



Minding the Gap – March 2019

A Faith and Work Publication

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

Are We Relevant?

If you are a person who is active in the pursuit of integrating the beliefs and principles of faith, and specifically those of the Christian tradition, into work, then I'm guessing you've likely run into some significant opposition at your worksite. In fact, this may almost be a daily occurrence for you. The teachings and life style of Jesus just don't seem to fit into one's typical work environment. When you consider his most significant teaching found in the Sermon on the Mount - especially the Beatitudes (Matt 5:3-12) where Jesus instructs those listening to: "**be poor in spirit**"(code for being *humble*); "**mourn**"(code for *suffering*); "**be meek**"(code for *not bragging*); or even "**be merciful**"(code for *compassionate*). Jesus continues for the next chapter and a half of Matthew to lay out principles/ideas which appear to be the complete opposite of what society deems appropriate: "*You have heard it said, but I say...*". So, one begins to truly wonder "Am I relevant?" "Are my convictions about the practices and attitudes for a meaningful life right?" Please allow me to cite from the book *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*.

The book is written by Marshall Goldsmith a leading business consultant who works with the leadership of numerous Fortune 500 businesses. In his book he lays out 20 behaviors successful people *must stop* in order to continue being

successful. He cites ending habits such as: winning too much; passing judgment; making excuses; passing the buck; failing to give recognition; etc., etc.. All these and 15 more result in aborting an individual's path to being successful and a blessing to others at work.

However...the points he makes of **what to do** are **astoundingly the exact behaviors given by Jesus**. Just highlighting four of these behaviors should be enough 'ammunition' to convince us that "Yes, the principles given to us in the Sermon on the Mount are beyond the pale for being relevant!" Goldsmith states:

- **Thanking** - An act of gratitude recognizing the contributions of those around you. Gratitude tends to show up in the presence of a "*poor spirit*"(*humility*), but be absent in the presence of a "*haughty spirit*". But, can be difficult in the work place because it may be interpreted as a submissive or humiliating action. Goldsmith says "If you get an A+ in gratitude nothing bad will ever come of it - only good!"
- **Feedback** - His premise for feedback is that it must be **authentic**. To me this means being **both honest** and **compassionate**. Too often feedback is given out of frustration or anger, and warmth or respect are completely lacking. For it to be helpful we *must evidence mercy(compassion)* along with the truth.
- **Apologizing** - "I regard apologizing as the most magical healing, restorative gesture human beings can make."-Goldsmith. It can only happen when you step beyond yourself and are "*content with who you are*"(Matt5:5MSG). Blest with many gifts but still flawed = **meek**.
- **Listening** - Goldsmith says: "This is the skill that *separates the great from the near-great*." Listening **embodies suffering** because so often you have the deep-seated need to express your ideas and perceptions, but to show respect for and the significance of the other, we must seek first to understand (listen), and then to be understood.

So, to the question, "Are the principles told by Jesus relevant to the world-of-work?" I must say **ABSOLUTELY!**

Blessings, Jim Grubs

 Incarnation Lutheran Church

4880 Hodgson Road, Shoreview, MN 55126