

## **Integrity – Important Asset in Campground Business**

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Recently I noticed a full-page ad in the Sacramento Bee with these headlines: "The Way Things Used To Be...Integrity...The Way Things Ought To Be." The thought crossed my mind that this was certainly true. Integrity ought to be an important part of all of our lives.

To pursue the thought further, I consulted my friend Daniel Webster to study the word integrity. Here is what I found: (1) an unimpaired condition: soundness; (2) adherence to a code of moral, artistic, or other values; (3) the quality or state of being complete or undivided: completeness; see honesty, unity.

Pondering the statement I had read and the meaning of the word, I found myself wrestling with a question of why this had stirred my interest so much. Perhaps it is because I remember the teachings of my mother and father and my faith concerning right and wrong. Perhaps it is because a positive attitude about life and other people was instilled in me at an early age. Perhaps it is because I still remember that the "golden rule" is really a pretty good rule for life. Have I always followed it? No, few of us (if any) can claim that level of perfection.

Perhaps it was because I was lied to by two different businesses I dealt with recently in an effort to do some repairs to my home. Perhaps it is because I recently became aware of a lawsuit that is to include testimony from a National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds (ARVC) member and state association member against a campground owner who is also a member in both associations.

When business people tell lies, it really gets to me. But when people within my industry fight openly among themselves and knowingly say negative things, I am ready to go ballistic.

I received a call asking me to give testimony against this same park and management but I refused. My personal ethics simply would not allow it, no matter how much money was involved. Why? Because it is my industry, and I'll fight to keep any dirty laundry we might have within the family. If it has to go public, I will always be on the side of the park owner/manager. Please do not misunderstand this statement. I do not hold myself up as having any corner on always doing the right thing.

Perhaps it is because during much of my time in this industry I was privileged to be a member of a state association where members cared, really cared about each other. Yes, in some cases we were geographically located near each other - competitors as

one might say - yet there was this unwritten law that as members we all worked together to ensure as much as possible each others' success. If a new park was being built, it was often the closest park owner who invited them to the next unit meeting, perhaps even giving them a ride, encouraging them to climb aboard the association train to success.

One of their themes was "Adjust Your Attitude with CTPA."

I think we all, or most of us at least, realized that when one prospered it was good for all of us. Many of us knew we shared some of the same guests from time to time. No one was so blind as to think ours was the only park our guests ever visited.

Recently the papers and news quoted Phil Jackson, coach of the LA Lakers, regarding the possibility of a rift between two of the team's stars. His comments were, we keep that type of thing within the family." And if you will recall, until that reported rift was settled, the Lakers were losing games. Only after it settled down did they return to winning ways.

It is my view that we need to study Daniel Webster's definition of the word integrity. If we do, we will notice that it is full of other words such as "soundness", a code of moral values, complete or undivided, and refers us to the words "Honesty" and "Unity." After studying the word, we need to practice its application.

We've all heard it said: "United we stand, divided we fall." I don't always agree with the way the national association, my state association or even park managers do things. To disagree is my right. However, it is also my God given obligation to strive to work to better my industry. That cannot be done at the same time any one member is assisting those who would seek to divide or destroy another member.

It is time that we "adjust our attitude!" It is time for us to put aside our jealousy, envy, personal vendettas and petty differences. The current challenge of rising gas prices and sluggish RV sales demands it!

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