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Gleanings

By Gerald R. Chester, Ph.D.

The Mustard Seed and The Golden Rule

On vacation this summer, my wife and I discovered a store called the Mustard Seed Clothing Company. We found the shop late in the day when we were already tired, and so initially, my wife was not inclined to go in. But as we walked by, something drew her into this quaint little boutique. She looked through the store and, as usual, I started to ponder other topics such as the energy crisis and the recent terrorist bombings in London. For some reason that I cannot explain, I lost my train of thought and found myself gazing at some words painted on the wall in the back of the store. As I stared at the words, I realized that these were the core values of the shop owner.

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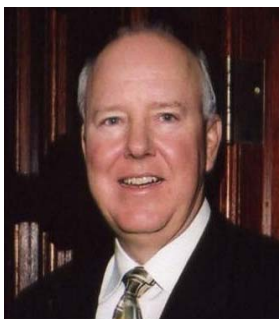
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The words were:

Think Deeply Speak Gently Love Much Laugh Often Work Hard Give Freely Dress Well

I found myself mesmerized by these pithy sayings; all of which reflect a high value system—other than the last “dress well” which arguably is self-serving as the shop is a ladies boutique. My wife was engrossed in the merchandise and failed to notice the sayings until I disturbed her with a request for paper and pen.



As we left the shop, I asked her if this was a good store. She said yes, the shop had a nice selection of quality merchandise that was fairly priced, and the staff was pleasant and not pushy. I realized that the store was trying to live up to its values.

As I reflected on the core values encapsulated by the seven succinct sayings, I understood that these sayings simply reflected more specifically how to practice the golden rule—“do to others as you would have them do to you.” Even the “dress well” finds a root in the golden rule because everyone enjoys the sight of a nicely dressed person.

The golden rule is a simple, yet powerful, concept. It is very much like the mustard seed that is the smallest of seeds, yet when it grows, becomes the biggest tree in the garden. When an organization practices the golden rule, it is metaphorically sowing “mustard seeds” that will grow and bless many.

My compliments to the Mustard Seed Clothing Company in Napa, California—may you grow and prosper, and always model how to practice the golden rule.

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