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Theme: "Getting Personal"

*"Every man is a volume
if you take time to read it."
Unknown*



I inherited a condition from my father which I affectionately call "who's 'yer daddy?" syndrome. It is prevalent among people who live in the same area they were born and raised. I realized that my dad was a carrier during my teenage years when he would interview my dates and, within minutes, could recite the poor guy's genealogy. (I quickly found that dating guys who were not from this area ensured that we would actually make it to the movies in time for the opening credits.)

What used to be a source of embarrassment for me, later became great entertainment as we shared *who's 'yer daddy?* stories at family gatherings. Recently, while returning from Frederick with my parents, I was stopped for exceeding the speed limit. As the officer sat in his cruiser researching my potential criminal record, the conversation in my car sounded like this:

Dad: "Did you see that officer's name tag?"

Julie: "No, Dad, I was a little preoccupied making sure he didn't SHOOT me as I reached for my registration card."

Dad: *I think that might be so-and-so. He's the guy who works security at the football games. When he comes back, ask him if that's who he is. I'm sure it is..... it sure does look like him. He's been doing security at the high school for a while now. He replaced so-and-so whom I think retired a few years back.*

Julie: *DAD!!! This is no time for 'who's 'yer daddy?' PLEASE, DON'T SAY A WORD!!!*

He didn't and, fortunately, I escaped with a mere warning to slow it down. ☺

Over the years my dad taught me the importance of *getting personal*. I learned that everyone has a story. That story defines us and, more importantly, it binds us to one another. As human beings, we have an inherent need to feel a sense of connection... to someone or something. This is equally as important in our professional lives as our personal ones.

We spend over 75% of our life at work. That is more than the time spent with our own families and so, in a sense, our co-workers become our extended families.

Do your office dynamics resemble *Family Feud* or is it *Seventh Heaven*? In my years of experience, I know this to be true. Leaders must invest time and energy into helping employees feel a greater sense of personal connection with each other. They reap the rewards of increased camaraderie, team work, and a renewed willingness to work cooperatively.

Half or full day retreats which offer employees time away from the office help in creating shared stories. As the old saying goes, "*we can't hate someone whose story we know.*"

A large residential builder in Northern Virginia encourages their managers to plan departmental outings each quarter with the sole purpose of "getting personal." Activities have included an afternoon of miniature golf, paint ball, go-cart racing, complete with intense competition and always laughter.

It's summer. Work slows to a simmer. Take the time now to get personal with your employees!

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