Greatness lies, not in being strong, but in the right using of strength; and strength is not used rightly when it serves only to carry a man above his fellows for his own solitary glory. He is the greatest whose strength carries up the most hearts by the attraction of his own.

- Henry Ward Beecher

MINISTRY A DAY AT A TIME

by Rej Dixit

A few weeks back I turned on the computer to find that Pope Benedict is resigning. He says that he no longer has the mental or physical strength to cope with his ministry. Pope Benedict is 85 years old. The median age of the 10 oldest popes on record is 85.6, so maybe it was a good move, physically and mentally. But it made me think: if you've been called by God, can you resign from ministry?

Most of us lay people serve in ministries as a side interest, taking on new ministries and resigning from ministries as our busy lives and interests allow. But what about pastors?

There are some people who become pastors, maybe because they didn't know what to major in at college. But others have been called by God. My husband says that he's always known he was going to be a pastor. He was dedicated by his parents to pastoral ministry when a baby. Luckily, he also grew up with the talents for and interest in leading others to Christ. He started his career fairly young, around 20. Must he be a pastor until age 67-70? Or can he resign now after 20 years of ministry and pursue a new career? Are you called by God to the same ministry forever?

What about the mental and physical demands of ministry? Pastors work 24-7. If someone is in the hospital in the middle of the night, you're on. Holidays - Christmas and Easter, you're not only on, but you are usually working overtime (with no overtime pay). Even if you are off, and on vacation, you end up running into church members and once again, you're on. What does that do to your mental and physical strength? The Adventist church gives pastors sabbaticals to rest and refresh their bodies and minds. But why are there still so many pastors who leave ministry? And take it from me, there are many more pastors out there who want to leave ministry.

I think it's because its a futile job. Just like my field of special education. We are working every day with people who can't, don't want to, and maybe never will reach their full potential. That's really frustrating.
How do we cope? For teachers, we live for summer vacation and graduation, knowing we've done our best with these students and hope that someone else will find a new and different way to reach them later in life. Some pastors do the same. They move on after 3-5 years, so someone new can try to inspire this uninspired lot. Or they move on to bigger and better things (conference positions, healthcare administration, etc.) where the big bucks are.

I think pastors, teachers, nurses, anyone in people professions should leave their positions once they no longer care. Perhaps this applies to all jobs. If you work at Starbucks and you don't care about my drink, please resign. If you're a mechanic and you don't care about my car, resign! If you work in Congress and don't care about our country, please leave.

It's a struggle to keep caring about others, even when they don't want your care and concern. God does this every day. He won't resign because of a lack of physical and emotional strength to deal with us pesky humans. Maybe he'll give me the power to continue to deal with the people around me, one day at a time.

What do you think? Discuss with Rej on our Facebook page. Facebook

Rej is married to pastor and author Kumar Dixit. She blogs at Angry Pastor's Wives.

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Seven Days of Miracles Under Way!!!

It started this past Sabbath, but it's absolutely not too late to join in!

This week - all week - Seventh-day Adventists across the North American Division are being very intentional about impacting somebody's life for Christ. As you're reading this, people are asking God for opportunities to interact with specific people on Christ's behalf, and looking for those opportunities before the coming weekend. By faith, they named someone on Sabbath. By faith, they're asking God to open doors. And by faith, they're seizing the opportunities that God provides.

It's an easy way for absolutely everyone to become engaged in community outreach, in that almost anything a person does to reach out to someone else counts for the project. Everybody gets to fight in his or her own armor. Everybody gets a chance to see God working to open possibilities for outreach with people we love. And this coming Sabbath, we'll be sharing what God did to answer our prayers.

If you didn't kick off your seven days this past Sabbath, you can still do it. It's not too late. Take a look at the materials posted at www.sevendaysofmiracles.com and forward the link to your church members. They're remarkably easy to read and to implement.

Imagine what might happen if everybody touched just one life for Christ this week. Imagine what might happen if every member started to realize just how deeply God longs to answer prayers for other people!

