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“This I Believe”

The origin of the topic is from “This I Believe,” a radio broadcast program hosted by Edward R. Murrow beginning in 1951. Over time, many noteworthy individuals were interviewed and asked to talk about their beliefs. The program has since spawned a culture of essays about people’s different perspectives on life; their core values, what they believe in, hence, “This I Believe.”

Throughout ones’ years there is a struggle to examine those inner qualities that lend essence to your very being. One can’t put a price tag on them and yet they are the most valuable possessions you will own. They are your values, your beliefs. Not to wax poetic but one might say they are the steering wheel of your life. They are in a suitcase always by your side and never to be set down. So I’ll open my suitcase and let you peer in.

There is one core value I place above all others. In my mind it’s the one quality I would like to think I worked at and earned. It’s who I am and what I stand for. It rises above all others. So I’ll save it for the last.

*This I Believe:*_

I believe in equity. I believe individuals should have equal opportunity to grow, to self-actualize, to become all they are capable of becoming. This is why I spent 41 years in education as an educator and department head. It was my way of manifesting what I believed in. It gave me the opportunity to create an environment where each individual was not only treated with equity but knew they were regarded on the same level as everyone else.

Put another way look at equity as if it were the outcome of a puzzle. Rather than looking at a group of individuals from a structural point of view, look at the group as a puzzle with many

pieces. Each piece has to fit in properly in order that the picture takes form. One piece is no more important than another. All pieces together yield something greater than the sum of its parts for the greater good. You probably know this as synergy which in human terms is one outcome of equity.

This I Believe:

I believe people are essentially good. The unfortunate thing is that some don't know it. The capacity and desire to be kind, gentle and caring I believe is universally shared by more people than less. What gets in the way? Perhaps it's self-interest or selfishness that fogs the vision of some and invariably works against the better good. Wouldn't it be great if we focused more on what is better for all rather than focusing on self-interest at the expense of others?

This I Believe:

All too often we fail to understand what an individual is feeling before we speak. An old Indian expression asks that one should walk in the other person's moccasins before saying something.

Here's another perspective on this theme.

Put your brain in gear before your mouth in motion. Learn to listen first and then respond. I believe what gets in the way of understanding is the increasing tendency to answer the question before it's been asked or prejudge without knowing. Technology today increasingly focuses on rapid communication shortening the time one has to think out responses. But this should not eclipse the responsibility to be sensitive to what words mean as an expression of feelings.

This I Believe:

I believe students I taught for forty-one years are caring individuals; that when one conveys a love for them, they return the same in kind. When that bond is created students learn because they want to achieve a sense of self-esteem through success. If anything was

learned throughout my years in education it was this; that it isn't about how much I know or don't know. Rather, it was the ability to nurture and care, the most important tools of an educator.

This I Believe:

I believe there are very few constructs or models in life. For example, two plus two equals four is a construct. So too is the basic construct and foundation that one should do or say to someone else only what they would want done or said to them. One of the simplest constructs of life and yet one that many individuals find difficult to adopt. And then, why is it that when one does violate this construct that one can't accept responsibility but it must be the other person's fault for some reason! What happened to the notion of culpability?

This I Believe:

I believe it's a challenge but certainly gratifying to be humble in the face of derision; Turn the other cheek and walk the other way. Feel sorry for the one who is hateful and mean-spirited. In the same vein, the Shenandoah Indians say it this way: It is no longer good enough to cry peace; we must act in peace, live peace, and live in peace.

This I Believe:

I am an avid bicyclist. As the wheels of the bike turn quietly on the road, I hear the birds and animals scurrying here and there. I see the deer stand by the side. I see the trees, the blue sky, the mountains and I am reminded of the power and beauty of nature. I am reminded how we are but a small part of a grander scheme, perhaps even a spec. I believe we have an absolute responsibility to preserve what was here before us and will be here after us. Nature will win and man will lose if respect for the environment is tossed to the wind. If we are to survive we must remember that we are an integral part of this planet, not a higher order but an equal order with the mountains, trees, soil and water and every living creature.

This I Believe:

I believe in standing firm on your moral and ethical principles even as those around think otherwise. Henry Thoreau wrote: If a man does not keep pace with his companions perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music he hears, however measured or far away. Sometimes one cannot take sides but must sit on the fence if one wants to be true to themself.

And now back to where I started:

This I Believe:

As a model boat builder I am working on a schooner called Blue Nose. There's a Blue Nose 1 and a Blue Nose 2. Blue Nose two is docked in Lunenburg, NS. Blue Nose 1 no longer exists. Having gone to harbors and studied how wooden ships are built I am fascinated by the planking, decking, and tall masts, the intricacies of the knots and the language itself of the ships. But, one thing I note is how grand a ship can be; how upright a ship will float with its tall masts, deep draft and billowing sails and how with the turning of the tiller the ship will sail in a purposeful direction. It's congruent with the most essential core value I believe in, the core value at the pinnacle of a moral and ethical foundation.

What I believe in is the hull or framework that defines a person; the one who can turn the tiller for a purposeful life. It's the one moral and ethical quality- a statement of character- the one to which I hold as my standard bearer, the one to which I have sometimes fallen but have gotten up and continued on its path. That one quality is integrity-a true measure of character.

Integrity is the sturdy tree that despite strong winds does not snap. Integrity is the tall mast on the horizon which is seen long before the ship's hull. So too, Integrity is what character is all about. It defines us.

This I Believe.