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Working for the greater good

John Topp
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Working to achieve economic gain and striving to accumulate wealth are fundamental to our American life. It is the driving force behind unrestrained growth and our position in the world economy.

This position is the direct result of innovation, hard work and our system of self-governance that has created opportunity for all Americans to achieve at a high level.

Historically, America has sought balance between individual prosperity and a broad-based sharing of wealth, a concept that allows fresh innovation the chance to succeed and provides every American with an equal opportunity to achieve.

If left unchecked, however, the focus on achieving prosperity can cross a line where economic gain becomes our only focus and the sole measure of success. If we as a nation reduce the available opportunities for the general populace to achieve more, eventually all wealth will be directed to fewer and fewer people, and that broad brush of creativity will be stifled. When that happens, we'll all suffer the consequences.

Every person in a position of leadership should examine this delicate balance and make decisions that take into consideration not only short-term benefits but also long-term effects. Too many consider only what is best for their own self-interest, not the balanced interests of everyone's long-term success. No person can claim to be a leader if the concern is greater for self than for the interests of those one claims to be leading.

It's easy to become complacent once a certain status has been achieved. In today's world, without a continuous effort toward personal growth, additional achievement isn't possible. Without always seeking opportunities to do more, a decline of position or status will likely occur. There is simply no room in our world for a lack of 100 percent effort and continuous learning.

Doing our best

In the big picture, peoples' abilities vary. We won't all be valedictorians, but that's not necessary for success; however, we all must strive to be the best our ability allows, whatever the task. Whatever our job, we are all critical contributors to each others' success and to the success of our nation as a whole. Recognizing the importance of every individual's contribution fosters mutual respect and a sense of compassion versus an "achieve at any cost" mentality.

Building Advantage contractors and trade organizations believe in mutual respect and practice it every day on and off job sites -- a necessary habit for any project to be successful. We measure success not only for ourselves but what we achieve for the primary stakeholder, our customer.

No person is entitled to anything in this world, and nobody achieves success without the help of others. Genuinely working toward creating a civilized environment -- one in which we can all achieve and attain something better -- is the foundation of what America is. This attitude encourages the innovation process in those striving to find and create opportunities to succeed. That, in turn, will strengthen our communities and this great nation, allowing us to maintain our enviable position in the world economy.

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