

## The “L” Word

*by Jon Craighead*

Loyalty is defined as an allegiance, a sense of duty. It connotes a sentiment of devotion to others, an act of fidelity to a cause, country, and duty beyond one’s own self-interest. We are living in a time where self-indulgence and opinionating are too commonly the order of the day. We see multiple examples where people believe their rights supersede the rights of others. Like oil and water, we become united briefly by tragedy, then quickly separate again. This is not just an individual phenomenon; it is a corporate-guiding principle as well.

To survive, businesses need customers. When a substantial portion of our population is unable to buy our goods and services, our businesses suffer a significantly reduced success ratio. The most abundant periods in our history have been when there was a robust business environment of profit and growth from goods and services bought and sold. Now more than ever customer demand is shrinking, and multiple businesses across the country are failing. Profitability is generated today by capital rather than goods and services.

My commitment is that we return to our old and often forgotten American values proposition that everyone deserves a place at the table. There are many things that we can do to put unemployed people to work rather than mocking them as undeserving. I’m not suggesting throwing government money at everything, although some solutions will require government money.

An example is infrastructure repair and replacement. This process could immediately impact the employment dilemma. It’s badly needed and if not addressed soon will cause major safety and transportation issues that will be far more expensive later. Handling it now will create tax revenues to offset the costs.

Another possibility is educational retraining programs. Many unemployed are in that position because they have been replaced by technology which has rendered their jobs obsolete. In fact, there are even more available skilled jobs in commerce today than since the beginning of the recession, thus generating more revenue.

Another major concern is people working multiple jobs because they are not earning enough to stay above the poverty level. Recent reports of wage theft on workers in low

paying jobs adds to their financial woes. This situation challenges family stability, which creates youth issues as a result of insufficient parenting. This results in additional cost in government expenditures and long term psychological wellbeing. These untenable conundrums could be greatly impacted by a fair wage system. Corporations are making record profits with unprecedented cash reserves and are more than able to pay an equitable wage.

These are just some of the approaches that that could make an enormous contribution to the quality of life for many of our disenfranchised citizens.

Timothy Keiningham, Lerzan Aksoy, and Luke Williams authored a book titled Why Loyalty Matters which identifies loyalty as a groundbreaking approach to rediscovering happiness, meaning, and lasting fulfillment in life and work. The authors make the case that “loyalty is critical to our happiness as individuals and our health as a society, that loyalty improves our business performance and our satisfaction as employees.” They further put forward “we have made loyalty an old fashioned notion; an unimportant virtue and this has made us weaker as a society and less satisfied as individuals.”

I attend meetings both professionally and socially, and it’s my observation that people appear unhappy, dissatisfied, and unfulfilled. Many seem to prefer bonding with people like themselves and see others as a threat. This separates them from the general public. It’s as if people see their past and familiar experiences fading away and harbor a melancholy yearning for things to be as they were.

There is much needed and an abundance of talent available to resolve these issues, and the sooner we start the better. Looking outwardly rather than inwardly will greatly alter our worldview for the better. When we can see our own success in the success of others, we can accomplish great things. We’ll all do better when we all are doing better.