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MONDAY MANNA
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PEOPLE-PROBLEMS, OR POSSIBILITIES?

By Robert J. Tamasy

“Business would be so much easier – if it weren’t for the people.” Have you ever heard this, or thought something like it yourself? If so, you’re not alone, because the vast majority of problems we encounter in life and work have something to do with people. However, eliminating people is obviously not an option – and why would we want to?

Author and business executive Max DePree wrote, “People are the heart and soul of all that counts. Without people, there is no need for leaders. Leaders can decide to be primarily concerned with assets...or they can go beyond that and capitalize on the opportunity to leave a legacy which provides greater meaning, more challenge, and more joy in the lives of those whom leaders enable.”

A company might be focused on products, but it requires people to design and make those products. If a company specializes in services, it requires people to provide those as well. Each of the individuals we work with every day is unique, with distinctive strengths and weaknesses, personalities and quirks, but we could not get anything done without them.

As DePree stated, rather than complaining about the issues people can present, we would be wise to constantly consider how we can take advantage of opportunities to leave an enduring legacy through them. By helping them to discover greater meaning and joy in their lives through their work, we can make a profound difference, not only in their lives but also in the lives of everyone around them.

How can we do that? How can we ensure that our primary focus is on the people we work with and for whom we have responsibility? The Bible gives us some sound principles to follow:

Keep careful watch. Just as a diligent farmer seeks to protect the welfare of the animals that generate his livelihood, those in authority should remain alert to how the people on his or her staff are faring. “Be sure to know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds...the lambs will provide you with clothing and the goats with the price of a field. You will have plenty of goats’ milk to feed your and your family...” (Proverbs 27:23-27).

Treat others as you would want to be treated. When asking, ‘How should I direct others?’, a better question might be to ask is, ‘How would I want them to direct me, if we were to trade places?’ “And as you would like and desire that men would do to you, do exactly so to them” (Luke 6:31, Amplified).

Put people first. We can easily become consumed by goals and objectives, the “bottom line.” But for workers to perform at their best, they need to know they are cared for and valued. “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than

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yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Philippians 2:3-4).

Set the example by serving. In many working environments, the staff are expected to serve the “boss,” but one of the greatest motivating factors is demonstrating that the one in authority is willing to serve those who work for him. “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28).

© 2021. Robert J. Tamasy has written Marketplace Ambassadors: CBMC’s Continuing Legacy of Evangelism and Discipleship; Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today’s Workplace; Pursuing Life with a Shepherd’s Heart, coauthored with Ken Johnson; and The Heart of Mentoring, coauthored with David A. Stoddard. Bob’s biweekly blog is: www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com.

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. How would you describe yourself in terms of relating to other people? Are you extroverted, eager and even needing to be around people? Or are you more introverted, dealing with people when necessary but feeling comfortable when you are not with people?
2. What are some of the challenges you face in dealing with people on a daily basis? Do they present any particular frustrations as you approach each day’s demands and responsibilities?
3. Think of a time when someone you reported to made you feel especially valued and needed. What kind of the impact did that have on you, especially in how you perceived your job and the sense of fulfillment and satisfaction you derived from it?
4. Why is it often difficult to put people first – to serve them – rather than to expect them to serve you? How perceptive do you think you are, in terms of recognizing and responding to needs or hardships they might be dealing with?

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages: Proverbs 3:13-15, 11:17, 13:20, 16:24, 17:17; Matthew 5:38-47; Luke 6:37-42

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