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ADDRESS

An idiomatic expression attributed to President Truman made sense to me: "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen." I suppose that we are unique as a group of human beings. We live in a time when we are all pretty well aware of the fact that we are unusually, uniquely visited with problems, and that we have a kitchen full of them, and that it is hot. Prevalent in each of us is the inclination to develop an attitude that might be something less than positive in that climate. It might even be called negative.

One manifestation of that attitude is apparent in our jobs, where we earn our living and pay our way. There is a tremendous amount of tension; economic tension compounded by the unique partners of recession and inflation. Another manifestation is an apathy, not in our land, but in this world, which includes a feeling of impotence when people ask how things can be changed or they can participate. In my own thought processes, I have reached the point where I can finally say that all of that is decisional. I can decide to have a negative attitude, or to be apathetic, or that I cannot participate I can decide to be consumed by my economic tension, jobs, money, bills and so forth.

Now, if I go through that process, I can also say that I am absolutely lucid about the fact that there is a flip side to everything. All of human history has taught us that out of chaos, out of collapse, out of crisis, has come unbelievable opportunity and unbelievable breakthroughs in terms of the quality of civilization that rose out of the ruins that bred it.

So, I would say to myself (and not to anybody else except the people I work with, and I have that option because I am a sales manager), "Damn it, I do not have to permit my short life to be consumed by the problems that are always at hand. I can decide to take advantage of the gift of crisis and the gift of chaos and participate in something that I might call a sense of significance in terms of how I spend my time."

We have been given, uniquely in our time in history, a choice -- confronted if you will -- with a choice. A choice to delegate the responsibility of the future to others. The choice to say to ourselves and to others that the problems of the world are not my concern, or to say that I will participate and engage myself in the exciting possibilities of creating images of what tomorrow might look like. And I would hold up the possibility that this is a little more fun than being exposed to that which is always at hand, seemingly, today.

When I talk to the salesmen in our company's basic sales school about this, I ask them to give me 8 virtues or attributes of a good salesman. What should he have? There are eight people in each of our schools, so I get eight attributes if there is no repetition and each trainee gives me only one. These eight are organization, persistence, enthusiasm, work habits, creativity, ability to influence people, absolute work structures that we all know make people tick, and marketing.

My next question to them is what is anchoring you? I tell myself the story that whatever I do in participating or anchoring LENS or anything else, finally has to be grounded somewhere. I have become clear at the age of 50 about two or three things. One is that as far as my vocation goes, that is, the normal understanding of vocation it is not how I earn my living. It is how I live my life. That is my vocation. If I say that it is true of a human being, I say that it is true also of groups of human beings or of a corporation.

My story for young folk is that you have to anchor yourself in a context of authentic integrity based on concern and a willingness to creatively participate in your vocation. I think this is true of a company. If you finally become clear that your vocation is how you live your life, you then have some chance to contribute to your company, contribute to the people you know, and-to gain objectivity on the job where you earn your living.

One unbelievable thing that has happened to me in the last couple of years is that I have found that this kind of idealism is a very powerful dynamic in the economic sense in the business community. What I am saying is that if both kinds of thoughts sound idealistic, sound moralistic, sound as if they were a kind of desperate cry for good, so be it.

The other side of that is the fact that man wants that kind of society. The people with whom you are engaged in your job or in communities want that kind of society. They want a society anchored on integrity, anchored on care, anchored on creative images of the future. These thoughts have great validity in terms of the creative process we are participating in now, as well as being wonderful ways to spend one's life, up against the other possibilities that we are all too aware of. Thank you for letting me share my thoughts with you.

Don Moffett