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ELLEN WHITE ON FEMALE LEADERSHIP

by Edwin Garcia

Seventh-day Adventist Church Co-founder Ellen White took an active role in encouraging women in leadership positions, though she never directly weighed in on whether they should or shouldn't be ordained ministers. Still, during her 70-year public ministry, she advocated for more women to become pastors, criticized male chauvinists within the church who sneered at female leaders, and insisted that women working in ministry receive equal pay to their male counterparts.

She also suggested that in many situations women were ideal laborers for the gospel ministry because they were better suited than some men for certain aspects of pastoral roles, such as home visits, particularly when working as a team alongside their pastor husbands. Women as ministers, she noted, could better connect with other women to further the gospel, stated Roger W. Coon of the Ellen G. White Estate, in his 1986 writing, "Ellen G. White's View of the Role of Women in the SDA Church.” Read More

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TO THE POINT: GREATNESS

"Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great.”
- Mark Twain

“Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds.”
"Is it so bad, then, to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood."
- Albert Einstein

"Always be a first rate version of yourself and not a second rate version of someone else."
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Men have called me mad; but the question is not yet settled, whether madness is or is not the loftiest intelligence - whether much that is glorious - whether all that is profound - does not spring from disease of thought - from moods of mind exalted at the expense of the general intellect."
- Edgar Allan Poe

"A great man is always willing to be little."
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Wherever you find a great man, you will find a great mother or a great wife standing behind him - or so they used to say. It would be interesting to know how many great women have had great fathers and husbands behind them."
- Dorothy L. Sayers

"Not everybody can be famous but everybody can be great, because greatness is determined by service."
- Martin Luther King, Jr.

BEST PRACTICES WEBINAR - APRIL 16, 2013

Managing the Risks Between Pulpit and Pew
Join us for a Webinar on April 16, 1:30 - 2:30 pm EDT

In this litigious age, pastors deal with many challenges surrounding people, places, and things. Being aware of relational landmines and legal pitfalls is half the battle as you lead your congregations.

Each year the Seventh-day Adventist Church spends millions of dollars on employee issues. Arthur Blinci will provide pastors with a better understanding of the risks they face on a daily basis and provide them with resources that will assist in their ministry.

Arthur Blinci

READING FOR PASTORS

You have no leaders in your church? Rich Birch doesn't believe it. Here are five sources for leaders who may be right in front of your eyes.

From unSeminary, a great infographic about ministry trends in 2013. This would be a perfect discussion starter in a leaders' session or retreat!

Negative, critical people are a constant threat to the church. Two views:

- From Leadership Freak, 8 secrets to eliminating negativity
- How to deal with negative people, from LifeHacker
- Are you "Danny Downer"?

Is your church operating for God's glory, or Grandma's traditions?
Quote: "The very thing that you hold up as a tool for transformation today can easily become an idol of tradition tomorrow."

Rob Bell can't stay out of trouble. First hell, now gay marriage. Quote: "I am for
I am for fidelity. I am for love, whether it's a man and woman, a woman and a woman, a man and a man. I think the ship has sailed and I think ... we need to affirm people wherever they are."

What will be on your tombstone?

Christians: at least we should be nice! Quote: "These are the moments when it's embarrassing to be a Christian. I'm not embarrassed to believe the extravagant claims of Christianity: that Christ was born to a virgin, died for our sins, physically rose from the grave and is returning to rule the world. But I am embarrassed to be associated with some of the people who claim his name."

IDEAS, EVENTS, RESOURCES, ANNOUNCEMENTS

Andrews University Christian Leadership Conference, July 21-22, 2013, Howard Center for the Performing Arts. Featured speaker CNN anchor Soledad O'Brien. Press session July 19-21, 2013 (Friday night plenary; Sabbath morning plenary; Afternoon breakout workshops; Sunday morning workshops), featured speaker for the pre-session: R. Scott Rodin on his book The Steward Leader. Pre-session Registration fee: $30 (includes 1-year subscription to Journal of Applied Christian Leadership. Regular session: $150. For more information, phone: (269) 471-8332, or e-mail clc@andrews.edu

Humor: An app for people who want to look like they're in church, while they're really at home on the couch.

From frequent Best Practices contributor Roger Hernandez: "I started a monthly webcast on leadership and related subjects - every last monday of the month, 6 pm, Eastern."

