

THE FREE PRESS

Around Town

by Mary Giuliano

September 13, 2009, Fernie (Canada)

Faith has been a constant in my life yet recently when asked how I start my day as I replied "with prayer" I realized that I had just set myself up for criticism.

Prayerful people should have attributes of a saint but reality tells me I'm far from that designation.

But a routine of scripture readings with petitions for help and guidance is equivalent to a good meditation that is definitely good for spiritual, emotional and physical health.

This introspection resulted from a conversation with a retired attorney who casually told me he'd begun his professional life as a devoted Roman Catholic monk. After six years he left disillusioned holding the belief the Bible wasn't the word of God and wondering if God even existed.

So what brings an individual from a deep place of Faith to having none? Could it be that Faith really is a choice?

The Catholic missal says "We choose to believe, this involves risk, to believe in nothing is a form of death, to risk nothing is to die as a human being."

A book titled "Why Loyalty Matters" has caused a lot of thought as well. "Loyalty", say authors Timothy Keiningham and Lerzan Aksoy, "like any virtue can go too far and become toxic but it's still an important fundamental value of life."

Society has become less loyal today but research finds people believe they are loyal but are surrounded by not so loyal friends. The authors say that if we don't find our friends to be loyal "odds are that we aren't either."

In the workplace long time workers are no longer valued. Companies going through tough times downsize and layoff although it has been proven that in the long run companies downsizing rarely realize the "cost savings or efficiencies despite the corresponding pain to customers and employees."

Regarding loyalty in politics, government is successful when those entrusted with the honor of representing people work for the betterment of society, "compromise and honest discourse are the nature of political life, politicians shouldn't practice extreme partisanship. Adding that sometimes loyalty to a group or cause can become evil, "never, ever ignore your moral compass."

About religion, "emphasis on religious differences has led to some of mankind's greatest sins such as the desire to root out heretics and to convert or eliminate heathens that ultimately led to an out group brutality. All too often, we have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another."

In ending the authors state, "The most valuable thing you can give is not money. It's you. There's nothing more powerful than the human will, nothing more precious than the human spirit."

Through loyalty, we literally invest that will and spirit to create something greater than we can achieve alone.

Loyalties are signs of the types of people we choose to be, the foundation of our character; demonstrating what we value, believe and what we want our world to be."

And so I choose loyalty to faith, family, friends and community.

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