

Lasallian Week of Peace: October 2--7, 2011 on Winona Campus:

Theme: "Dignity of the Person"

This is the third year the Office of Campus Ministry is hosting the Lasallian Week of Peace in which every Lasallian school hosts either as a day or a week event. Each year we use a specific Catholic Social Teaching as the theme to illustrate and help our students reflect on how these principles are evident in living out your faith in all walks of life. The principle of the Dignity of the Person is the cornerstone principle of all Catholic Social Teaching.

Overall Concepts to be included within each presentation/activity during this week:

- Who are you? Investigation of self--recognize the dignity of self and others
- What do you believe about yourself?
- Dignity of the Person: I am worthy and valued because I am made in the image and likeness of God. Everyone has something to contribute according to his/her personhood. Your value is divinely given.
- Help students see beyond themselves
- Who am I in interactions with others? Within diversity?
- What do we value in others; in the poor, disabled, the workplace, in other religions, in other cultures?
- Who is your family? Who do you define as community? How are you inclusive?
- An action step to better respect the dignity of the person (completed on last day October 7th)

Sunday, Oct. 2: Communion Meditation on Dignity of the Person at our 2 Sunday liturgies

Monday, Oct. 3: Interreligious Dialogue on Faith, Work, and the Dignity of the Person between Catholic Christian, Muslim and Jewish practitioners of faith. (2 professors from University of St. Thomas: Michael Naughton, Brian Shapiro, & Tamim Saidi, VP of Islamic Resource Group of Minnesota)

Location: Figliuolo Recital Hall—7:30-9:30 pm

- How do we put forward a vision of religion in a secular and pluralistic world?
- How do different religions engage with the intersection of faith and work, and how does this relate to the dignity of the person?
- Exploring: a contemporary practical issue involving work, organizational activities, vocation, and the dignity of the person.
- Questions/Answers with Students

Tuesday, Oct. 4: Movie and facilitated discussion on the movie, "Freedom from Famine--the Norman Borloug Story) (Nobel Peace Prize Winner and Founder of the Green Revolution)

- Discussion led after viewing the movie.

Location: Salvi Lecture Hall—7:30-9:00pm

Wednesday, Oct 5: Professional Ethics: Jerome Mayne: Fraud & Consequences

Location: Salvi Lecture Hall—7:30-9:30pm

- Ethics and personal integrity are fundamental in addressing the dignity of others.

- Every student will enter a workplace regardless of his/her career field, and to better understand how to recognize that a person of faith brings their morality and decision making skills to the workplace is living out your faith relationship with God.
- Questions/Answers with Students

Jerome Mayne (jerome@jeromemayne.com) is a public speaker and story teller who talks from his own experience in the finance world, his incarceration for white collar crime and how that proved to him the importance of the ethics of the person as an evolving process.

Jerome Mayne quotations from his website:

- "To trust their instincts and make the best decisions in life's most difficult situations."
- "How to ensure a forward moving work environment that is built on a strong ethical foundation and an open mind; which leads to a happier life."
- "Trust builds self confidence; and a strong sense of self confidence builds strong character."
- "Strong decision making and trusting your instinct will instill a strong sense of ethics in the workplace."
- "The appearance of impropriety is as bad as impropriety itself."

Thursday, Oct. 6: Who is your family? Dignity of Persons within different communities' survey, with students' asked to complete super-link survey sent by emails and collected during the week—Review of results of all the cultures of who we are as a SMU community and a facilitated discussion to understand the received data.

Valerie Robeson, Human Service Dept. and Marc Hartmann, graduate student/Hall Director and student committee composed the survey.

- Who are we as a SMU community?
- How do we define our SMU community?
- Are we welcoming?
- Are we inclusive?

Location: Salvi Lecture Hall—7:30-9:30pm Presentation of Data from Survey by Valerie Robeson/Marc Hartmann and a facilitated discussion led by Mark Barber.

Friday, Oct. 7: Action Step of Advocacy/Service: Led by Peace & Justice Club

County workers learn customer service tricks

by SARAH ELMQUIST

Back in February, Winona County support staff were given the chance to attend a customer service training class by an outside motivational speaker, followed by a training for Planning Department and other staff aimed at dealing with change in the workplace.

First, they drew pigs.

If you're nice, the pig you draw will have a big snout. Optimistic, and your ham will be at the top of the page. If

your piggy faces left, you're traditional, friendly, and good at remembering dates. And if your sketch of a swine has a long tail, you're in luck, because it means you have a high quality love life.

The pig drawings broke the ice, and then speaker Rick Olson got busy sharing ideas that could help make service in Winona County government world class.