Replay
Request powerpoint
Notes

From A. Allan Martin: "How are you using Social Media? As this particular NAD Building Block has implications for every ministry and implies impact on the other five building blocks, I would solicit your commentary, innovations, and case examples pertinent to Social Media. Please infuse your insights and examples on this recent blog." I am excited for the wisdom and creativity you may share!

The Seventh-day Adventist Church will produce small group discussion guides and other materials to go along with the 11-part mini-series The Record Keeper. It is designed to reach the secular audience and scheduled to be released this summer. More information here.

THE ADVENTISTS 2 is slated to be released soon. The film is the sequel to The Adventists, an award-winning film seen on Public Television stations that became a national success. It examines how Adventists are changing healthcare around the world. The DVD will be distributed by the Pacific Press® Publishing Association. More information here.

Easter events and resources:

Breath of Life
Dan Jackson and friends
The Ultimate Passover DVD; how to celebrate passover. Trailer here.

Previous resource links:

eGracenotes mobile app
New PlusLine at AdventSource
NY13
Pastor's convention, NAD Ministerial Department
The Seven Campaign to stop child abuse
Family Ministries Facebook page
Andrews University Press, Homosexuality, Marriage, and the Church
General Conference International Field School of Evangelism
NAD Theology of Ordination Study Committee
General Conference Annual Council response to ordination without regard to gender
Jesus 101 Biblical Institute with speaker/director Elizabeth Talbot
The Great Controversy Project e-newsletter
Real Family Talk
Interactive health program on Hope Channel
Where there is one there should be twenty--Ellen White on Female Leadership

by Edwin Garcia

Seventh-day Adventist Church Co-founder Ellen White took an active role in encouraging women in leadership positions, though she never directly weighed in on whether they should or shouldn’t be ordained ministers.

Still, during her 70-year public ministry, she advocated for more women to become pastors, criticized male chauvinists within the church who sneered at female leaders, and insisted that women working in ministry receive equal pay to their male counterparts.

She also suggested that in many situations women were ideal laborers for the gospel ministry because they were better suited than some men for certain aspects of pastoral roles, such as home visits, particularly when working as a team alongside their pastor husbands. Women as ministers, she noted, could better connect with other women to further the gospel, stated Roger W. Coon of the Ellen G. White Estate, in his 1986 writing, “Ellen G. White’s View of the Role of Women in the SDA Church.”

And it was in that context that White declared one of her most profound statements about the importance of women in leadership:

“The Lord has a work for women as well as for men. They may take their places in His work at this crisis, and He will work through them. If they are imbued with a sense of their duty, and labor under the influence of the Holy Spirit, they will have just the self-possession required for this time. The Saviour will reflect upon these self-sacrificing women the light of His countenance, and will give them a power that exceeds that of men. They can do in families a work that men cannot do, a work that reaches the inner life. They can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach. Their labor is needed.”—The Review and Herald, August 26, 1902.

In the chapter entitled “A Power That Exceeds That of Men,” from the book “Women in Ministry,” author Jerry Moon quotes from White to mention various leadership roles in ministry that are ideal for men women, including: alleviating the sick and suffering, helping the needy, and speaking words of comfort to the discouraged. White also singled out specific vocations, such as medical missionaries and literature evangelists. “Ministry,” notes Moon, “does not consist alone in preaching.”

White also suggested women may be more capable than some men in managing a church. “If faithful women have more deep piety and true devotion than men,” she wrote in Letter 33, 1879, p. 2, “they could indeed by their prayers and their labors do more than men who are unconsecrated in heart and in life.”

In a July 9, 1895, Review and Herald article widely known as an “ordination” statement, White wrote, in part, “Women who are willing to consecrate some of their time to the service of the Lord should be appointed to visit the sick, look after the young, and minister to the necessities of the poor. They should be set apart to this work by prayer and laying on of the hands…” The article undoubtedly refers to leadership roles for women (and although at first glance it may seem she is advocating for women to be ordained ministers, scholars have concluded that White was referring to the position of church deaconess).
One of the most significant messages White stated about the role of women is that they should be prepared to accept any post that might be offered, whether a pastor, teacher, superintendent or other position, stated Cindy Tutsch, an associate director of the Ellen G. White Estate. “That tells me that she didn’t put any limitations, or any barriers, or any boundaries, on women,” Tutsch said. “She just felt that they were not often given the education that would prepare them for such positions of responsibility and leadership.”

During White’s lifetime, some 31 women were licensed by the Seventh-day Adventist Church to preach from its pulpits, according to Coon’s 1986 paper. In addition, Coon noted, three of the first 11 treasurers of the General Conference were women, and women held other prominent roles, too.

Despite White’s encouragement of women in leadership, and the fact that she, herself, held the credentials of an ordained minister, she was never ordained to the gospel ministry by laying of the hands, Coon wrote. She also never spoke in favor or against ordination, which Coon says “proves nothing conclusively beyond the fact that this subject was not one of her high-priority burdens during her ministry.” White was more interested in pleading for more workers, whether male or female, to spread the gospel.

Tutsch and Laura Wibberding, in a workshop handout entitled “Ellen White on the Roles of Women,” state unequivocally that God calls women to ministry in a variety a situations and places: as paid workers or volunteers, in the home or in a school, at a corporation or even the political arena.

“Ellen White placed absolutely no limitations on women in leadership,” Tutsch and Wibberding wrote. “She urged only that we perform our work with excellence and with efficiency, and see in every worthy calling an opportunity to extend our influence for Jesus.”
5 Hidden Leaders in Your Church Waiting to Be Asked to Jump In!

Chances are your church is looking for more leaders to serve within various ministries. Whether your kids ministry needs some more coaches to motivate the teams … or your small group ministry is needs some great new leaders … or maybe even your weekend services needs some support to ensure that everything runs smoothly. Churches are driven by the volunteer leaders and you need to find some new ones!

I believe that God has provided the leaders you need in your church to push the mission forward. The problem is that often leaders might be hidden within your church and you need to seek them out. Here are some types of leaders that I’ve found over the years … look closely into these types of people in your church you’re bound to find some new leaders!

- **People with Followers** // Potential leaders are leading people already. This Sunday after your service look around your foyer and try to notice those people who seems to be “holding court” with a circle of people. Those people are influencing and leading in your church … even if you haven’t given them a role!
- **Young People** // Chances are that someone trusted you when you were too young to lead something. Are you trusting young people as much as you were trusted? Find some young folks in your church … and give them a small project to lead. When they succeed give them more!
- **Moms are Leaders** // Keeping the modern home on the rails takes incredible leadership. There are still “at home Moms” who are attending your church who would welcome the opportunity to lead within your church. If you were able to find some mid-week and mid-day opportunities you would unlock fantastic new capabilities as a church!
- **Zoomers!** // Boomers that zoom! There is a generation of leaders who have been leading for years in the marketplace and had great success but are now looking for significance. Look among the boomer generation to find some leaders who might be looking for a new way to invest their time, efforts and energy!
- **Entrepreneurs Lead** // There are business leaders in your church who run their own businesses and might be up for investing a few hours a week in a project at your church. These leaders are going to want something that will show results and push the kingdom forward! Look for business owners and pair them up with some projects this month!

The problem with leaders is that they want to lead! Remember to give new leaders roles that make a difference in the life of your church and release them to change the world!

What are some other hidden leaders that you have found within your church?
MINISTRY TRENDS 2013

The landscape we minister in is constantly shifting and changing. These are three areas of "change" in our culture that are bound to impact your ministry more in the coming year than ever before.

MOBILE MINISTRY
WILL 2013 BE THE YEAR THAT CHURCHES START LEVERAGING SMART PHONES FOR MINISTRY?

>3200
TXT MSGS A MONTH

New Research in September 2012 finds that 14-19 year olds send over 3200 text messages a month.

MORE THAN A NOVELTY. NOT JUST MARKETING.
Our people see their phones as an extension of themselves. Is it possible for us to leverage these tools to extend our ministry everywhere their phones go?

63% 73%
CHECK SMART PHONES HOURLY.

