

REFLECTIONS

February 6, 2005

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Accent-u-ate the positive ...

There's no hiding my age when I can recall the words of an old song that says, "Accent-u-ate the positive, eliminate the negative, and don't mess with Mr. In Between." But the wisdom of those words resonates with me.

It becomes so easy to focus on the bad that we see because we always seem to be surrounded by it. Yet by doing so, the good that is there can be lost from neglect.

Recently I had the privilege to hear Ken Blanchard speak to a Christian group. One of the salient points he made is how we so often damage relationships we have even with people that we love. We know that we all fall short of a perfect score of 100—no one is perfect. The harm to relationships comes by focusing on the faults that prevent one from achieving a 100. We accentuate the negative.

Blanchard goes on to point out that the Sea World trainers don't correct Shamu for doing the wrong thing. They reward the whale for doing the *right thing*—accent-u-ate the positive. But so often we become so caught up in correcting the deficiencies that cause ourselves and others to fall short of 100 that we lose sight of the qualities that we originally fell in love with—we lose sight of the qualities that we originally fell in love with.

Then there is the enterprise I know that prepared to replace its retiring leader. When identifying the strengths they wanted in the person they were looking for, they focused on the weaknesses of the retiring leader. The result was that the person they hired to replace him was deficient in the qualities that made the retiring leader successful.

There are certainly times when shortcomings need to be addressed, but even then they can usually be dealt with in a way that encourages improvement and builds up those we are addressing. So this week, let's try to live the words of the song—"Accent-u-ate the positive, eliminate the negative and don't mess with Mr. In Between. It will make a difference to those we love—and I expect the payback to be well worth the effort.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +