

Greetings,

Everywhere we look people are picking sides. There have always been opposing views, and differences of opinions, but not like today. I find it difficult to stay in dialogue with someone if our views are too different. Usually, one of us is trying to make a convert of the other. I might suggest this is a widespread problem for many of us in our relationships. I wonder why it has gotten to this state. In the book "The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism" the author, Tim Keller, makes the following observation:

"How does this destruction of social relationships flow from the internal effects of pride? If we get our very identity, our sense of worth, from our political position, then politics is not really about politics, it is about *us*. Through our cause we are getting a self-worth. That means we *must* despise and demonize the opposition. If we get our identity from our ethnicity or socioeconomic status, then we *must* feel superior to those of other classes and races. If we are profoundly proud of being an openminded, tolerant soul, we will be extremely indignant toward people we think are bigots. If you are a moral person, you will feel very superior to people you think are amoral. And so on...

I am more comfortable applying this to everyone else, but I realize it applies to me. I have strong values and what I believe a strong moral compass. Great! However, if my position causes me to see others in a diminishing view, I am wrong and I need to work on my attitude. Life's circumstances have formed many of my opinions. The news I choose to consume; the books I choose to read; the people I choose to spend time with; all this shapes my views. If another person has walked a different path than I, and has influences in their life different than mine which causes them to see an issue from the opposing side, who am I to label them as being less than me?

The better response for me would be to ask them to help me understand their view. And, when they speak, LISTEN! If I am not asked to share my reasons, then I do not offer it. Simply, and kindly, say thank you.

Our Mission Statement at M & S Flooring is "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you." Matthew 7:12a

Our Core Values are to Act Justly, Love Mercy, Walk Humbly. Micah 6:8

These statements have proven to be strong guides as we make decisions for the company. If given the chance, they can help us stay in healthy dialogue with those different than ourselves. Might be worth the try. And, just maybe, we can be part of the solution to a kinder culture.

Thank you for reading.

Mike