

The Mantras

1. It's not about you.

When you can't see a path through the moment or think of the right thing to say, step out of yourself and see the situation through the eyes of the rest of the world. Once it's not about you, what it's really about will be clear.

2. Sometimes, people want stuff.

What we feel often overtakes what we think. Don't work too hard to force logic on the situation. People do what they do, and they want what they want. Recognize and find advantage in it, because you often can't change want with reason.

3. Sometimes, people don't want stuff.

See above.

4. It's not about what it's about.

The issue on the table is rarely the real issue, so focusing all your energy on addressing it will just bring a new (and equally non-essential) issue to confront. Find the bigger-picture issue, and deal with that as a priority.

5. Huh.

Most surprises we encounter aren't really all that surprising.

6. What it is v. What it does.

Whether it's a mine or a landfill, pipeline or a water bottling plant, detractors will focus on what you *are*. Your path to success lies in focusing on what you *do* – for customers, the economy, society, the environment, the world.

7. Tell your story. Or someone else will.

Going quiet in today's communication cycle never means going invisible. Engage, lean in, and set the tone for how you're seen, or your critics will be happy to handle the job for you.

8. A tunnel with no light at the end is a shaft.

If you can't see the light at the end of the tunnel, rethink the path you're taking.

9. Focus on what's important to people who are important to you.

Being a good neighbor, a dutiful public servant or a respected local company means listening and understanding your neighbors.

10. Everyone sees a hero in the mirror.

People disagree about all kinds of things. The key to finding common ground lies in not looking for good guys and bad guys. Show respect. Employ empathy. Listen carefully.