

Walt Rakowich – Transformative Influence

Walt is an author, speaker and the former CEO of Prologis, the world's largest owner of industrial distribution facilities. With more than 35 years in the business world, Walt arrived at a philosophy that the best leaders are those who de-emphasize themselves, and focus their efforts on serving others. After retiring from Prologis, Walt produced a book in 2020—***Transfluenece***—which shows leaders how they can overcome their fears and pride to make a transformative difference in the lives of those they influence.

Discussion Questions

1. Walt was heavily influenced by his humble parents who, though not materially wealthy, poured tremendous love into their home and practiced the golden rule with all those around them. Their example formed the foundation of Walt's faith and leadership philosophy later in life.

Question: What, if any, positive example was set at home by your parents which influenced your values in life? Perhaps it was the opposite for you. What was that like and how did you overcome it in your home as an adult?

2. Walt describes a major disappointment with his college girlfriend turning him down for marriage. That, however, turned out to be best for him in the long run.

Question: Are there disappointments in your life which, although very difficult at the time, turned out to be God at work in directing you to a better life outcome?

3. Walt's next job out of PWC was with the national commercial real estate development firm, Trammell Crow. There he worked with a believer who never compromised his faith, and who he greatly admired. That relationship rekindled his faith.

Question: Was there anyone with whom you worked in your career who heavily impacted your faith journey? Have you been that person for someone in your career?

4. Walt describes a business situation at Trammell Crow, involving the possibility of personal bankruptcy, which drove him to his knees because of, in Abraham Lincoln's words, "the absolute conviction that he had nowhere else to go." That situation turned out to have a nearly miraculous outcome—one which others might call "coincidence or luck", but which Walt calls an answer to prayer. That reinforced for Walt the belief that with God anything is possible.

Question: Have you ever encountered an impossible problem or situation which drove you to your knees, from which the Lord delivered you? What impact did that situation have on your faith?

5. After Trammell Crow, Walt went with Prologis from which he eventually retired. In 2007, as the then President and COO, he was faced with an ethical dilemma with his boss, the CEO, which he describes in detail in the video. His decision to go against his boss with the board led to Walt's resignation and eventual return as CEO, replacing his boss who was terminated.

Question: What are some of the key lessons/takeaways you took from Walt's Prologis story? With what, if any, of Walt's Prologis story can you personally identify?

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