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December 27, 2018

[George Will, soft side of leadership, & MH media](#)

Filed under: Uncategorized — George Allen @ 11:20 am

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INTRODUCTION. This blog departs from the norm of past postings. Rather than comment on matters manufactured housing and land lease communities, here's a collection of views

penned by columnist George F. Will, and partial book review of *The Softer Side of Leadership* by Eugene B. Habecker. Maybe next week we'll get back into the usual swing of things newsy and controversial. In the meantime, here's hoping you enjoyed a Merry Christmas and your New Year is off to a very Happy and good start!

And please don't miss Part III, 'A Final thought for 2018.' It's something we all should consider.

I.

George F. Will

No idea how many of you know George F. Will is the famous columnist with libertarian leanings. Over the years I've read one or two of his books (i.e. collections of his writings), and columns from time to time. Recently, I was recipient of an eight page, single spaced letter from him. As I perused its' content I found myself thinking, 'Here're thoughts my blog readers might like to experience for themselves.' So, here follows is a random collection of quotes from George F. Will's letter....

"In Washington, an ideology is the other guy's views. You have a 'philosophy', while someone else has an ideology."

"First come rights, then comes government. Rights preexist government." Do you agree?

"The only path to vigorous growth is to liberate the country from the dead hand of government and get out of the way of the natural wealth-creating aptitudes of the American people."

"...the welfare state...exists to subsidize two things...protracted retirement and competent medicine." & "The average length of retirement in America expanded in the 20th century from two years to almost 20 years. Social Security was never designed for this." & "One-sixth of our economy today is medicine...."

Thirty-seven percent of all deaths in 1900 were from infectious diseases. That's now down to two percent. Only 18 percent of deaths in 1900 were people over age 65. Today it's 75 percent."

"...30 percent of Medicare expenditures go to people in the last six months of life....;"

"A new thing (has) been born – the playground lawsuit. In a district in Florida, after about 157 playground lawsuits in five years, they came to a Solomonic (sic) conclusion – they said they would not ban recess (as many other districts had done), but they wouldn't allow the kids to run during recess."

“Forty percent of recent college graduates are either unemployed, or underemployed in jobs the Bureau of Labor Statistics says do not require a college education. And one in three is living at home with his parents....”

“...five of the 10 most affluent counties in America surround Washington, D.C.”

Well, that’s it. Hope you enjoyed the statistical run through some of American society, politics, and more.

II.

My Response to ‘The Softer Side of Leadership’ book

The book was a gift. The author, Eugene B. Habecker, is a longtime academic and president/CEO of philanthropic organizations. So surmised going in, his leadership style and experiences would likely differ from mine, being a retired Marine officer and 40 year business entrepreneur.

What’re soft leadership skills? ‘Behaviors, practices & attitudes’, to name a few that generally contribute to leadership effectiveness – helping one “absorb chaos, give calm & provide hope” (p.17). Soft skills tend to be qualitative in nature as opposed to quantitative hard skills.

Dr. Habecker suggested common ground for this review when he allowed “it all depends” upon one’s leadership situation, at the time, as to which soft skills are applied and how. Hence my departure from a thesis where he’d “...no longer separate...feelings from my leadership duties.” (p.21). Me? Harken back 50 years (next month) to a firefight along the Ho Chi Minh trail in South Vietnam. All but lost it emotionally, as I retrieved wounded and dead Marines. My men became concerned about my ability to get them safely back to Dong Ha forward combat base. As soon as I realized that, I seared my emotions, no longer crying aloud, but laughing at the carnage – clearly separating my true emotions from my leadership duties! Disgusting – sure. But doing so reassured my Marines I was in control (of myself) as their leader. So, we survived the battle and its’ trauma. Residual consequences? I was unable to cry, for any reason, during the decade following that incident; and it took yet another decade for me to cease being mirthful during funerals for friends and family members. All is well today. But had I not separated feelings from duty, all those years ago, would I – and they – be here today? (If you’d like to know more of that true story, ask me to send you a copy of ‘PUC Beer’).

A few pages later, the author comments it wasn’t until the 1990s that ‘soft skill literature emerged’. Perhaps. But it was taught in the early 1970s! Following release from active military service, my first civilian employer – after psychological testing pegged me 100

percent authoritarian, hired me as a probationary employee, until I was properly trained (i.e. reprogrammed) in the basics of the emerging participative management and job enrichment movement (i.e. later known as soft skill leadership). Chafed at the experience but benefitted from the education. How so? I not only knew how to lead men into combat (as an authoritarian figure) but how to involve everyone in job planning and decision-making, as long as they weren't exhausted, starving or severely stressed. Otherwise, it was back to the old authoritative KITA method...'Kick in the A__!' to get the job done or mission accomplished!

One part of the book that did resonate with me had to do the writer's encouragement to plan and experience regular 'sacred space', whether it be daily quiet time, purposeful meditation, even shutting off one's phone and PC for awhile. I know my daily half hour of deep reading, personal reflection, and intentional quiet, have been the norm for me for decades. How 'bout you?

Job interview and hiring practices is another area where we parted company. Habecker states, "Some organizations view academic credentials, skill sets, and organizational experience as places to begin the job interview process." (p.52) Me? As anyone who's taken the Manufactured Housing Manager certification class knows, I teach the SUCCESS (equilateral) Triangle approach to this important matter. One side of the triangle is labeled ABILITY (i.e. academic credentials, skill sets), the other equilateral side, EXPERIENCE (i.e. organizational experience); and the all important base, tying the two sides together, as MOTIVATION and or ATTITUDE. As it is, too many undervalue the key role of motivation in today's hiring process!

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George Allen / EducateMHC Blog

Mobile Home & Land Lease Community Advocate & Expert

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