June 2012 Harris Interactive Study shows that smartphone owning adults are constantly connected.

COMPASSION EVANGELISM
HOW CAN WE ENLIST SEEKING FRIENDS IN COMPASSION MINISTRY AS A BRIDGE TO JESUS?

TOP 100

In 2011 Outreach Magazine remarked that the 100 largest and fastest growing churches in North America constantly "serve their culture": they actively mobilize their people to care for the communities they minister in.

8.1 BILLION
HOURS VOLUNTEERED

Over 70 million North America's volunteered last year. That's 20% more than attended all churches combined.

THE BEAUTY OF AND
RATHER THAN CHOOSING TO BE "RELATIONAL" OR "TRANSACTIONAL" CHURCHES ARE NOW SEEN CHOOSING TO BE BOTH.

DATA FOR DISCIPLESHIP
CAN CHURCHES LEVERAGE INFORMATION THEY HAVE ABOUT PEOPLE TO HELP THEM GROW?

CHURCHES HAVE DATABASES, ARE THEY MORE THAN DONOR LISTS?

ALMOST 40%
CHURCHES LAG BEHIND

Jenna Research Group says only 12% of churches have a website. In a hyper-connected world a church without a website is sharing it's redundant presence.

ADAPTIVE LEARNING
The process by which the church sculpt educational experiences based on each student's needs.

stuff you wish they taught in seminary.
8 Secrets to Eliminating Negativity

One bad experience outweighs one good. A gallon of bad weighs more than a gallon of good.

Setbacks nag; success whispers.

You overemphasize what went wrong and minimize what went right. Down is easier than up.

Small setbacks increase frustration more than small successes enhance satisfaction.

One negative defeats one positive. It’s worse! One negative defeats two positives. It takes three positives to off-set one negative. It takes 2.9013 gallons of positive to sweeten one gallon of negative.*

One gallon of positive won’t sweeten one gallon of negative.

Now you know why negative environments are easy.

Boats with holes:

There’s a hole in your boat. Bad experiences gush in; good experiences jump ship.

Find the good before the bad sinks you.

Thank more. Cheer more. Pat on the back more, much more.

Plugging holes:

When boats are sinking you can bail like hell or plug the damn hole! Preventing one bad creates more buoyancy than appreciating one good because bad outweighs good.

Do more good by eliminating one bad.

1. Eliminate negative employees.
2. Remove obstacles. Organizations create hoops, sign offs, and regulations that make work harder. Ask, “What’s slowing you down?” When you find out, remove it or smooth the way.

3. Stop belittling. Work that isn’t valued isn’t meaningful.

4. End frustrations. Explore frustrations with employees, don’t ignore them, end them.

**Throw out bad – good comes back.**

**Still more:**

1. Focus on progress constantly. You’re falling behind if you don’t. Better wins.

2. Transform setbacks into progress by making them learning events.

3. Respect. Welcome ideas, for example. Don’t dismiss suggestions, explore them. Off handed rejection belittles.

4. Agree on outcomes then let go. Freedom energizes; control drains.

**The pursuit of excellence is fueled by positive environments.**

Positive environments aren’t accidents, leaders build them.

Eliminate bad.

Shout the good.

Whisper correction.

* Research on the bad outweighs good.

**How can leaders counteract the pull of negative gravity?**

This week’s best FREE opportunity for leadership development:

Tags: , ,
How to Deal with Negative People

We all have negative type of people in our lives who manage to bring us down on a perfectly good day. While you likely can't avoid these people entirely, you can deal with them in a way that you both walk away from the conversation better off. That means figuring out when it's worth listening to them.

To help figure out the best way to deal with negative people, I spoke with Roger Gil, a mental health clinician who specializes in marriage and family therapy. As Gil notes, dealing with negative types is primarily about learning to differentiate between the opinions you should consider and the ones you should ignore—to distinguish between the pessimist who's just being a sour puss, and the pragmatist who's actually offering valuable insights. After all, if those negative nancy's aren't adding to the conversation you're probably best off ignoring them:

There is no foolproof way of distinguishing needless pessimism from productive pragmatism when seeking advice or opinions. But by assessing what goes into the formulation of the third-party opinions that can influence your own decisions, you can separate the skewed opinions from the more well-thought-out ones.

