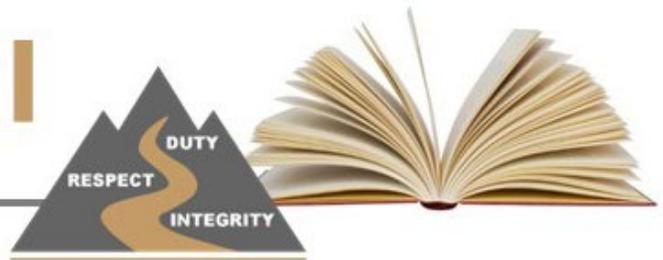


Professional Reading Program

Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program



How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie

Best Wildland Fire Leadership Level to read this book:

- *Any, but especially valuable for Level One, Follower; and Level Two, New Leader.*
- *This book is focused on the basics of communication – which seem simple – but everyone needs to circle back to the basics every once in a while, no matter what level of leadership they are at.*

Why Read How to Win Friends and Influence People?

“Dealing with people is probably the biggest problem you face, especially if you are in business. Yes, and that is also true if you are a homemaker, architect, or engineer.”

“We learn by doing. So, if you desire to master the principles you are studying in this book, do something about them. Apply these rules at every opportunity. If you don’t, you will quickly forget them. Only knowledge that is used sticks in your mind.”

A significant part of being a successful leader in the wildland fire service involves working well with others. While 90 years have passed since *How to Win Friends and Influence People* was first published in 1936, the concepts and principles it covers are just as valuable today as they were then. The skills discussed in the book can be applied to just about every interaction a leader has, whether in an office, on a difficult piece of line on a remote hillside, or at home after a long assignment. Being able to communicate well with others, and to get them to work toward what’s best for the mission at hand, is a foundational part of being a good follower and leader at any level of a fire organization.

Firefighting is high-stakes — bad communication can cause accidents. Carnegie’s tips, like listening or praising, prevent those accidents, by building trust. They help firefighters stay tight and work better with other teams. It’s not a replacement for fire training, but a boost for the social aspect of the job. It’s a solid tool for anyone wanting to lead or communicate better.

For more leadership ideas and to dig deeper, check out the Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program (WFLDP) blog, Facebook page, Professional Reading Program, and more at the links below:

Blog: <http://wildlandfireleadership.blogspot.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WFLDP>

Professional Reading Program: <https://www.nwccg.gov/wfldp/toolbox/prp>

Leadership in Action: Perspectives from an Interagency Hotshot Crew

The Diamond Mountain Hotshots out of Susanville, CA selected the Dale Carnegie book *How to Win Friends and Influence People* to read as a group, aiming to build crew cohesion and implement its lessons during the 2025 fire season. Collectively, the squads came up with four different study guide questions for future readers of this book. The crew then graciously provided their study guide to the NWCG WFLDP to create this discussion guide.

Hotshot crews fight wildfires in tough, rugged, and dangerous conditions. It's not just about fire skills; Teamwork, communication, and trust keep everyone safe. The NWCG stresses these "human factors," and Carnegie's book gives practical ways to achieve them.

The crew put leadership into action by choosing to integrate this book into their Critical 80 at the start of the season. This was to help take a group of people who are new to fire, new to each other, and new to hotshot crews and quickly build a strong team that communicates and strives to build unity all season long. They assigned each squad a section to study and propose a question to facilitate squad breakouts throughout the weeks.

This structure worked well in building both squad and crew unity, which is why they wanted to share how it was facilitated with others.

- **Team Unity:** Hotshots live together for weeks. One crew member suggested the book builds "cohesion" for stronger leadership. Praising a crewmate's work, like Carnegie suggests, keeps morale up. He also liked how it demonstrates leading without being harsh.
- **Communication:** Clear talk is critical on the fireline. One crew member noted the book's focus on understanding why people disagree, which helps resolve disagreements over tactics. Another crew member noted it reminds you that tone and body language matter, especially in chaotic fire settings.
- **Leadership with Heart:** One described a lesson from the book a "call to humility," saying empathy is key. A leader admitting a small error, per Carnegie, builds trust. It's great for dealing with other crews or agencies, smoothing out coordination.
- **Crew Feedback:** Most of the crew recognized that the book helps with leadership, communication, and relationships, from rookies to senior overhead.
- **Limits:** Some felt the book's tips are too basic for hotshots who already know each other well. One said the old examples of communication might not click with younger firefighters. Still, the core ideas work if you adapt them.

This book is a great fit for hotshot crews. It teaches how to lead with respect, talk clearly, and keep the team strong, key actions for staying safe and effective on the fireline. The crew recommends it, especially for new firefighters or leaders. Together with fire skills, it enables more effective handling of the human side of wildland firefighting.

How to Win Friends and Influence People Discussion Questions

Part One: Fundamental Techniques in Handling People

Can you think of a time in your life when you criticized someone and it led to a negative outcome in the conversation? Do you feel that you give honest and sincere appreciation to crewmates when they deserve it?

Part Two: Six Ways to Make People Like You

After reading part two and considering the six (6) principles outlined, what are some ways that you have successfully helped build relationships based on trust and make people like you?

Part Three: How to Win People to Your Way of Thinking

Can you find an example in your current position, or a past example where the challenge of a job or competition compelled you to perform at a higher level? How can we apply the other principles of part three appropriately to motivate or influence people to adopt or understand our way of thinking?

Part Four: Be a Leader: How to Change People Without Giving Offense or Arousing Resentment

Is there one aspect of part four that stands out to you for its ease in implementing? Have you ever been corrected in a way described in part four that made the corrective action seem easier than it may have otherwise been? Are there any other examples you can think of that illustrate the underlying principles of this portion of the text?