"I want us to be the Disney of government workers," he

said.

Olson is owner of Rick Olson Seminars, founded in the early '90s. He lives in Barron County, Wis., where Winona County Administrator Duane Hebert worked prior to taking his post here. Olson said he also knows Al Roder, who in February was working as a contract employee assisting in plans to merge the county's Planning, Environmental Services and Emergency Management departments. Olson's two training sessions ran for about six hours and cost the county \$3,285.

Great organizations define their standards for customer service, Olson told those who attended the customer service class. At the Ritz Carlson, employees are trained that they, themselves, are responsible for immediately resolving any guest problems. Nordstroms simply has one sentence defining its entire customer service policy: "In all situations, use you're best judgment." And at Disneyland, you don't punch in. You're on stage.

A lot of customer service has to do with attitude, Olson explained, and a person's attitude is a choice. Having a good attitude is more than just making those you serve happy, but also

the biggest gift you can give your coworkers, he said.

Sometimes, dealing with an irate customer takes more than just a good attitude, Olson told the group. "When they come in and they have smoke coming out their ears, venom coming out of their mouth and they're wandering toward your desk and you see they have a couple of little emotional six shooters on their hips, and you know it's going to get really ugly [sic]," said Olson. It can be easy to get sucked into a fight. "At that point, the hair on the back of your neck stands up, everything inside of you would like to say 'how about if you and I step right out of here?' Wouldn't that be fun sometimes? 'We're gonna go out behind the County Building here and I think we can work this out,'" joked Olson, pounding one fist into his palm. "Man that would feel good. But I'm not thinking Duane [Hebert] is a big fan of that."

Instead of taking irate customers out back, Olson offered some tips that can help deal with an upset, emotional citizen:

1. Listen attentively. "An amazing thing happens if you listen," said Olson. "They run out of bullets. If you ever interrupt them, that's all the time they need to reload." An upset customer wants you to under-

stand, he said.

2. Empathize.

3. Don't ask why. Asking why, said Olson, evokes an emotional answer, and you can't fix emotion. Instead, ask about the "what."

4. Apologize. "It's never acceptable to blame another person or department," said Olson. Don't throw a coworker under the bus or air dirty county laundry. Instead, say you are sorry.

5. Solve the problem. "That customer will actually like you more," said Olson.

Olson said it was also important to live by the Golden Rule. He offered copies of a \$10 book he wrote to staff members, as well as a series of training sessions on CD for \$75.

During the second session, Olson spoke with staff from the Planning Department, as well as several staff members from Environmental Services and the Economic Development Authority. During this class, Olson focused on the challenges of change.

Olson said these are difficult times for government workers because the public's expectations of government have grown. "People are looking at all things government-related rather cross eyed," said Olson.

He explained some change in his own life, like the decision

to start a new business as a motivational speaker. It came at a time in his life when so much change made him feel like he was at rock bottom, he said. Sometimes, what we see as the worst can end up being a new opportunity, he told the group.

"You can't do change to people," he said, "but you can change with people." Olson told the group that when dealing with change in the workplace, a person has to evaluate what they can control, and what they can't, and focus on the positives.

Olson spent time telling the story of Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer, as well as the Ugly Duckling, as examples of changing "contextual framework," or finding the good in situations that seem negative.

Staff members who attended the second class focused on change in the workplace were given a copy of Olson's book.

At least one member of the public requested to attend the training sessions, but was not allowed. The Winona Post requested to view a video copy of the training session in March. A representative from the Winona Post was allowed to view the video in mid-June.

CEO Q&A

Plastics exec aims for higher performance for his new firm

By ADAM VOGEL
adam.vogel@lee.net

Steve Bowen was no stranger to long-fiber thermoplastics when he founded PlastiComp in 2003.

After starting his plastics career with General Electric Plastics in 1973, he worked as the vice president of a plastic molding company in Nashville, Tenn., while completing a master's degree in business administration at Vanderbilt University in the early '80s. After he graduated in 1984, he became president at Ticona Celstran, a Winona plastics company, where he worked for 17 years.

After taking three years to find investors, Bowen was ready to open PlastiComp, manned by a five-person staff.

Today, the business employs more than 30 and has seen rapid growth. Sales in 2011 have already surpassed 2010 numbers, and the company recently purchased Southeast Technical's airport campus, a move Bowen said will nurture even more growth.

You were already successful in plastics in 2003. Why start a new company?

I started PlastiComp to focus on producing high-performance materials.

A significant part of our business comes from working on development programs for companies. We mold products and develop materials.

For example, an aviation company approached us about needing lighter seating material for their planes. We replaced the metal frames with a plastic carbon-fiber material.

