

## The Dream Manager

I think it was the Boston airport, and I know exactly where I was heading. I was heading to somewhere or other, a city that I regularly visit. And wandering through the bookstore, I saw something that was called *The Dream Manager*. Ken Blanchard, the one-minute manager, was my roommate in college, and a guy who I love *and* respect. The truth of the matter—for heaven’s sakes don’t tell Ken—I’m not that excited about the parable books. And *The Dream Manager* was just that. And I thought, “What the ... no, don’t really want to spend my eleven dollars ...” And I opened it up, and it *hit* me. And I took it on board the plane, and I read it. And I just—I *loved* it. It’s one of those things that you know, and I know, and—as is always the case—Matthew Kelly, the author, just put it *perfectly*. He said—sorry, I don’t know *what* I’m going to sound like when I say this—he said the obvious. He said, “*All of us have dreams.*”

I was talking to somebody one time, and they were talking about this, that, and the other. And I said, “Whoa, you talk about a person who’s really trying to do this, that, and balance the other. Think about the person who’s working at McDonald’s, has two other jobs, is raising two kids. *Those* are people who really understand what the tough life is all about.”

We all have dreams. And Matthew Kelly says, that it is *our* goal—our objective, our reason for being, as *leaders*, is to help people realize their dreams. Everybody has a dream. Name somebody. I live in a rural area, okay, in a rural part of Vermont. My wife is an artist. She’s building a studio. I don’t know whether most of you know about sheet rock or not, but, when you put sheet rock on the ceiling, and sheet rock on the wall, they call the people who put the sheet rock up “*hangers*, sheet rock hanger.”

Well, it was just utterly fascinating to me, we had this sheet rock job done. These guys were really terrific. I’m driving down our driveway. The guy who was the leader of the band was right ahead of me. And his license plate said “Hanger One.” And I thought how

cool. I thought how many people working in a purchasing department have “Purchasing One.” How many people who work in a logistics department have “Logistics One.” It is the *engagement*; it’s all about engagement, energy, creativity, growth. And the housekeeper has a dream that is *absolutely* as profound, if not more profound, than a whole lot of people who are 37 or 42 in middle management. So if we think of ourselves as managing the collective—as enabling the collective—dreams of the people who work with us—if we serve them in that regard ...

You know, I’m an old guy, but I really *do* believe in miracles. And I think if people are pursuing, as Mr. Kelly puts it, “better versions of themselves,” then we can have a *heck* of an organization. And better yet, we can look at *ourselves* in the mirror at night.