

What Type of Culture Are You Fertilizing Among Your Followers?

Have you thought lately about the culture you are developing in the world around you? You might be too busy with deadlines, meetings, appointments, details and preparation to remember that you are a “culture builder.” However, every single one of us is building some type of culture in the atmosphere around us whether we are aware of it or not.

A culture is built on the foundation of our intrinsic value system, so the first question that must be addressed is, “What do I value?”

The answer to that question can be determined by examining the philosophical, emotional and spiritual principles that represent the life that you have built.

I was speaking with a young man recently who was contemplating starting his own production company, and I asked him this question, “What type of culture will you fertilize among your employees?”

He was quick to answer that his passion was to build a culture of encouragement, of creativity, of honor and of integrity. He knew who he was and what type of working environment was important to him. I smiled at him as I realized that perhaps it wasn't his exact answer that was so vital but just the fact that he even had an answer at his age that was of greatest significance. This Millennial knew who he was and what he valued.

So, let me ask you again, “What do you value?”

When you can answer that question, you can begin to examine

the culture that you have built among your staff members, your family and your church.

Several months ago, I was caught in the crossfire of a contract dispute, and I continued to tell the man who was representing me, "I will be kind, and I will be a woman of integrity."

Kindness and integrity are equal parts of my core value system, and I have endeavored to build that kind of spiritual and philosophical atmosphere in my home and in my ministry.

Another value that has always defined the woman that I am is the word "celebration." I believe that life this side of eternity is unbelievably short, and that every day is a good day to celebrate God's goodness, His faithfulness and His mercy. I take great joy in celebrating ordinary days and in applauding the common stuff of a miraculous life.

For years, when my husband was a senior pastor of a growing church, we had a staff gathering every Wednesday evening for dinner. Each week had a specific theme of celebration. One week we celebrated the color red, and everyone had to wear red clothing and then bring something red to eat. (Think about spaghetti, red Jell-O, strawberry cheesecake and a tomato salad.) Another week, we celebrated breakfast, and everyone had to wear appropriate pajamas. Each staff family brought their favorite breakfast dish including such gourmet offerings as an oatmeal bar with all the toppings, an egg and cheese casserole, fruit salad and pancakes. One week, we declared that it was the week of the letter "L" for "Life Church." You guessed it—everyone was required to wear a T-shirt with a word that had an "L" in it and to bring a dish that began with the letter "L." (Lemon bars, linguini, lettuce salad and luscious and lovely appetizers were on the menu that night.)

What fun we had coming up with new themes and laughing over our attempts to eat the smorgasbord of creativity! Those three

hours of weekly celebration cemented our hearts together in friendship and in unity in a way that lingers even today—years later.

What kind of culture have you built? What type of atmosphere are you endeavoring to promote in your ministry environment? What are the character traits that you place great value upon?

The answers to those three questions are vital to your success as a leader.