We also recently got a patent for a reinforced plastic rebar, which is a great example of our innovation.

THE STEVE BOWEN FILE

Position: President and CEO of PlastiComp

Age: 64

Family: wife Connie, daughter Lori, four grandchildren

How do you make doing business with PlastiComp different?

We really focus on the customers. Rather than invent and market, we understand what our customers need and invent a product to fit that need.

We try to understand what our customers need first. It's kind of backwards. Many of our materials are specific to a single customer.

What inspired you to adopt that business model?

We strive to be different and create some advantage against our competitors. As businesses have gotten more global, many of them have reduced the service component of their business and focused on lean manufacturing. We try to increase the service aspect and create products with higher value.

That's the big difference; we're creating the most unique, high-performance product, not just going for the lowest cost.

What have been some of the biggest factors in your company's growth?

Because my previous company was in the same town, I was able to rehire many people. That's a big advantage for a small company, getting experienced people I had worked with before.

Our company also licenses our technology to other companies. At the end of the year, we'll have 12 product lines around the



ANDREW LINK/WINONA DAILY NEWS

PlastiComp President Steve Bowen aims to first understand a customer's needs and then invent a product specifically for them.

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world operating with our technology, including locations in Germany, Spain, Korea and India.

Samsung came to us because they saw a growth opportunity for LFTs. We now manufacture materials for them. It's nice to have Samsung as a partner, because they have capabilities we don't have. Their diversity gives us access to new markets.

Looking forward, what does your company need to do to remain successful?

The most important thing is to continuously innovate and make new products. In order to stay profitable in this world, you have to constantly produce new and high-quality materials to meet customer needs.

We want customers to see us as a leading company in the industry and for our employees to feel secure in the company. Since 1984, I've never laid workers off because sales went down. Employees are very valuable resources to us.

CONSUMERS R

What to do about debt collectors

By CLAUDIA BUCK
McClatchy Newspapers

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — There may be only one thing worse than getting called by a debt collector: getting called by mistake.

These days, more and more people report getting "robo-dialed" by debt collectors looking for people with similar names, phone listings and addresses.

The calls come several times a week, often at odd hours, sometimes apparently from overseas call centers.

It's annoying and irritating.

Take Ted Gibson, a retired government economist in Sacramento. He listed as "T. Gibson" to the phone company, which means he's frequently called by collectors looking for folks with similar initials.

State and federal officials say debt collector calls — including those to the wrong person — are increasing and are "a serious consumer protection problem." Last year, the Federal Trade Commission logged 140,000 complaints about debt collectors, everything from calling the wrong person to leaving threatening messages.

In some cases, the erroneous calls are simple cases of mistaken identity.



The Happiness Hypothesis

FINDING MODERN TRUTH
IN ANCIENT WISDOM

JONATHAN HAIDT



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FINDING THE GREAT WAY

In philosophy classes, I often came across the idea that the world is an illusion. I never really knew what that meant, although it sounded deep. But after two decades studying moral psychology, I think I finally get it. The anthropologist Clifford Geertz wrote that "man is an animal suspended in webs of significance that he himself has spun."³² That is, the world we live in is not really one made of rocks, trees, and physical objects; it is a world of insults, opportunities, status symbols, betrayals, saints, and sinners. All of these are human creations which, though real in their own way, are not real in the way that rocks and trees are real. These human creations are like

fairies in J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*: They exist only if you believe in them. They are the Matrix (from the movie of that name); they are a consensual hallucination.

The inner lawyer, the rose-colored mirror, naive realism, and the myth of pure evil—these mechanisms all conspire to weave for us a web of significance upon which angels and demons fight it out. Our ever-judging minds then give us constant flashes of approval and disapproval, along with the certainty that we are on the side of the angels. From this vantage point it all seems so silly, all this moralism, righteousness, and hypocrisy. It's beyond silly; it is tragic, for it suggests that human beings will never achieve a state of lasting peace and harmony. So what can you do about it?

