

WORKPLACE WISDOM NEWSLETTER

MY LEARNING TREE

**Your resume looks good.
Your spouse, kids, house, neighborhood look good.
Your career is moving upward.
Your retirement is "in sight"!**

**How did you achieve all this?
How did you arrive at this point?**

The truth is that your life is the result of many, many contributions by other people.

A **fascinating exercise** for a quiet afternoon is to draw a "Learning Tree" for yourself. Draw the tree so that YOU are the main trunk -- and then, as you draw each branch, write the name of someone who has made a lasting contribution to your life. Some of your "learning limbs" will have off-shoots that led to others who helped you be who you are today.

YOUR TREE



Use a LARGE piece of paper! You WILL need it.

On each limb, write the person that influenced you positively.

Keep going...make it larger....make it even larger.....

Come on! Make it a huge tree! Now, you're thinking....and remembering!!!

As I drew mine several years ago, I grew more and more sensitive to those who meant so much to me. I realized that, without their influence, I would have lacked the character quality that they demonstrated so effortlessly.

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Here are some of my "limbs"...the people that have made a difference to me:

- Family members who taught me love and laughter
- Teachers that encouraged excellence
- Friends who have helped me through difficult times
- People who have demonstrated amazing life-lessons
- Individuals who have made me feel appreciated and special
- People with whom I enjoy spending time

Here are people that are newsworthy, but who have not lived on in my memory:

- Academy Award winners
- Heisman Trophy winners
- MVPs
- Politicians of years past
- Nobel Prize winners
- Beauty pageant winners

The people who make the most difference in your life are **not** the ones with the most credentials, the most expensive political campaigns, the most money, or the most awards. POSITIONAL IMPORTANCE is like the ocean tide; it flows in --- and flows out.

The people who make the most difference in your life are the ones that show you they care.

As a teen-ager, I heard - and remembered - this quote:
"People may not remember what you say or do, but they'll always remember how you made them feel."

My Junior English teacher *mercilessly graded* my English papers with a red ink pen!

"Redundant!" "Foolish comment!" "Unnecessary paragraph!" she wrote.

My feeling? I was humiliated.

By fate, I had her again in my Senior year.

I knew, now, how to write, however! And this is what she wrote with her red ink pen:

"Excellent!" "Beautifully said!" "Nice and clear!"

My feeling? I was elated.

I made straight A's in English at the University of Missouri.

I had someone who cared enough to force me write well!

My feeling? I was proud!

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Mrs. Johns died before I could ever personally thank her.

But, without a doubt, she is a huge limb on my tree!

I am sorry I never told her what she meant to me.

You have not succeeded ALONE -- nor have I.

It takes a "village" to make us *all that we CAN be!*

My suggestion is to tell people NOW what they've meant to you...while you still can.

Step 1 - Draw your tree.

Step 2 - Pick up the phone, send an email, or write a note to your "LIMBS"!

Step 3 - Thank them for what they've meant to you.

Recognition precedes gratitude!

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