
Guiding Principles: The Value of Others

By [Tanner Ehmke](#)

Remembering the importance of respecting and valuing others this holiday season, here's a recap of this year's Guiding Principles on maintaining our most important relationships – family or otherwise.

[Steve Irsik](#): “My father always told my four brothers and me, ‘You boys need to get along. You need to work together.’ That’s the way he and his brothers operated and that philosophy was handed down to us.”

[Steve Henry](#): “No matter whether the farm is successful or if people are a part of the farm or not, we’re still family no matter what we do. Who we are as a family is more important than what we do for our occupation.”

[Kip Tom](#): “Show humility and respect to one another. You may disagree with somebody, but we need to show deep respect for employees, our neighbors, our community and the industry.”

[Lon Frahm](#): “Instead of following the Golden Rule of treating people as you want to be treated, follow the Platinum Rule: Treat people how they want to be treated. Not everyone wants to be treated the same way. Not everybody is you.”

[Reggie Strickland](#): “Family’s first. That’s always been our philosophy. No matter what goes on during the day in the business, we can’t carry that home to the family. We also treat our employees like they’re family.”

[Jeremy Jack](#): “We get along so well because we have that mutual respect for everybody. You don’t necessarily have to like everybody, but you have to respect others and you have to work together. Everyone’s got to work as a team.”

[Kristijan Hebert](#): “We try to make it a safe place to work for everybody. Our biggest worry is guys working long hours, so we try to have them working in teams just to keep an eye on each other.

[Bob Temple](#): “I grew up in a small community where I was related or connected to most of the town. I felt they were in my corner cheering me on to reach my God-given best. We strive to provide the same environment here. Together, we’re going to win or lose as a team. We want our team and customers to know and feel how much we appreciate them as well as their business.”

The Value of Job Descriptions

By [Davon Cook](#)

An important issue in strengthening human resources in family businesses is writing useful job descriptions. When you start to hire, the job description is important for two reasons:

1. The *process* of writing it forces *you* to think through the what, where, and how of this employee’s role. That helps you recruit more effectively and increases your chances of successful retention.
2. The *information* provided helps the *candidate* make an informed decision. A job description eliminates some of the ambiguity and helps him/her ask informed questions.

What should the job description include? In my opinion, the category titles are less important than the quality of the information included – and the value of the reflection that helped create it.

- **Position Title:** The title should only emerge after your planning process, that is after you really understand what you want the person to do and how he/she fits into the organization.
- **Purpose:** Why is this person there? What goal are you asking them to accomplish for the organization?
- **Company Background:** This is an optional and *brief* description of your company to educate and recruit.
- **Responsibilities or Duties:** List the tasks this person will do every week. Segment the year by months as you build your duties list to remember major activity themes.



- **Qualifications:** This describes the “checklist” that a candidate must meet to be considered. It would include education, experience, language skills, etc.
- **Expectations or Standards:** Emphasize work standards, expectations or values that are particularly important to this position or your organization in general.
- **Relevant details:** There is certainly more conversation needed in the interview and hiring process to clarify expectations of hours, benefits and compensation, but including general guidance in the job description helps screen for realistic candidates at the beginning.

I provide some more explanation about each of the above [on our blog](#). Sometimes writing job descriptions seems tedious, but the return on investment both for you and the applicant is significant.

Talking Charity during the Holiday Season

By [Dr. Conny Bogaard](#)

Despite their reputation for being entitled, needy and self-absorbed, many millennials do care about the world. Mark Zuckerberg’s [recent announcement](#) to pledge 99% of his Facebook shares to charity may be a case in point. Yet not everyone is in a position to give \$45 billion away during their lifetime. Altruism is not a privilege of the super wealthy however; charity really begins at home. The holiday season is a prime opportunity to celebrate the spirit of giving and inspire philanthropic traditions.

The earliest lessons about giving have to be simple. For instance, if you buy food for a needy family at Christmas, explain to your children that people who don’t have enough money to buy things sometimes need our help. Explain the origin of the holiday too – that Jesus was born in poverty, and put in a manger because there was no other place for him.

Or, you may ask your kids, “If you had a million dollars to give away, what causes would you support?” Be sure to ask “Why?” After the kids have had turns, share your own thoughts about how you’d disburse such a sum. What vital needs do you care about? What really motivates you to give? Our society offers tax deductions on charitable giving – Zuckerberg’s mega donation is an important reminder of how our tax system works. Yet there ought to be something more that drives us.

Millennials typically like to think of themselves as not just donors, but investors. They want to feel engaged and be part of the mission. Traditional fundraisers such as gala-dinners and mailed solicitations may not excite them, but give them the opportunity to be actively involved and they may become a lifelong supporter down the road.

Before parents can convey their values about money and philanthropy to their children, they need to examine just what their own values are. Knowing how you feel about using money and the organizations you support will help you guide the next generation in creating a better world.

Faith and Family Business: Enlarging Life

By [Dr. Bill Long](#)

One of the illustrious people we lost this year was the neurologist [Oliver Sacks](#) (1933-2015). Bursting into public consciousness through his stunning case study essays in [The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat](#) (1985), Sacks consistently probed the lives of what we might call the people on the margins of life. He felt that they teach us many valuable lessons about living. In the last year of his life, as it became clear he was dying, he penned some remarkable essays on gratitude, essays which have now been put into a [little book](#) of that name.

His central point was that as we age, and as years turn to decades, rather than bemoaning the ever-greater restrictions on us, we should be grateful for the various “enlargements” of life available to us. As he said, “My father, who lived to 94, often said that the 80s had been one of the most enjoyable decades of his life. He felt, as I begin to feel, not a shrinking but an enlargement of mental life and perspective...” “I do not think of old age as an ever grimmer time...but as a time of leisure and freedom.”

As we turn to 2016, and as we all turn one year (and some of us, one decade) older, may our thoughts turn to the way that life has been and is being enlarged for us. Perhaps it is through business success or loss, of familial struggle or joy, of personal achievement or even failure. May 2016 be a year of enlargement for you, your family and your family business.

