



Thanks

Thoughts on leadership
by Karl Pister



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A turning point of my life was my introduction into the Hispanic culture. When I was nineteen years old, I spent two years in Venezuela. Amazing experience.

Upon return, I studied Spanish as my major. I have had the marvelous opportunity to do translating and interpreting in a variety of settings, all of which have allowed me to dive deeply into this magnificent culture that permeates so much of our western hemisphere.

I could take weeks to describe what this has taught me, but I will keep it to gratitude.





Sadly, many of those living in these cultures live very unpredictable lives. Political and economic stress seems to be part of the fabric, for decades, for many of these countries and cultures, resulting in dire poverty for many. This economic inequity even follows them into this country.

However, in spite of that, it has been my experience, over decades of being in the homes and neighborhoods of the culture, that it is not a culture of complaint. Instead, quite the opposite.

Most comments on their current conditions, however precarious they might be, are usually hopeful and accompanied by the common phrase "*gracias a Dios*", or "*thanks be to God*".

This was driven home to me a couple of years back when participating in a community food drive. As the morning ended, I asked if a community of government farmworker housing had been visited. My question was rather awkwardly received, since the feeling was that most of that population would not have a lot to give.



However, my wife and I persisted, and off we went. Not only to that community, but to other areas of our town that I knew were heavily Hispanic. Home after home. Apartment after apartment. The same open and giving response. Our car returned to the collection center literally filled to the brim. Even in their poverty, they gave from their hearts. The deepest example of gratitude and giving. How grateful I am for the years of tutelage, by example, of what gratitude means.

From an article written more than seventy years ago:

We are thankful for blessings we cannot measure, for gifts we cannot appraise, "for books, music, art, and for the great inventions which make these blessings available ... ; for the laughter of little children; ... for the ... means for relieving human suffering ... and increasing ... the enjoyment of life; ... for everything good and uplifting."

And to elaborate on the phrase of 'relieving human suffering', I share the following...and for those whose beliefs might not share a belief in Deity, no offense intended. Please read it in a spirit of understanding and consider the important message:



Joe, had been asked to get up at six in the morning and drive a crippled child 50 miles to a hospital. He didn't want to do it, but he didn't know how to say no. A woman carried the child out to the car and sat him next to the driver's seat, mumbling thanks through her tears.

Joe said everything would be all right and drove off quickly.

After a mile or so, the child inquired shyly, "You're God, aren't you?"

"I'm afraid not, little fellow," replied Joe.

"I thought you must be God," said the child. "I heard Mother praying next to my bed and asking God to help me get to the hospital, so I could get well and play with the other boys. Do you work for God?"

"Sometimes, I guess," said Joe, "but not regularly. I think I'm going to work for Him a lot more from now on."

See the point? You don't have to do much to start, for someone, the cycle of gratitude, even in yourself.



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