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MARKETING MINUTE

See You on the Mountaintop!



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“ Find a way to see the richness in who you are becoming. ”

I grew up skiing. I hated it when I was young. I'm so old now that I swear I've seen my skis hanging on the wall in the lodge at Seven Springs Mountain Resort. Why did I hate it? Well, the skis on the wall are old wooden skis with a cable strap mechanism that held my leather laced boots in place, but only kind of.

A hard turn or an easy fall would knock the skis off and it took what seemed like hours to get them back on after scraping snow out of the "bindings". As a child, this was torture. My father was wise, however, and he knew what a mountaintop experience was and while this was "cold hell", he knew that I would eventually get at least a view from the top.

My dad, an accomplished skier, now nearing 90 years old, shared a story with me years ago that I think epitomizes the real mountaintop experience. Dad was invited to ski Squaw Valley with a successful business man acquaintance.

As dad and his friend entered the gondola heading to the top of the mountain, his friend, used to boasting, went on about how good of a skier he was. My quiet father has always chosen to let his actions do his talking for him and remained silent. Of course, he was wondering if he would be able to keep up with this guy and beginning to doubt his own abilities. The truth emerged when the guy broke out in a cold sweat as they exited the gondola.

The panorama of the mountaintop, clearly a view this man had never seen before, exposed his false claims of having ever skied a day in his life. This wasn't his mountaintop, he simply took a ride to the top. He didn't claw his way or work his way to the top of this mountain. My dad had. He laced five kids' boots and scraped snow out of cable bindings with his frozen fingertips for years, preparing himself and his children for their chance on top.

Sometimes, like in skiing, the real work to get to the mountaintop happens on the decent. I had the exact same experience skiing as my father did when I was an invited guest to ski Summit County with some older businessmen.

My ski partner that morning was an Electrical Contractor who happened to be passionate about fine wine. This boastful and powerful man had no business being on a mountaintop,

let alone on the bunny slope. Like my father, we both took hours to guide our friends safely to the bottom, where they belonged, inside the warming lodge, beside my old skis on the wall near the fireplace.

We can find ourselves jealous of other's successes. But I am finding myself drawn more towards jealousy of those that have suffered, those who's lives have been lived in the valley.

Mother Theresa lived her life scooping up unlovable, discarded humans from stinky sewers. Her mountaintop was not a high elevation, but a high calling. I respect Elon Musk's vision because I'm an engineer, but how amazing would it be if Elon Musk turned his focus outward?

One of our world's most accomplished thinkers was Chuck Colson. A figure in Watergate, Colson was transformed from his time in prison. He was born to go to prison, because it was there that he learned to restore hope to the hopeless through his deep valley experience behind bars.

These are but a few examples from history that surround us, yet we still fight and claw for our residence at the top. The top of the mountain is simply a place to get a better view of where we need to fight our battles. You will never win a battle from the top of a mountain. In the valley is where the action is.

The soil is rich in the valley and the growth is unimaginable. For wine lovers, a trip to Napa VALLEY, not Napa SUMMIT is where you go. The richness left in the Napa Valley soil through the glacial struggles have made the area what it is.

I want to challenge you today that no matter the name and identity of your valley, find a way to see the richness in who you are becoming so when you get to the mountaintop, you will appreciate the struggle that it took to get there. Then, don't Move in, Move on!

Take a selfie and head back down and help someone else get to the top, at least for just a moment.