The first step is to see it as a game and stop taking it so seriously. The great lesson that comes out of ancient India is that life as we experience it is a game called "samsara." It is a game in which each person plays out his "dharma," his role or part in a giant play. In the game of samsara, good things happen to you, and you are happy. Then bad things happen, and you are sad or angry. And so it goes, until you die. Then you are reborn back into it, and it repeats. The message of the *Bhagavad Gita* (a central text of Hinduism) is that you can't quit the game entirely; you have a role to play in the functioning of the universe, and you must play that role. But you should do it in the right way, without being attached to the "fruits" or outcomes of your action. The god Krishna says:

I love the man who hates not nor exults, who mourns not nor desires . . . who is the same to friend and foe, [the same] whether he be respected or despised, the same in heat and cold, in pleasure and in pain, who has put away attachment and remains unmoved by praise or blame . . . contented with whatever comes his way.³³

Buddha went a step further. He, too, counseled indifference to the ups and downs of life, but he urged that we quit the game entirely. Buddhism is a set of practices for escaping samsara and the endless cycle of rebirth. Though divided on whether to retreat from the world or engage with it, Buddhists all agree on the importance of training the mind to stop its incessant

judging. Sen-t'an, an early Chinese Zen master, urged nonjudgmentalism as a prerequisite to following "the perfect way" in this poem from the eighth century CE:

The Perfect Way is only difficult for those who pick and choose;

Do not like, do not dislike; all will then be clear.

Make a hairbreadth difference, and Heaven and Earth are set apart;

If you want the truth to stand clear before you, never be for or against.

The struggle between "for" and "against" is the mind's worst disease.³⁴

Judgmentalism is indeed a disease of the mind: it leads to anger, torment, and conflict. But it is also the mind's normal condition—the elephant is always evaluating, always saying "Like it" or "Don't like it." So how can you change your automatic reactions? You know by now that you can't simply resolve to stop judging others or to stop being a hypocrite. But, as Buddha taught, the rider can gradually learn to tame the elephant, and meditation is one way to do so. Meditation has been shown to make people calmer, less reactive to the ups and downs and petty provocations of life.³⁵ Meditation is the Eastern way of training yourself to take things philosophically.

Cognitive therapy works, too. In *Feeling Good*,³⁶ a popular guide to cognitive therapy, David Burns has written a chapter on cognitive therapy for anger. He advises using many of the same techniques that Aaron Beck used for depression: Write down your thoughts, learn to recognize the distortions in your thoughts, and then think of a more appropriate thought. Burns focuses on the *should* statements we carry around—ideas about how the world *should* work, and about how people *should* treat us. Violations of these *should* statements are the major causes of anger and resentment. Burns also advises empathy: In a conflict, look at the world from your opponent's point of view, and you'll see that she is not entirely crazy.

Although I agree with Burns's general approach, the material I have reviewed in this chapter suggests that, once anger comes into play, people

find it extremely difficult to empathize with and understand another perspective. A better place to start is, as Jesus advised, with yourself and the log in your own eye. (Batson and Loewenstein both found that debiasing occurred only when subjects were forced to look at themselves.) And you will see the log only if you set out on a deliberate and effortful quest to look for it. Try this now: Think of a recent interpersonal conflict with someone you care about and then find one way in which your behavior was not exemplary. Maybe you did something insensitive (even if you had a right to do it), or hurtful (even if you meant well), or inconsistent with your principles (even though you can readily justify it). When you first catch sight of a fault in yourself, you'll likely hear frantic arguments from your inner lawyer excusing you and blaming others, but try not to listen. You are on a mission to find at least one thing that you did wrong. When you extract a splinter it hurts, briefly, but then you feel relief, even pleasure. When you find a fault in yourself it will hurt, briefly, but if you keep going and acknowledge the fault, you are likely to be rewarded with a flash of pleasure that is mixed, oddly, with a hint of pride. It is the pleasure of taking responsibility for your own behavior. It is the feeling of honor.

Finding fault with yourself is also the key to overcoming the hypocrisy and judgmentalism that damage so many valuable relationships. The instant you see some contribution you made to a conflict, your anger softens—maybe just a bit, but enough that you might be able to acknowledge some merit on the other side. You can still believe you are right and the other person is wrong, but if you can move to believing that you are *mostly* right, and your opponent is *mostly* wrong, you have the basis for an effective and nonhumiliating apology. You can take a small piece of the disagreement and say, "I should not have done X, and I can see why you felt Y." Then, by the power of reciprocity, the other person will likely feel a strong urge to say, "Yes, I was really upset by X. But I guess I shouldn't have done P, so I can see why you felt Q." Reciprocity amplified by self-serving biases drove you apart back when you were matching insults or hostile gestures, but you can turn the process around and use reciprocity to end a conflict and save a relationship.

The human mind may have been shaped by evolutionary processes to play Machiavellian tit for tat, and it seems to come equipped with cognitive processes that predispose us to hypocrisy, self-righteousness, and moralistic conflict. But sometimes, by knowing the mind's structure and strategies, we can step out of the ancient game of social manipulation and enter into a game of our choosing. By seeing the log in your own eye you can become less biased, less moralistic, and therefore less inclined toward argument and conflict. You can begin to follow the perfect way, the path to happiness that leads through acceptance, which is the subject of the next chapter.