(Continued from Page 1)

My vocational choice involves woodworking. When I began my foray into the world facing me many years ago, I made a conscious decision to learn from people that I met whom I respected. The opportunity presented to me involved working with wood for some very wealthy, influential, successful people. I made a genuine effort to discover what it was that got them to where they were in life. I knew it had to be far more than just blind luck. Sometimes, it was simply to observe their behaviors. Other times, I took advantage of direct one-on-one time across a table in restaurants for “interviews”. What I learned surprised me, and I would like to pass it on to you.

Accomplished people tend to have some character traits in common. I was not surprised to find these firmly set in their foundational makeup. First, there is no such thing as an overnight success. Many times, a lifetime is required to amass the necessary skills for achievement. Their stories told of small successes and failures that they learned from and built upon. It took time. That did not surprise me. Second, they were not afraid of hard work—really hard work. They knew the feel of dirt on their hands and sweat on their forehead, long hours, and at times, low pay. But their belief in what they were doing drove them on. That did not surprise me. Thirdly, they understood the thrill and passion of their commitment. It drove them to do their absolute very best—at all times. Excellence: always, always, always! That did not surprise me.

But one character trait common to all did surprise me! Allow me to relate to you an observation that I believe is a most excellent example. I was on a particular job site, and watched another subcontractor walk into the house carrying and sipping on a canned soft drink. I watched in disbelief as a woman walked up to the man, grabbed the can from his hand, and threw it in the trash. She then walked to a well-stocked refrigerator, took out a soft drink, popped the top and handed it to him. He was informed in very firm language that on THAT job, there would be nothing other than her brand products! You see, she was the wife of the CEO of a major soft drink company. The character trait that I quite unexpectedly found in every successful individual was LOYALTY. I found examples of extreme loyalty. Their lives were filled with loyalty to their product, or their family, or any number of things.

Loyalty is a rare commodity in our culture today. Decisions are often made based on cost, or convenience, or emotion. Loyalty is the embodiment of devotion, honesty, integrity, sincerity, and fidelity. How does loyalty play out in the real world of everyday life? Think of it as the “duct tape” of life. Relationships are founded in loyalty. A true friend will be there when others have disappeared. Marriage is supposed to be the public display of the definition of loyalty. Divorce would be nonexistent if loyalty were the norm. And your ultimate loyalty is to God. No matter what happens, stay close to Him!

Loyalty will take you far in a world that has largely forgotten about it. Develop it. Embrace it in your life. Don’t make decisions based solely on emotion, or convenience, or cost. Factor in a generous amount of trustworthiness, reliability, honor—even duty. Be loyal.

So, I ask you once again. Are you a moose?

**Top 10 Truths About Christmas**

1. Anyone who believes that men and women are equal, have obviously never seen a man wrap a Christmas present.
2. You can tell a lot about a person by the way they handle three things: a rainy day, lost luggage at the airport, and tangled Christmas lights.
3. Nothing is quite as mean as giving a little kid something useful for Christmas.
4. You can always tell when you stop believing in Santa Claus. He starts bringing you underwear.
5. You will know that you have grown up when none of the things you **really** would like for Christmas can be purchased at Walmart.
6. On the first day of Christmas your true love gave to you……….nothing, because you’re still too young!
7. If you buy a family member gift wrap as a Christmas present and have it gift wrapped, be sure to tell them to use a different wrapping paper, so they will know when to stop unwrapping your gift on Christmas morning.
8. Always “jingle all the way”! No one like a jingler who only jingles half of the distance.
9. This holiday season let us treasure what is truly important in all of our lives, the reason for the season—COOKIES!
10. There are 16 days until Christmas. So guys, that means we have 15 days till we need to start shopping, right?



