

PERSPECTIVE

Office Lighthouse Discussion Materials

Perspective

Chapter 1 - "Character"

It's a fast-food, instant gratification world. We want to loose weight this week, and earn a fortune this year. We want it now. But some things can't be attained overnight. One of them is character, clear values and unflinching integrity. No man grows up overnight.

Comment on the above.

Discussion questions:

- 1) Character is defined by the dictionary as "moral or ethical strength". What does that look like from your perspective?
- 2) "Character, in the long run, is the decisive factor in the life of an individual and of a nation alike." (Theodore Roosevelt, 26th President of the United States) Does this strike you as truth? Why or why not?
- 3) "Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved." (Helen Keller, author 1880-1968) What do you think this person is trying to communicate?
- 4) "Character is what a man is in the dark." (Dwight Moody, College President) How do you feel about this statement? Can you relate?
- 5) "We rejoice in our suffering because suffering produces perseverance." (The Bible) From your perspective is this an accurate description of how we develop hope? Why is hope important?
- 6) "What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us." (Ralph Waldo Emerson, Philosopher 1803-1882) How might this perspective change your life?

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Chapter 2 - "Relationships"

"Beneath all our problems there are desperately hurting souls that must find the nourishment only community can provide, or die. The greatest need in modern civilization is the development of communities-true communities, where the humble and wise learn to shepherd those on the path behind them, where trusting strugglers lock arms with others as together they journey on." (Larry Crabb, author)

Comment on the above.

Discussion questions:

- 1) "Community is the place where the person you least want to live with always lies. Often we surround ourselves with the people we most want to live with, thus forming a club or clique, not a community." (Henri Nouwer, scholar) What is Nouwer trying to communicate from your perspective?
- 2) "Lots of people want to ride with you in the limo, but what you want is someone who will take the bus with you when the limo breaks down." (Opra Winfrey, TV host) Have you experienced people of both types described above? What is the difference from your perspective?
- 3) "It's easier to love humanity as a whole than to love one's neighbors". (Eric Hoffer, writer) Is this a true statement from your perspective? Can you share an experience?
- 4) "Americans are the loneliest people in the world". (Mother Theresa, a nun in India, now deceased) Why do you think she made this statement? Would you agree or disagree?
- 5) "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." (The Bible) Where do you see forgiveness fitting in with community and relationships?
- 6) "Success in marriage consists not only in finding the right mate, but also in being the right mate." (Anonymous) Considering the high divorce rate why is marriage such a difficult relationship?

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Chapter 3 - "Wealth"

"In our culture, success is measured by a comparison with others of who we are and what we have done. This type of success is difficult to attain because; the standard is someone else's, the measuring stick is generally on outward results and the time frame is usually short. The world will often define success in terms of possessions, position or power. It becomes a driving force in our lives." Anonymous

Comment on the above.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) "He does not possess wealth; it possesses him." Benjamin Franklin. Does this statement strike you as true? Why or why not?
- 2) Today's Golden rule: He who has the gold makes the rules. What has been your experience with the rule? Have you let it compromise your integrity?
- 3) "The 1990's were really a turning point in American's life style. Prosperity changed everything." (Martha Farnsworth Riche, Census Bureau director) From your perspective what has changed with prosperity in your life, for the good or bad?
- 4) "The richest man is content with the least, for contentment is the wealth of nature." (Socrates, Greek Philosopher) "Being content with less"; can you make sense out of this radical statement? Why or why not?
- 5) "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want." (Apostle Paul in the Bible) What is the writer's attitude about possessions? Can you relate to being hungry?
- 6) "Measure wealth not by the things you have but by the things for which you would not take money". Anonymous From your perspective what would those things be? Why?

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Chapter 4 - "Fear"

Aristotle observed the paralyzing effect of fear upon our lives:

“Elderly men...have often been taken in, and often made mistakes. The result is they are sure about nothing and under do everything. They ‘think’, but they never ‘know’; and because of their hesitation they always add a ‘possibility’ or a ‘perhaps’, putting everything this way and nothing positively...They are cynical; that is, they tend to put the worst spin on everything.”

Comment on the above.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Dwight Hill commented, “Recently I asked a group of businessmen their greatest concern in life. Their answer, fear. Why would they answer this way, in your opinion? Would your answer be the same?”

- 2) From your perspective comment on the following areas as you relate them to fear:
 - The future or the past
 - Peers or superiors
 - Personal inadequacies or bad health
 - Business failure or competition
 - Parents or children
 - Death or the unknown

- 3) Isaiah wrote in the Bible: “Don’t panic, I am with you. There is no need to fear for I am your God. I’ll give you strength, I’ll help you. I’ll hold you steady; keep a firm grip on you.” Can you relate to what Isaiah is saying? How so?

- 4) How do you plan to live the rest of your life as it relates to fear? Will you be diminutive and paralyzed by fear or liberated from it?

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Chapter 5 - "Success"

"A few months ago I was in Dan's office. Athletic trophies were scattered about. Dark, strong wood paneling graced the room. Several photos of projects completed hung on the wall. By any measurement, Dan is a 'success'. There was a picture of one of his kids playing soccer; the toothless grin of his 7 year old with dad and their trophy trout. At 43, Dan is in the prime of life. Shortly after my visit, I received an email that Dan had contracted cancer, and was headed for Mexico for treatment." Dwight Hill

Comment on the above.

Discussion questions:

- 1) What has been your experience with equating self worth with career success?
- 2) Have you experienced how one can easily be trapped in the seductive chase for power and recognition? Explain
- 3) Any experience with how an inflated notion of importance quickly fades when success turns to failure? How can one deal with this?
- 4) When success fades hopelessness and stagnation follow and one feels trapped. What is the way out of this inescapable consequence of failure?
- 5) "the Lord our God broke out in anger against us, we did not inquire of Him about how to do it in the prescribed way." How might this quote from the Bible impact your prospective of success?
- 6) "In business, we are free to choose any path we so desire, but we are not free to control the consequences." (Dwight Hill) Are you prepared to live with the aftermath of your business choices? How will you do this?

Perspective

Chapter 6 - "Values"

"Worth of the Individual – We will practice the 'Golden Rule' in decision-making. We will respect human life, dignity, and rights of each including health, safety, and work environment. We are in business for 'people' (employees, customers, vendors), not for our own wealth, power, prestige or ego." (Jack's Service Company)

Comment on the above.

Discussion questions:

- 1) Reason is superior to faith. From a values perspective do you agree or disagree? Why?
- 2) Business practices are amoral. Value free. That is, pragmatic realism dictates the modus operandi. Just get the job done. (Facts of the Matter) How do you feel about this statement?
- 3) "We are emancipated, self sufficient individuals who are free to do as we so choose." (unknown) What is your perspective on this statement?
- 4) If a man's "world view" determines his values, what would you say is the foundation of your "world view"? Explain.
- 5) "The wicked man flees though no one pursues..... There they were, overwhelmed with dread, where there was nothing to dread." (The Bible) Have you observed this or experienced it? How so?
- 6) Religious idealism has no place in the hard –nose business world of Machiavellian reality. (Unknown) Do you believe this value or just operate like you believe it? Give an explanation.