Gil's point is that you'll always run into negative people, so the best thing you can really do is figure out if their advice is worth following or not. Whether it's a friend, or a new co-worker at the office who seems to always wear the grumpy hat, here's how to root out the underlying truth in what they're really saying.

Find the Critic's Baseline
First things first, Gil recommends you find the baseline of a person before you assume they're being negative. We all have our bad days, and unless you have an idea of where a person stands you can't know whether they're just in a bad mood or if they're always like that. Gil suggests that before you assume they're negative, you spend a little time figuring out exactly how they work.

If you hang around someone long enough you will get a feel for whether they're the type to be more optimistic, pessimistic, or pragmatic. This knowledge is valuable because while you might expect a "yes" from the optimist, a "no" from the pessimist, or a "let's look at the big picture" from the pragmatist, it's the times that the responses don't follow the "party line" that should interest you. By knowing what is your critic's norm, you will be able to differentiate between the times that "they are just being themselves" versus the times that they may be recognizing something truly noteworthy.

Essentially, when your negative critic ventures off the beaten path, and offers advice to you that's surprising, that's when you should really take note. Even if they're typically the pessimist in a situation, when they break that norm, something interesting is going on there that's worth noting. Photo by devolenti.

Follow the "Three's Company" Rule

Just because a person's a pessimist doesn't mean they're not right now and again. Gil notes that the easiest way to figure if their advice is worth following is to simply ask around, and figure out if a consensus exists that falls in line with the person's view:

If one or two people give you similar opinions, it could just be that they are drinking the same Kool Aid. If three or more people that have nothing to do with one another have similar opinions, then
If it's a unanimous opinion, then perhaps that person isn't as pessimistic as you think, and their advice—whatever it may be—is worth considering. While you certainly don't need to treat the three's company rule like a law, it's worth considering if you're unsure if someone's opinion is based on their grumpy mood.

**Ask the Right Questions**

Eventually, your grump-spotting is going to need a little more investigation, and that means asking questions. To get to the root of why a person's opinion is the way it is, Gil suggests one question you might want to ask is the simplest:

"Why?" is the most powerful question you can ask a person who is giving you their opinion because it allows you to determine what assumptions inform their opinions. If the response you get is one that indicates a lack of insight (e.g. "I don't know, that's just how it is," "Because everyone knows that's how the world always works," etc.) then you can pretty much assume that the person's emotional baggage is informing their opinion. However if the response is one that suggests that some good, old-fashioned contemplation was involved (e.g. "The data suggests that this outcome is likely.") then you may want to lend a little more credence to the response you get.

To further root out the origin of someone's advice, and whether it's worth pursuing, you also want to ask another simple question, "would you do it again?" when it applies. The reason is pretty simple: it requires a bit of an emotional response, and that can help you differentiate their opinion even further.

When seeking the advice of someone who has walked down a path that you
are considering pursuing, asking them if they would do it again and what they would do differently will reveal valuable insights into whether or not they are being objective in their assessments. If their response to "would you do it again?" feels like it's more of a reflection of their own emotional baggage than of someone who has their eyes on the situation at large then you know to give less weight to their opinions on a topic. If the person can tell you what they would do differently or can expound on why they would keep it all the same then the opinion you are getting is that of a proactive thinker instead of a passive person who is just coasting along.

The hope is that your questions will lead to a better understanding of their history, and subsequently, you'll know whether their advice is worth following in the future. When it boils down to it, the best way to root out and deal with a negative person is to figure out how much of their opinion really matters to you, if you should take it, and how much you should care about their advice moving forward.

If it's a co-worker, boss, friend, or family member, they'll likely be in your life no matter what—learning how to decide whether or not to pay attention to them helps inform your decision making moving forward. If their pessimism ends up being too much of a bummer, **you can always call them out on their BS** and try to remedy the situation a little. Photo by Anders Sandberg.

