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**"Wisdom is knowing the right path to take. Integrity is taking it." » M.H. McKee**

## An Honest Smile

On a recent evening, I found myself wondering how a macadamia nut could make such a loud popping noise as I chewed it.

(Okay, you know what's coming. Don't cringe. It didn't hurt.)

A molar with a large...oh... 40-year-old filling finally failed a stress test. I was fortunate to be home and able to get an appointment with my dentist for the next afternoon.

Our family dentist's office is open 4 days a week. He plays in a band on most weekends.

If Work/Life balance had a poster boy, it may be this guy.

But he has earned both our trust and respect over the past 15 years, and we've recommended him to dozens of folks in that time.

As we had a few minutes waiting for a machine to create a porcelain crown, I told him how impressed I was with their improved technology.

In the old days, getting a crown was a two or three trip process. Now, they can create a perfect fitting one in the office within minutes.

I shared how amazed I was with his industry's advancements.

Heck, the fact that neither of my adult sons have had a cavity in their lives is a testament that someone in a lab somewhere figured something out.

## What Walks in When You Do?

I joked with a group recently that one of the most memorable statements about culture I'd come across was above the door of a pub in Louisiana about 30 years ago.

The sign above the door stated, "Everyone who passes through this door brings happiness - some by entering and some by leaving."

I further explained that I recently had reason to look at my college transcript for the first time in over 20 years.

I was a bit surprised to find there were several business and management classes that I do not remember. Seriously...no recollection at all.

It appears that I made A's and B's in them. So, I apparently spent a decent amount of time learning things I managed to completely forget.

And no, it wasn't because I was reading signs in pubs.

But I do remember that sign. It hinted at something I've spoken and written about through the years.

The mood in a place of business is incredibly important and matters to the success of a business.

Yes, having solid business plans matters. Hiring good people matters. Paying competitive wages matters.

And all of these will either be supported or muted by the day-to-day moods in a workplace.

That fact often seems to be a difficult one for

I asked if cavity reduction was a threat to dentists. He laughed and said, "Well, not for honest ones."

Having my curiosity piqued, I explored the "honest" comment.

I shared with him that the main reason I originally found him was that my dentist at the time had rebranded his practice as "Smile Designers" (or something like that.)

Every visit, for whatever reason, included being pitched on things like veneers and other assorted add-ons.

It got to the point that I questioned any "advice" that guy offered.

My current dentist said, "Oh, I have consultants calling on me constantly about ways to increase my revenue. They know patients will almost always take whatever suggestion a medical professional makes. They want to trust you."

He continued, "I always tell them that I'll just worry about fixing actual problems and leave their revenue increasing schemes to the other guys."

I shared with him that he echoes something I preach to bankers.

There are more honest business opportunities and people to help out there than you even have capacity for.

Always do the right thing for customers and they (and the friends they tell about you) will keep you as busy as you choose to be.

some in leadership to pay enough attention to.

After all, we're adults, right? Pay people fairly and they'll do their jobs, right? Well...sure...usually.

But there is a night and day difference between meeting minimum job standards and doing a job to your highest potential.

Beyond that, the moods and attitudes in a workplace tend to have tremendous influence on customers' experiences.

Something else to consider is that the difficulty of a job is not always the driving factor behind the mood of a workplace.

You can find folks working in highly demanding environments yet showing upbeat moods and engaging attitudes.

Concurrently, I've seen folks on jobs that would not seem demanding at all who appear to be as negative and disinterested as humanly possible.

In many instances, I'd place a person's attitude above even their experience when building a team.

Experience is an individual attribute.

Attitudes, on the other hand, are communicable. They spread.

Also remember that the mood and attitude of a leader sets the tone more than others.

What tone is being set when you walk through the door?

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**"The most important decision you make is to be in a good mood." » Voltaire**

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