

Extracted from St John Vianney Bulletin on December 28, 2008

Lower Expectations by Carl E. Beyer

A new year is about upon us. So once again we are expected to make resolutions to make ourselves better persons. I have never been big on this, so I usually give it a pass. But it got me to thinking about expectations. We always hear, "Be the best you can be". Now that may be fine for yourself but what about for others?

Way too often I observe people belittling others because they do not exceed where they themselves have. Let us take a simple work example. The first person is very organized. Their desk is always clean, and they have one task in front of them and that is all they concentrate on. They pass a coworker whose desk is always messy but multitasks and is able to keep several projects going at once. The first worker always rolls their eyes at this second worker because their skill is being super organize and looks down on anyone who isn't. Of course, we could just as easily reverse their roles.

God gives us each gifts. That is the first leap of faith we have to take. Our gifts given to us are just that, "a gift", so we each can have special skills. Now, we can expand and develop our gifts and work on our weak points, but no one can have all the gifts. By accepting this we can have lower expectations of others. Flipping this also means we need to recognize the gifts in each other. Often in jobs people are put into wrong positions. If the boss can recognize the gifts in each person and put him into the right position everyone could be happier.

That is where lower expectations come into play. Let say I have an employee who can solve any computer problem, but it takes him a while. Should I fire him for being slow or should I be sure and put him into situations where his special but slow skills can solve the problem. Then my second employee is fast and friendly but just doesn't like digging to solve those problems. I would want to send him out to the easiest jobs where speed is essential. Of course, all this is easier said than done but that is our challenge.

OK, all you married couples I like your ear for a while. How many of us look at our spouses and see that they lack our gifts and that is unacceptable. How often have you heard people complain about their spouses over and over on their failings. Now on one hand you can probably count the number of times they have complimented them on their gifts. Lower expectations! Let say it again, lower expectations. The next time you are being driven crazy by your spouse, lack of a gift, just have lower expectations. A person that was always late while you were dating is likely to be late after twenty years of marriage. Lower expectations. Enjoys the special gifts that attracted you to your spouse in the first place and stop complaining about those weak points.

When I was a kid, I had a plaque that read; "Until you walk a mile in another man's moccasins." Not sure if this is a true native American saying but it gave me much thought as a kid. My first thought was why did I want to wear someone else shoes? It was probably years before the true meaning started to sink in and I was able to give some adult thoughts on it. One of the first gift I recognized as a kid was my math skills. I usually had an A+ in math and couldn't understand why others were struggling with the simple problems. Then we would have to take those stupid

English courses. I hated those courses and had a general dislike for those that enjoyed it. Adverbs, adjectives, conjunctions meant nothing to me and probably some of you are thinking they still mean nothing to me after reading my poor writing. Maybe one reason why we are given different gifts is so we can help others and learn to have others help us.

I believe in the higher scheme of things. Let's take my favorite subject of food. Yes, it always returns to food. I have one fat sister and one skinny sister, and I doubt they eat very differently. Whenever I see someone who is fat and no matter what they do they are going to be fat, I always have a simple thought that makes me smile. With their low metabolism they will have the last laugh in a famine situation. All the skinny people under that situation will be literally eating away their body trying to maintain their high metabolism. I have been personally stocking away for years for that famine but may have to break my own rule and make a New Year resolution to get more exercise. ☺

So figuratively speaking, not beat a dead horse, the next time you see the weakness in your fellow man, "have lower expectations". Encourage their building of their God given gifts while not having too large of expectation on their weaknesses. God wants us to complement each other, to realize his love in each of us and to count our blessing that each of us are different.

Oops got more space to fill. Have you heard the one about the duck that clucked? OK forget that one. Another year has gone by and the kids are getting older. It amazes me that each has such unique personalities. My wife and I have been together for close to twenty-one years now, so how can three kids raised in the same household, have such different beliefs? I am waiting for that day when the kids think their dad is the wises of them all. Waiting for them to say I remember when you told me ... Right now I get, "Stop Lecturing." But as the kids develop, I am both proud and dumb founded on how they have gotten wise themselves.

Now go forth and have lower expectations and learn to enjoy each other. Make this year resolution to find the gifts in each other and thank our God for this. What a boring world it would be if we were all the same. Thank you, God, for this wonderful ride you have given us the privilege of being on. God Bless You ALL. Happy New Year.