

Hard Work is Good

by
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"Life's greatest joys are not what one does apart from the work of one's life, but with the work of one's life. -- William J. Bennett

I consider myself to be one of life's most fortunate people for a variety of reasons. One of those reasons is that I love my job. I like hard work. No, I'm not a workaholic and I don't derive self-importance from my position. I just thoroughly enjoy what I do. I believe in small, independent companies and employee ownership, which is probably a big reason why I have always felt at home at Apollo Trust Company.

There were times, however, when I wasn't wild about my work. I remember unloading rail cars full of grain for 14 hours a day, 7 days a week for 8 consecutive weeks. All white collar people should work a job like that for a couple years so we could empathize with the people who physically break their tails day in and day out to earn a living. I also remember times when I could only scrape up enough money to buy worms for fishing. I caught fish for breakfast, lunch and dinner -- over and over again. When you're hungry, you don't care if its the same. If you've been there, you know.

It is experiences such as these that motivated me to seize opportunities in life, opportunities that only come through hard work. I realize that not everyone has every choice in life to be whatever they want to be. I had the benefit of being able to read and write when I graduated high school. The fact that not everyone has that opportunity is why school choice is an inevitability. I also had the benefit of being raised by two parents that taught me what hard work was all about through their example.

For me, work is a vehicle of dignity when it is driven by a commitment of oneself to excellence. People that already have their minds made up that they will never work for some predetermined dollar figure are mistaken, in my humble opinion. It isn't what one does, but how well one does it. Sometimes I admire the people flipping burgers more than the corporate presidents I occasionally meet. Why? Because the people flipping burgers are usually just doing their best to make a life for themselves.

I have the privilege to work around a great group of people. Most, if not all, take a great deal of pride in what they do. I have repeatedly seen them go the "extra mile" for others, for the simple reason that they don't separate what they are from what they do. They're good people who bring value to their work instead of just taking money from a job. Their commitment to excellence transcends money. Their ability to persevere through change has been impressive but necessary to our survival. To me, they are each individually successful because they are committed to be the best that they can be. And it is the accumulation of these individual successes that has been the key to our corporate

success.



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