

## **Hard Work is Good**

by  
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"A Bible and a newspaper in every house, and a good school in every district -- all studied and appreciated as they merit -- are the principal support of virtue, morality, and civil liberty." Benjamin Franklin

It was a very busy day at my bank when I was told that someone was waiting to see me with questions about the Internet. The enjoyable process of explaining the net was something I unfortunately didn't have time for on this hectic day. I tried to find fellow employees who could answer the questions, but no one was available.

I walked over to my office and was a little surprised to see a senior citizen waiting for me. As he introduced himself, something inside sensed that this gentleman might be someone special.

Zeke's mind worked faster than he could speak. He almost seemed annoyed that his preamble (which was filled with enthusiastic ideas) could not come out of his mouth fast enough. Zeke was 71 years old and was in a hurry to race down the information superhighway. For what reason, I had no clue.

"I don't know sir. I'd take this one step at a time," I warned. Zeke would have none of it. He was sure that he could leap from A to Z. He had already been paddling out on the net but now he had to surf. His eyes were filled with hope. He listened to me ramble about the nuances in surfing with the wide eyes of a child. There was something behind all this that I couldn't quite figure out.

I have run across many people in the business world that are half Zeke's age who do not want to deal with computers, let alone the Internet. That impressed me. But there was something about Zeke's questions that transcended his eagerness to learn about computer communications.

As we concluded our conversation, I learned that Zeke was a teacher, an educator. He also served on the school board of a neighboring district. Zeke's quest for learning was only surpassed by his zest for life and his zeal for teaching others.

A week later, I was surfing the net when I suddenly bumped into Zeke. This time we were each sitting at our terminals at home, no longer face to face. Zeke began to type out to me some ideas he had for his school district. He wanted to introduce character and moral education. And from there, the sparks began to fly.

Zeke was on a mission and his mission was to promote virtue. It was rather ironic that while the media was lambasting the "net" for the evil, there was this wonderful senior

citizen quietly going about his business on the net of all things for the propagation of virtue.

"How can you possibly teach values without involving your own choice of faith? Won't religious intolerance follow?" I pounded out on my key board. As if he had anticipated my question, Zeke's words quickly came across my screen. With the skill of C.S. Lewis, he distinctly spelled out the tenants of natural law, something that does not promote any one faith but from which came Lewis' path to conversion. Zeke was a man of deep faith and he concluded by saying that teachers are not allowed to provide religious instruction, however they are allowed to be examples of faith.

Many today are blasting the lack of values in public education. I have always felt that this problem was symptomatic of our society and not our educational system. Perhaps in our efforts to accommodate everyone, we have mistakenly compromised what makes us, what we are. Separation of church and state - yes. Separation of what we are from our beliefs - no.

Each time we hide our faith underneath a basket in society for the good of the order, we erode the foundation of our values. Those that complain that schools do not teach morals need to ask themselves if they allow Light to shine within their own chosen occupation.

The difference between hope and optimism is faith. Before I met Zeke I was not very optimistic about our schools. But Zeke showed me that there is still plenty of hope for public education if we allow ourselves to live what we believe.



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