
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

“Hold Your Head Up”

*And if it's there
Don't let it get you down,
You can take it.*

*And if it hurts
Don't let them see you cry,
You can make it.*

*And if they stare
Just let them burn their eyes
On you moving.*

*And if they shout
Don't let it change a thing
That you're doing.*

The words above are the lyrics to the verses of a song by Argent. The name of the song is (you guessed it) *“Hold Your Head Up.”*

If you remember the song, think about it as you read this article. If you don't know the song, Google it and then play it on YouTube or something before you read, or while you read this article.

Over the course of my postal career, I have seen people cry. I have seen people overcome by anxiety. I have seen people paralyzed by fear.

I don't generally discuss it with people outside of work, or at social functions with people from the private sector. However, on occasion, when someone really persists, I will answer their questions about life at the USPS. Based on the looks on their faces, I'm sure some of them think that I am embellishing the stories I relay to them.

You folks, though, you folks know what it's like.

Where does the fear come from? What causes the anxiety? What power is so strong that a look from a boss or uttered words can paralyze?

I know it's real, I've seen it. As a matter of fact, I've seen it all too often.

It used to be that I didn't understand it. Unfortunately, in the last several years, with increased exposure, I'm beginning to understand (I think).

We all have a strong desire to provide for our families. The threat of having our ability to do so taken from us, whether the threat is direct or veiled,

is a powerful negative force. Whether the threat is in the form of an intimidating remark, a disparaging remark, or a sarcastic remark about one's abilities, the threat is real.

We all take pride in our job, in the work we perform, in the service we provide. If we didn't, we wouldn't care about anything that was said to us, we wouldn't pick up newsletters to stay informed, we wouldn't pay attention to instructions. When our performance is challenged, when our knowledge is called into question, the effect is very real.

Part of the job of a Union official is to educate the members to their rights and responsibilities. Your union has been doing that for as long as I can remember, and I'm sure that your union was doing it long before I came aboard the postal service.

But try as we may to be clear, some people can't comprehend the message that we put out. Listen to the song. Listen to the song and take it to heart. As long as you are putting forth an honest effort, as long as you are doing the best you can, turn the volume up and listen to the song.

While you're listening to the song, think about this. A true leader doesn't have to ridicule, bully, intimidate, degrade, assert authority, or harass. A true leader simply has to lead; lead by action; lead by example.

Believe it or not, your supervisor, OIC, or Postmaster, should be a leader. Are they? I'm glad that some of you reading this can say yes, they are leaders.

Education is important to everyone, but it's even more important to those who are reading this that can't characterize their bosses as leaders. Turn to your steward for education. Turn to us at the Union office, turn to the contract, the JCAM, turn to the M41, the ELM, the M39.

As you learn more and more about your rights and responsibilities, you will begin to become immune to the sarcasm. The paralysis that overcomes you will lift. The tear that used to form in your eye will turn to a glimmer that comes with a satisfying smile from knowing and doing the right thing. Then, play the song for someone else.

Stay informed and Happy Holidays!

Dave Barbuzzi