



## Minding the Gap - February 2014

A Faith and Work Publication

Welcome to Minding the Gap, a monthly thought about faith in the workplace!

### **“Can We Be Vulnerable at Work?”**

One of my favorite passages from the New Testament is Philippians 2:5-8:

"Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death - even death on a cross."  
(Philippians 2:5-8).

This passage is an great example of the manner in which the Creator chose to reveal His nature by "stepping" from the sovereign greatness as the Creator to the vulnerable and finite existence of a human being (a "slave"). The God of the universe suddenly becomes a man who both cries ("Jesus wept.") and cries out ("Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me."). A Creator experienced as One of great compassion ("Jerusalem, Jerusalem...How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings."), as well as one who is humble enough to wash the feet of his closest friends who've just spent the day walking - picking up lots of "delicious" odors. Thus, we are able to know God in a way that is real but vulnerable.

In the world of work, I have an acquaintance who was general manager of an automotive supply corporation. At one point in the company's history, they experienced a serious downturn in business, which was the result of an unsuccessful business strategy on management's part. The result led to the company's need to layoff a significant number of co-workers. This man came and spoke before the company explaining the failure and asking for forgiveness.

In leadership, although you can't know the future, you are responsible to do well in discerning what might be a wise approach in business planning; but that did not happen in this incident and was very costly in many ways for many people. The question is this: is there wisdom in this "confession" and becoming clearly vulnerable in such a public manner? What do you think? Would you take a similar approach? What are the pluses and minuses of such an action?

Jesus's act of incarnating himself into the human experience made him very vulnerable to the plethora of human challenges that can lead us away from being who God created us to be. However, and this is a big **HOWEVER**, this act of incarnation - to participating in the human experience, was also God's key action in allowing us to connect with our Creator, and, I am convinced, a model of how to connect with one another - to have trusting, caring and authentic relationships.

Sociologist, Brene' Brown, makes a very convincing argument for the importance of being vulnerable. She believes it to be the key to connecting with others in forming a relationship of trust, transparency and authenticity. If you have a few minutes I would encourage you to watch her TED Talk presentation on that issue at [Brene' Brown - The Power of Vulnerability](#). It is excellent!

Blessings to you all!

-- Jim Grubs

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