

If the Floor's Dirty, Don't Call a Meeting, Pick Up a Broom

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By Susan Dunn

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The EQ Coach

Mother Theresa. How would you describe her? Compassionate? Kind?

That's not what people who knew her said. In my Strengths course, I ask the learners to name the major strength of different well-known people. Here's what Pamela Sheppard replied: "The standard is compassion, but, having had the chance to actually see her in action, I have to add mental toughness, clarity of intention and economy of action. She was Holy Hell on Wheels, and thank God for that! --- and anyone else pales beside her."

Another anecdote from someone who worked with Mother T. for 6 months and described herself as "the typical Trophy Wife looking for enrichment and meaning." She was also a self-proclaimed fixer.

When she got on-site and saw people in the hospitals and hospice areas cleaning the floors with rags and cloths, she became excited. She told Mother Theresa---and this was a month after getting there when she felt she could actually speak to her and not just gaze at her in awe and feel woefully inadequate---that she could get brooms and mops sent to her. For FREE.

"Mops?" said Mother Theresa, in that lilting voice of hers. "Yes," she replied, "they'll save time and energy." "Labor saving devices?" replied Mother Theresa. "But the point is to labor," and smiled and walked off.

APPLICATION

In one list I belong to, someone has experienced identity theft. Someone has erected a website about him, as if by him, that's damaging to his reputation.

He has requested help from the others and the replies have been coming in. How sorry they are for him this has happened ... how impossible it is to clean up identity theft, it takes years, it happened to

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them ... check out whoisit.com to see who owns the site ... check with the server...what a mess, it's impossible.

One clear voice came through with, "Call the FBI. This has happened to me. They will have the site down in 10 minutes and the name of the perpetrator in 20."

I read that and considered the case closed. How fortunate someone who'd been there knew what to do. But there was no response and the sympathy cards kept flowing in. Two days later another e-note: "I'll repeat. Let your tax dollars do something for you for a change. Call the FBI. It's what they do."

But the list is still talking about what to do.

BACK TO MOTHER THERESA

Pamela continued, "Mother Theresa was unmistakably in command. I will NEVER forget it. Everything I read about her since that time has more resonance, more depth, more meaning in the light of her as this Commander-in-Chief."

When I had proposed Mother Theresa to the class, what I was after was Intentionality. It's one of the highest-level EQ competencies – meaning what you say and saying what you mean, getting it done, and being accountable to yourself for your motives.

There's nothing ^soft^ about compassion, or Intentionality, or emotional intelligence. EQ is what drives it all.

"There should be less talk," said Mother Theresa. "A preaching point is not a meeting point. What do you do then? Take a broom and clean someone's house. That says enough."

Work on your Intentionality. It will make your life work better for you.

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Want to Learn Something New Today?

By Steve MacLellan

How many times do you say, "Gee, I wish I had of learned...?" How often do you avoid new tasks simply because they are out of your "comfort zone" and the task would involve having to learn something new?

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I realized how slow we, as adults, resist learning. I've often heard it said that as we get older, our thought processes slow down and it isn't as easy for us to learn. Is this true? Or is it simply we don't want to learn?

When my daughter Kelsey was four years old I was watching her one day, I noted some differences between children and adults. The fact is, I was getting prepared to scold her, when it occurred to me that I should be quiet and study the situation instead. I was observing how she was learning to work with what she has and the tools around her.

Kelsey had dumped a small bucket of mud and stones on the pad behind the house which is typically where we set up our outside table and umbrella. My wife, Crystal, often cleaned this area by spraying it with the water hose, which washes pebbles and dust from it.

Before I could scold her she whipped out two brooms she had collected from where we keep our outside tools. Why two? Because there were only two! Likely she didn't know which one would do the best job, so she brought them both. The first broom she dragged across the mud with the brushes pointing upwards. This obviously did not produce the effect she was trying to achieve so she discarded that broom in favour of the other one. The other broom she dragged across the mud with the brushes pointing toward the pad. This was achieving the result she expected.

She studied the two brooms for only a glimmer of a second. She discarded the second broom and picked up the first one again, and this time she had the brushes pointed toward the mud.

Finding the right tool, and learning how to use it is part of the daily life for someone who is 4 years old. Each day is filled with new challenges and they greet it with such enthusiasm. Could our lives benefit by adopting such a strategy? Could our businesses benefit from us learning at least one new thing everyday?

Steve MacLellan is the author of "How to Build Used Car Websites" and has been doing web development for small/medium sized businesses since 1998.

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