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Thanks to mental health clinician Roger Gil for helping with this post. You can find him on Twitter here and be sure to check out his podcast as well.
For All the Danny Downers
http://leadershipfreak.wordpress.com/2013/03/23/for-all-the-danny-downers/
March 27, 2013

You want the people around you to feel up not down, hopeful not discouraged. All successful leaders energize others. But, what if you aren’t the energizing type?

Peter Senge said,

“Your primary influence is the environment you create.”

Leaders often neglect environments in favor of getting work done.

Tending personal environments:

Personal space has energy. Step in and it pulls down or lifts up. Danny Downer is a spiraling vortex of despair. An hour with him drains you. Hours later, you’re still climbing out of his dark hole. Or you’ve given up.

Edna Energizer amps people. An hour with her boosts you. Hours later, you’re half way up the mountain with energy to spare.

We're all climbers.

All leaders impact “the climb” of others by establishing starting places. Energizing leaders elevate starting points; low energy leaders lower them.

Successful leaders elevate starting points.

Danny Downer:

1. Fears offending others – lives to please everyone.

2. Imagines obstacles that can’t be solved.

3. Knows all the reasons nothing can change.

4. Questions abilities.
5. Focuses on resources rather than people.

**Edna Energizer:**

1. Builds and trusts the team. Danny feels alone.
2. Takes small steps without permission. She believes it’s better to get in trouble trying things than doing nothing and staying safe.
3. Sees obstacles but imagines progress.
4. Learns from failure.
5. Expects herself and others to step up.

The difference between Danny and Edna is courage. Leadership requires courage. Danny’s a coward.

**For all the Danny Downers:**

1. Admit it. You are darkness with legs. (If you’re tempted to say it’s not that bad, it is.)
2. Confess it. Tell someone you’re a downer. Say, “I want to change.”
3. Get help. Run – don’t walk – to energizing leaders and learn.

Everyone feels the environment around you. Energize intentionally. The higher you start the further you’ll go.

**How can leaders create personal space that energizes others?**

Next week’s best leadership development opportunity is a free conference call with bestselling author, Doug Conant. Join me on March 27 at 1:00 p.m. EST.

Tags: , ,
This website is offline

No cached version is available

What's wrong?

The most likely causes:

- The server is down for maintenance
- There may be a network problem
- The site may be experiencing excessive load

What's CloudFlare?

This website uses CloudFlare in order to help keep it online when the server is down by serving cached copies of pages when they are unavailable. Unfortunately, a cached copy of the page you requested is not available, but you may be able to reach other cached pages on the site.
On Sunday, former pastor and author Rob Bell expressed his support for gay “marriage” during a forum at Grace Cathedral, the Episcopal Cathedral of the Diocese of California.

"I am for marriage," he said. “I am for fidelity. I am for love, whether it's a man and woman, a woman and a woman, a man and a man. I think the ship has sailed and I think … we need to affirm people wherever they are."

He criticized the evangelical perspective as, “narrow, politically intertwined, [and] culturally ghettoized.” He suggested evangelicals reject concepts about God that “don’t actually shape people into more loving … people,” and cease supporting “destructive” policies.

“We've done it in the name of God and we need to repent,” he said. He also warned that evangelicals would have to either “die or adapt.”

But John Stonestreet, a cultural analyst from The Colson Center for Christian Worldview, pointed out that Christians have no philosophical basis for moral adaptation, since biblical morality does not evolve or change with time: “The cultural narrative is that accepting gay marriage is inevitable. But that isn’t true. If more people say no, it isn’t inevitable.”

Stonestreet warned against Bell’s advice for evangelicals to adapt, suggesting cultural conformity could lead to the end of evangelicalism. Alternatively, he urged evangelicals to define themselves.

“For so long, evangelicalism has been such a squishy term, no one knows what it means,” he said. “What’s the point of your existence if you’re not distinctive?”

Bell’s view on marriage might not come as a surprise, given his controversial theology. Last year, he released Love Wins, a book in which he challenged the biblical teaching on hell. This year, he released What We Talk About When We Talk About God, in which he urged readers to pursue an experience with God that transcends traditional dogma.

