

“Open Door Policy”

By: Jack Muellerleile

An “**Open Door Policy**” (*the authority figure’s door is always open to anyone wishing to discuss anything at all*) is a smart policy regardless of the circumstances under which it is administered.

This is a savvy policy for parents, teachers, supervisors, politicians, preachers, law enforcement personnel and just about any other person in authority over others.

Why? Well, anyone required to sit in judgment and make decisions which affect the lives of others must rely on the accuracy of the information upon which the judgment is made. And information has the habit of getting skewed more and more depending upon how many voices are required to convey it all the way from its original source to the decision-maker. We’ve all seen the skit on a variety show where ten or so people are lined up on stage and the first is told something rather simple while the audience reads it on a monitor the other nine contestants cannot see. The statement is retold again and again until the tenth person has heard it. That tenth person announces the statement out loud to the audience who roars with laughter because it is not even close to that given contestant number one. Think about this.

The closer a decision-maker is to the source of the information the better. Some things for persons in positions of authority to consider include:

1. Encourage all to visit you in your office to discuss whatever is on the person’s mind;
2. When away from the office, designate a second in command to be available for this purpose;
3. Regularly visit field operations and revisit each several times yearly;
4. Organize forums for the purpose of gaining input about ways to improve things;
5. Be a good listener;
6. Thank others for their suggestions, for bringing matters to your attention;
7. Never reject anything reasonable outright, always say you will consider what has been said;
8. Be sensitive to the attitudes and opinions of others but never allow them to solely guide your thinking;
9. Utilize something akin to a ‘suggestion box’ where ideas can be deposited anonymously if desired; and
10. Always respond in due course; never leave things undecided for an extensive period of time.