



“Beneficial change begins when you can acknowledge and even embrace your weaknesses.”

— Ray Dalio, *“Principles: Life and Work”*

Earlier this year I was gifted Ray Dalio’s book, “Principles: Life and Work.” Dalio is the founder and former Co-CEO of Bridgewater Associates, one of the world’s largest and most successful hedge funds. The book sat next to a dozen other books on my bedside table, all silently judging my nightly iPhone scanning. After too many proclamations to my wife about reading more in the future, I finally picked up Principles. The timing was perfect.

I started my career in the finance world, first in investment banking and later in private equity. I learned a lot during those years and grew my knowledge base and skillset but never faced real professional adversity. I became an investor in, and President of, Colorado Quality Products (CQP) in October 2014. In private equity, I had the opportunity to spend a lot of time around successful entrepreneurs and successful business. I had been part of designing strategies, hiring key executives, and growing large organizations. But, I had never come in every day, turned the lights on, and had the buck officially stop with me. And I had never worked in beauty. The road from there

Growing a Business Requires Growing Your Self

By Worth Turner

has been humbling. We have had great successes as an organization – hiring an amazing group of people, partnering with inspiring customers, and developing highly innovative products for our clients. Business has been good. But it has come at a cost to my ego.

Dalio’s message is one of self-awareness and a commitment to personal growth. The truth, as he spells it out, is that none of us is capable of doing everything well. We have strengths and areas where we are above average but we also all have areas where we are below average. Success in business is not a result of your select strengths but a combination of those strengths and the humility to acknowledge the weaknesses. It is about recognizing your own limitations, staying committed to always getting better, and, importantly, trusting those around you.

That’s a tough lesson for the straight A student; always ready with a hand-up and an answer prepared. But it is a lesson that has made all the difference for me. I had to recognize that tying our growth to my available hours and capacity would be an anchor on the business. The company’s success must come from humility and the empowerment of the team over the individual. We had made those steps as a business but it was not until I read Dalio’s book that I realized that admitting a need for help is as important as any success. It is through that acknowledgement that we grow, that we improve, and, importantly, that the business grows and improves.

We all have strengths. Some are strong in marketing, some in finance, some in engineering, some in culture or research or operations. We are never going to individually be strong at all of them, but as a company we can be.

Letting go of those weaknesses has made all the difference for me and for our business. We still

have a long way to go in our company’s evolution. We still should get a lot better and then keep getting better after that. And to be successful in this pursuit we must keep raising our hands and admitting we don’t have the answer and we need help.

I’ll close with one last little anecdote about leadership. In 2007, in anticipation of the 2012 Olympics, the British sporting organization, UK Sport, published an ad asking all young athletic citizens above a certain height to try out for the Olympic handball, rowing, and volleyball teams. The idea was simple: there may be Olympic quality athletes, of a certain age and height, out there who have all the skills but have never played the game. More than 3,800 people applied. Ten went on to be Olympians, one winning a medal, and all participating in sports that they had previously never played. What’s the lesson? For me, it’s a reminder that we must let others shine as there may in fact be an Olympian on the staff who has never been given the opportunity to play. As professionals, peers, managers, and leaders, we have an obligation to find out where there are “Olympians” and then empower them to succeed!

Worth Turner is the President of Colorado Quality Products (CQP), an industry leader in personal care research, development and manufacturing. Mr. Turner has led the operations of CQP since 2014. Prior to joining CQP, Worth spent nine years at a lower middle market private equity firm based in Dallas, Texas. Throughout his private equity career, Mr. Turner completed nearly 20 acquisitions and sat on the board of a variety of businesses in the manufacturing, distribution, and healthcare categories. He is a graduate of Vanderbilt University with a B.A. in Economics and Spanish. Mr. Turner, his wife, and two young boys live in Denver, Colorado.