His public support of same-sex marriage is one in a recent line-up of pro gay “marriage” announcements. Last month, British evangelical Rev. Steve Chalke argued the church should “consider nurturing positive models for permanent and monogamous homosexual relationships and allow gay couples to have stable and loving relationships.”
In the political arena, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced her support today. Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio, and Charles Murray, a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, expressed the same view last week.
My take: A word to Christians – Be nice

By John S. Dickerson, Special to CNN

Last week a high-profile American writer and news personality asked me a painful question: “Hey pastor, can a Christian tweet hate?”

It was not a hypothetical question. He was asking because some of his 1.3 million Twitter followers claim to be “Christian,” and some of the meanest, most perverse hate-tweets he receives come from these self-proclaimed Christians.

We’ve all seen folks, Christian and otherwise, lose their cool in a Facebook face-off or in the comment section under a controversial news story. But as I scrolled through the “Christian” hate tweets to this news personality, I was baffled and ashamed by these so-called followers of Christ. One user describes himself not merely as Christian but as “sharing God’s message of Grace with everyone I encounter.” The messenger of Grace recently tweeted that he doesn’t merely hate this news personality, he despises and loathes him.

These are the moments when it’s embarrassing to be a Christian. I’m not embarrassed to believe the extravagant claims of Christianity: that Christ was born to a virgin, died for our sins, physically rose from the grave and is returning to rule the world. But I am embarrassed to be associated with some of the people who claim his name.

I have written in the past about the bad reputation that Christians have in America. Some argue that it comes from misrepresentation by the media. Others argue that “all who live godly will suffer persecution,” and that’s why we Christians have a poor reputation. Maybe there’s some truth to those claims, but we Christians have to acknowledge another reason why we are perceived as hateful: because many of our number are.

More and more, I see hateful Christians chalking up their disrepute to “persecution.” God tells us otherwise. In 1 Peter 4 we’re told, “If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed. …” And that’s the truth; sometimes we are insulted for proclaiming the good news of salvation in Christ. But listen to what follows: “If you suffer, however, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler.”

The Apostle Peter is more or less saying: If you suffer for sharing the good news of Christ, great, you’re blessed. But if you suffer just because you’re being a criminal or acting like an
idiot, then don’t blame it on Christ.

Some 2,000 years ago, Peter knew so-called Christians would be criminals and “meddlers.” He knew some would claim, “Wow, I’m really suffering for Jesus,” when they are really just suffering for being jerks.

The word “meddler” means busybody: someone who inserts himself into matters that are not his own. Might this include some people involved in the Twitter, Facebook and “comments” showdowns of our day?

So yes, “all who live godly will suffer persecution.” But let’s not be jerks, get persecuted and then blame it on Christ. American Christianity, with its past position of cultural superiority, gave birth to some self-righteous and condescending so-called Christians. These folks may be culturally Christian, but they know little of Christ and his actual message of humility and repentance. I am convinced that, if Jesus Christ were here walking among us, he would have nothing to do with those who claim his name and consistently spew hate.

Theologians and academics will argue about that last sentence. Isn’t Jesus “a friend of sinners?” Yes. Doesn’t Jesus’ grace wash away the sins of those who trust in him? Yes. Wouldn’t that include the sin of “hate tweet”? Yes.

In seminaries and churches, we tend to engage in obscure questions about theology. For example, “Is it possible for someone to truly trust Christ and spend their entire life tweeting hate?”

Maybe so. But Jesus didn’t engage in such esoteric abstractions. He taught simple truth with clarity, authority and practicality. On controversial issues—“Are hate tweeters true Christians?”—I find myself drawn to the simple words of Scripture. Theologians will argue and debate, but God’s word is simple and clear.

“Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness.” (1 John 2:9,11)

“With the tongue we praise our Lord and father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God’s likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.” (James 3:9,10)

“If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.” (1 John 4:20)

Jesus put it this way in Matthew 12:34–36: “For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth
speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.”

If we will give account for every careless word spoken, might we also give account for every careless comment typed or tweeted?

Christians aren’t the only ones hurling hateful blows on the Web. But we are the only ones who claim to follow the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. So let’s be nice.

The opinions expressed in this commentary are solely those of John S. Dickerson.
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