active listening
- Empathy
- Relatable
- Good sense of humor
- Tailor communication style to audience
- Smile
- Mentor



SUMMARY

Technical skills will pave the road to being a QAO.

Soft skills (empathy, good communication, good organization, listening, etc.) will make you a successful and effective QAO.

QUESTIONS

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- **Contact Information**

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