

Unleashing N.S.'s power starts with you

BARB STEGEMANN CULTURE SHIFT – Halifax Chronicle Herald Feb 7, 2009

WE ARE WIRED to believe whatever we perceive. So if you believe your community or workplace will never amount to anything, that's exactly what will happen. Or if we believe we work for the greatest organization on earth with a mission to make people's lives better, then we will indeed find ourselves building such organizations and communities. It's physiological.

We can make all the excuses we like. We can call it the February blues; we can even blame it on the current economy. But the fact remains that when Chris Power, the CEO of Capital Health, has to send out a memo to staff at one of our largest employers in Nova Scotia to come to work with a better attitude or stay home, we need to take a look at the story we're living. Is it life-affirming? If not, what can we do within our power to change it?

In her memo to health care personnel, Ms. Power called for an end to the complaining and urged people to get on with the task of healing the sick and injured.

"There are challenges and there are shortages. That isn't going to change," she said. "What is going to change is that we are going to stop talking about what we can't do and start doing what we can do."

How do you remain positive and soar if you find yourself surrounded by people who gossip, create fear and ignore your idea because it was not theirs? Martin Rutte, co-author of the bestselling *Chicken Soup for the Soul at Work*, has a few suggestions.

In a recent phone interview he told me he is participating in a movement he's calling the New Prosperity.

The movement recognizes the challenges we face, but also how they can force us to focus on what is really important: family, meaning and spirituality. With that shift can come new kinds of accomplishments and new kinds of success that are in line with our deeper values and a sustainable future.

"Some province is going to be the first to come out of the recession. Why not Nova Scotia? We can just as easily be the first, if we choose to be the New Prosperity," says Rutte.

"If 900,000 Nova Scotians say, 'We are in a recession and there is nothing I can do about it' and take on a negative attitude, then we are stuck in quicksand. But if 900,000 people say, 'We're participating in a New Prosperity' and each of us commits to doing one thing today to manifest that prosperity, then things start to turn — and fast!"

He says the beginning gestures can be as simple as tipping the parking attendant a dollar or believing and supporting someone in their vision or dream. It can be contributing a penny a day to a charity so you keep the money flow moving.

Rutte believes in Nova Scotia and its potential so profoundly that he is the founder and chairman of the board of the Centre for Spirituality and the Workplace at the Sobey School of Business at Saint Mary's University.

Years ago, Dale Carnegie wrote the bestseller *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, in which he promoted the Three Cs: Never complain, condemn or criticize. If we are to live in this new paradigm of which Mr. Rutte speaks, we too must focus on three new Cs for the workplace: take Control by instilling Confidence in those around us and showing Compassion.

Do you have an idea on how we might create the New Prosperity in Nova Scotia? Share your idea with me at barb@the7virtues.com and the five best answers will each receive signed copies of *Chicken Soup for the Soul at Work* and *The 7 Virtues of a Philosopher Queen*. The top five will also be showcased in the next Culture Shift column in March.

It starts with you and we're starting it right now. Unleash the new prosperity and creativity in this province.

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