



10 Principles for a Happy Life and Career

Principle 3: Compassion

By Michael A. Crawford, CPA

Editor's Note: Mike Crawford has, by even his own accounts, had a successful and happy career as a CPA in Oklahoma. He says there are 10 basic principles that have guided him through a joyful life and a fulfilling career. In this and future issues of CPAFOCUS, Crawford shares that idea and those principles.

Consider the rights of others before your own feelings, and the feelings of others before your own rights." —John Wooden

Compassion (i.e., kindness, consideration, heart, sympathy, mercy, empathy, humanity) is one of the greatest gifts you can show others.

The dictionary defines compassion as "a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering." I define compassion as a strong desire to place the interest and welfare of others ahead of your own with nothing expected in return. It's about caring and having a genuine desire to help others, especially when they suffer or experience misfortune.

While it's not necessary to empathize with those who are suffering, often those who have experienced similar losses display compassion most effectively.

Further, compassion can be displayed through a simple gesture.

Recently, I was standing at a pharmacy counter picking up prescriptions. While waiting at the register, I noticed an elderly lady at the pharmacy drive-thru having an anxious conversation with the pharmacy technician. The lady was at the wrong pharmacy, and the technician was trying to direct her to the correct

pharmacy, which was only three or four miles away. I knew the lady probably couldn't find this pharmacy on her own, especially in her anxious state. Therefore, I asked the pharmacy technician to see if the lady would allow me to lead her to the correct pharmacy as she followed in her own vehicle. The lady happily agreed and off we went. After arriving at our destination, I asked the lady if she knew how to get home from the pharmacy. She was unsure. I offered to help her home after she picked up her prescriptions. Ironically, she lived in the same retirement village as my mother-in-law, so I did not need further direction. When we arrived to the retirement village, she parked her car, walked over to me with tears in her eyes and hugged me as if I were her own son. She thanked me for my kindness, but there was no need for recognition because compassionately helping a stranger was a reward in itself.

Open your heart, and place the interest and welfare of others ahead of your own. €

Mike Crawford, CPA, is the retired Chairman of Crawford & Associates, P.C., an Oklahoma City-based CPA firm dedicated to state and local government accounting and consulting. Crawford is a past president of the Oklahoma Society of CPAs, an inductee into the Oklahoma Accounting Hall of Fame, the 2011 recipient of the OSCPAs Public Service Award and is past vice chairman of the Governmental Accounting Standards Advisory Council. Over the past 30 years, he has authored a number of professional guides, practice aids and articles on topics of governmental accounting, auditing and ethics.