

Act Well in Your Role and Fulfill Your Responsibilities

I have been reading and studying Stoic philosophy recently. The term derives from the Greek word “stoa” or porch where Zeno of Citium taught in Athens. I am always studying and thinking about Control Room Management (CRM), and will write a series of articles this year that relate CRM elements and Philosophy. Some of the philosophers will be Stoics such as Epictetus, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius. It is my role to write and your choice to read or not.

Epictetus was a Greek Stoic who believed individuals are responsible for their own actions, which they can evaluate and control through self-discipline. You may remember that Socrates taught that “the unexamined life is not worth living.” I encourage us to examine both our lives and our CRM practices and procedures.

I have noticed in some of the Team Resource Management sessions we have been teaching that a number of “controllers and other individuals who would reasonably be expected to operationally collaborate with controllers” do not understand their interdependent roles and shared responsibilities. Even when they understand the interdependencies and the need for combined efforts, some seem to resent that fact. Could that be true of you? It has been amazing and somewhat disheartening that some individuals believe they perform their duties without any cooperation and collaboration with others.

In your CRM Plan, are the roles and responsibilities clearly written and implemented in such a way that all individuals with a role know not only their responsibilities, but their authority and accountabilities? Does the CRM Plan include roles and responsibilities for all jobs that have CRM responsibilities? We believe CRM Plans should include statements of responsibilities for managers, SCADA personnel, technical advisors, field personnel and anyone who operationally collaborates with controllers.

Epictetus wrote something that is applicable to the CRM element “Roles and Responsibilities” and to life and work in general.

Although we can't control which roles are assigned to us, it must be our business to act our given role as best as we possibly can and to refrain from complaining about it. Wherever you find yourself and in whatever circumstances, give an impeccable performance.

Each of us finds ourselves in a designated organizational role, and that role likely includes some duties that are not our favorites. There are reasons you are in that role, either through your desires, choices, efforts, or fate. One of the Stoic principles is “Amor Fati” or “love your fate.” No matter your role or whether or not it is your favorite or whether you enjoy everything about the role, I encourage you to love the role. Stop complaining and whining about the responsibilities, your coworkers, your managers, shift work, and other circumstances. Perform professionally in every situation, fulfill the responsibilities of your role, and act in award worthy ways without expecting awards.