

**Y**ou're in trouble. Something has happened, and this time it's a really big deal. It might be your fault, but it probably isn't. Still, everyone has seen your picture in the newsletter right next to your latest effort to explain why driving on frosty turf is a bad thing.

When you mess up, you claim the bottom of the barrel as yours. Right now, you'd be better off if you were filling the water glasses and replacing the butter.

One day, you're going to screw up. In this business, it's not an "if" as much it is a "when." So when you take your turn in the hot seat, you can be prepared and pad the proper places that might let you keep your job.

With that said, I offer you the opportunity to be initiated into what I call The Oz Method of surviving as a superintendent. Let me explain.

Remember Dorothy and Toto and the flying monkeys? Most people do. However, if you're going to understand the Oz Method, you also need to remember Dorothy's other traveling companions. Like them, the Oz method requires you to get a *brain*, have a *heart* and find some *courage* to do this job over the long haul.

Move over Dr. Phil. This is my own *Oprah*.

One thing I'll never understand about Turfheads is their unwillingness to seek assistance. What is it about people who don't ask for help when they need it? I know that answer: They need a brain. Getting a brain means dropping the Scarecrow act and seeking help when you need it. Your new brain will allow you to ask for help, listen carefully and even follow the advice others might have for you.

Yes, this means a certain amount of vulnerability and exposure as you admit you are in distress. A fellow superintendent, a spouse, an educator, your boss and even a consultant (shameless, I know) can be just a few of the many who are more than willing to help if you ask for it. Those with a brain learn to ask.

The Tin Man needed a heart. So do you. One of the ways people get into trouble is

## The Oz Method of Turfgrass Care

BY DAVE WILBER



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when deep inside they have no passion — for the game of golf, for the environment, for profit, for a higher power or whatever else you can find as a reason for your efforts. You can make a difference if you stay passionate, but losing sight of what you're about and what motivates you means setting yourself up not to care. In a business where caring about the details means the difference between good and great, Oz Method stewards *do* sweat the small stuff.

Follow the Yellow Turf Road and get yourself a spine. A Lion without courage is like a superintendent without, um .... courage. Being brave is definitely part of what makes for successful grass growing. The courageous are the ones who don't let people talk them into doing the wrong thing. The strong-willed are *not* the ones who make up lame excuses when something is obviously their fault.

The true turf Lions admit to, take credit for and own the good and the bad they do. The interesting thing is that people tend to trust and want to follow those with courage. That's why, when their Lion has a bad day, they understand that it's an exception, not a rule.

A talented person once told me that he really wasn't good at growing grass. Instead, he was just better at taking as much risk as possible without killing grass. When he really screwed up, he learned how to make it better. He spent a few days hanging around the first tee, taking credit for the mistake and explaining how he wouldn't like that to happen again.

That marks him as a true Oz Method Turfhead.

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*Dave Wilber, a Sacramento, Calif.-based agronomist, can be reached at [dave@soil.com](mailto:dave@soil.com).*