

A LIFE'S LESSON:

***If you want to care ABOUT something (but don't),
try caring FOR it first...***

— by Tony Wirebach

I see participating in local government a lot like picking up the towels off the floor in my own bathroom: I may not have put them there; they SHOULD be picked up, both to preserve the towels, the happy mood of my wife so that SHE doesn't have to do it herself. It is neither profitable, nor glamorous. I do it because it needs to be done.

Why me? — well, *why in the world NOT me!?!?*

I find that, at first, what appears to be a thankless chore, one that I do grudgingly, starts to become a quiet labor of love. Sweeping the porch, or fixing a broken door: the more I do FOR my house and my family, the more I feel vested IN my house and family. The more I care FOR something, both emotionally and in practice, the more that something becomes a part of me and my life. The very purpose of my existence: the culmination of actions and feelings about the things I have done, and the people I have done them for — *and with* — as a community.

People who don't care about their town have most likely spent little or no time caring *FOR* their town. That's not a criticism, because we are all busy, and we all have our own priorities. But pick up some trash or sweep up some leaves and things will change for you. Not overnight, and not too dramatically at first, but, over time ... all good stewards in life grow a strong attachment to the things for which they have labored. We can't help it. It is built into our DNA.

The same holds true for relationships ... If there is a part of your life that is lacking, don't despair because life has not given you what you are hoping for. You've got to pay it forward: Do something. Work. If you want people to reach out and show that they love you, love someone first — not emotionally, but ***actively***, with sincere and selfless acts of service. If you want to be cared about, care FOR someone or something that matters to others. People may "friend" you on FaceBook. But "liking" a post online takes less than a second. It's better than nothing, but a far cry from shoveling an elderly neighbor's sidewalk or helping them catch their dog when it has run away. Real "likes" take time and effort, and real connections happen on the street, not in the chat room.

If you want to care ABOUT something (*or someone*), try caring FOR something (*or someone*) first. Yes, it takes work. Yes, it takes time. Yes, there are absolutely NO guarantees the world will pay you back in kind for your efforts. And No, there are no guarantees it will save you from hardship. *Do it anyway*. It will help, I promise you, and your life will be richer and more fulfilled because of it.

Of course, if you *REALLY* want to help, the first step — *always* — is just showing up, and BCP is as good a place to start as any. Join us. Watch and Learn. Then step onto the field and see what happens. Before you know it, you might just start caring about something beyond just yourself and your own property, and maybe make a new friend or two along the way.