

DEMAND THE EXTRAORDINARY

Expect excellence both for and from yourself in order to help you build forever. BY: DOUG CAIN



“WHEN WE BUILD, let us think that we build forever. Let it not be for present delight, nor for present use alone. Let it be such work as our descendants will thank us for; and let us think, as we lay stone on stone, that a time is to come when those stones will be held sacred because our hands have touched them, and that men will say, as they look upon the labor and wrought substance of them, ‘See! This our father did for us.’” —John Ruskin

My dear friend, Mark Trevino of GTO Advertising, sent this to me as I traveled to a conference of the major radio and TV talk show hosts in the country. I have not been the same since. What does this passage mean to you? Read it again. Read it in silence. Read it with reverence and expectation. But read it again.

What spoke to you? Was it the concept of building for a future? Maybe you felt the stones cut into your hand as you read the words, “as we lay stone on stone.” Maybe you felt your stomach and throat tighten as you read about the sanctity of those stones. That’s what happened to me. Maybe you saw yourself as a member of the Sheffield iron workers of the 1800s that Ruskin was so fond of as you read the words, “that men will say, as they look upon the labor and wrought substance of them...”

I hope some or all of this passage speaks to the many areas of your life: personal, family, business, spiritual, civic and others. I find myself applying these principles to every area of my own life. And why not look at every aspect of your life in this way? Are we not made for this level of dedication and intent of purpose? Why not look at everything with the objective that we are building forever? Why not build a marriage that lasts forever? Why not build a 64-year-old oilfield service company with the intent that it will be built forever?

What if you looked at everything you did as sacred? Would that make you feel a stronger dedication to what you were doing? Most people think I am rather intense about doing things right the first time. This passage made me question every process, policy and procedure that we have here at the Lake Group of Companies. These words make me want to drill even deeper to the core of what a company can do, what a company can be and what impact this one man can have.

Imagine hearing people say, “See! This our father did for us,” as they point to a mark you left on this world. Demand the extraordinary both for and from yourself in all aspects of your life, whether your current endeavor is significant or minor. Do this, and someone may say something about you as eloquent as what Ruskin wrote. Until next time ...

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