

Leaders Speak Words of Life

Someone once said it's not paranoia if people actually are talking behind your back. Perhaps we've all had that sinking feeling prior to leaving a meeting early.

Have you ever wondered what others will be saying about you after you leave?

Effective leaders are intentional about back talk. Leaders have an instinct about finding something good to say behind the backs of their teammates. It's not that difficult to offer a good word about the recently departed. Regardless of what is said, we can be certain that our words will get back to the absent.

"Pastor was saying some real nice things about you after you left the meeting." Keep the plaques, trophies and appreciation lunches. Speak well of me behind my back, I will hear about it.

Obviously, we speak well of everyone to their face but there is something very comforting to know that the boss tells others good things about me. We all need to know that our gifts are appreciated.

In that same vein, allow me to share a story from my TV days. I remember a general manager who wrote a personal note of praise about my work ... to my wife. It was like an elementary school report card sent to my parents. The manager thanked my wife for allowing her husband to work the demanding schedule of a TV station. The boss listed several things he liked about my work and how much he appreciated what I brought to the station.

Obviously, my wife shared the letter with me and was so thankful to know her husband's work was appreciated. In my 40-year career, I've only received one such letter. The leader

went on to lead in much bigger roles and it isn't difficult to understand his success.

I offer two action steps in today's message:

- Find good things to say about others when they aren't in the room.
- Write personal notes of appreciation. Write words of life

Leaders use their good words to encourage excellent work.