

August, 2023 Report from Pastor Mike

*"So let's agree to use all our energy in getting along with each other. Help others with encouraging words; don't drag them down by finding fault." The Message - Romans 14:19*

I am in a leadership group that listens to the podcast "The Non-Anxious Leader." The podcast is based in Family Systems Theory and looks at how we can become better at being a non-anxious presence in our family life, work life, etc. One of the recent episodes featured an article that was an extract from the book, *How We Ended Racism: Realizing a New Possibility in One Generation*.

The discussion in the podcast reminded me of one of the values that we adopted in our work with Paul Nixon. It reads, "At Catalina, we build people up—especially important in a world where people often feel beat up and discouraged, even at church!" That is a wonderful and *difficult* value to hold! I doubt I succeed more than 20% of the time! And that goes for Paul's words to the Romans in the above quotation. How hard it is to use our energy to get along as opposed to dragging down!

I think part of the reason is because we live in a sea of examples of tearing down others. I imagine that you see, like I do, the many arenas of our culture where a different value is in play: tear the other down (before they tear you down). We do this on social media, politics, some reality shows and am sure in some of our daily lives (at work, in families, etc.). The number of examples around us of people tearing each other down are far and above the examples of those of people building one another up.

I will provide a link below to the podcast and to the article that was used for episode, and I encourage you to check them out. But I want to share what was, for me, one of the most eye opening statements in the article.

Authors Justin Michael Williams and Shelly Tygielski write, "It's well documented in studies in the fields of psychology, anthropology, sociology, and even neuroscience that **shaming, blaming, and guilt**ing someone shuts down the center of their brain responsible for learning and growth." What that tells me is that when we engage in tearing others down, we shut down their ability to even learn—that coming from that direction, we will close off communication. On the other side, then, that also tells me that building others up always comes from a different place. It can never involve shame, blame, and guilt.

As you might imagine, the article discusses how we can engage with other people helping them and us grow in the process (build one another up). I will leave it up to you as to whether you want to read further. But I think the article is helpful in examining how we can live out our value of building one another up. In the author's words, we do that by calling others forward rather than calling them out. Like I said, that's difficult work. But living Christ's way is likewise hard work. I know it's hard for me.

Here are the links: Article: <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/calling-people-forward-instead-of-out-ten-essential-steps/>. Podcast (episodes 276 & 277): <https://thenonanxiousleader.com/podcast/>. (Scroll down on the site to see all episodes.)