

“Keep the Spirit Alive”

Was having lunch up in Reed City last week and ended up in a great conversation with two gentleman at the table next me. They were talking about how to keep the excitement alive in their life, how to have that awe about things. You know you got married, had the kids, got a good job, have some of the toys, a nice place to live, traveled a bit, what is it that keeps you going? “I don’t mean getting by, commented Jack, I mean feeling the joy.” The scary part, he said, is that when you don’t have it you sort of end up in a depression and that is hard to get out of. It was very heartfelt.

Haven’t you been there too? You get up in the morning, laying next to the same guy/gal, fixing breakfast for the kids, living in the same house, driving down the same road, same job, a date looks like a drive-through the local fast-food....(not that that is a bad thing) but it is day inday out and you have somehow ended up in mundanity (I know this isn’t a word, but it sure fits) and you’re saying to your friends....”I think I use to be fun!” And haven’t you worked for organizations that have felt like this? You walk to your “spot”, no one smiles, you get a grunt for hello, life is bad, your boss doesn’t understand you, your customers are demanding and there is a general cloud over everything. What are you to do???

A couple months ago I saw a great video and was introduced to the gentleman of Pike’s Place Fish Market. Now here is a company and people that have made a commitment to keeping the awe, keeping the spirit alive in their organization and with each other. You’re watching this group of guys have an absolutely high energy, fun-filled full day. There’s fish flying, laughter, lots of smiles, joking....and most importantly people connecting. They weren’t always like this. They were once a place that you went to...to work...the boss was demanding and not very nice, customers demanding, wasn’t fun, no smiles... And the owner, John, decided one day that there must be a better way to do business. He wanted more. So he and his fishmongers went to work on deciding what they wanted their workplace to look like. And they decided they wanted play, doing things that make each others day, choosing their attitude and just being there for people.” And they walk their talk and as John, the owner says, they sell a lot of fish too.

So, there is the answer. It is simple!! You must just choose what you want and then create a way to live it. In the family you must get the buy-in of your family and in the organization you must go after the same thing. Create the vision and then go after that commitment that it can be better, that you deserve that in your life. You know that feeling. And that is what it is, a feeling that comes straight from your heart....that soul thing. When you are connected to all that is around you....people, nature, your work, your stuff. When you are connected it is like you are plugged in and the lights, the colors, the people are all really brighter.

And as we head in to the Fourth of July isn’t that what we decided as a country. This celebration epitomizes that feeling, that spirit, that connection. We have parades, fireworks, ball-games, picnics, family reunions, music. You see this spirit is really a part of who we are as people. Sometimes we lose it, we misplace it for a period of time, we even forget that it is in us, but it is there. “To keep a lamp burning we have to keep putting oil it.” Isn’t this a great quote from Mother Theresa? So we must add the oil. We must recommit every day to that joy and to see life with awe and make that connection to our spirit.

