



SAYING GOODBYE TO 2020 WITH GRATITUDE

By Matt Peterson

This past year has been a tough one; a year which was, for many, filled with suffering and loss and I for one, alongside most others, could not wait for 2021 to commence. In reflecting on the last 12 months, I have consciously decided to adopt a different mentality for what lies ahead. I recently came across a quote from the theologian Paul Tillich which read “suffering introduces you to yourself and reminds you that you are not the person you thought you were.” It was followed by the comment, “suffering teaches us gratitude.” Wow.

So, in retrospective, I choose to reflect on 2020 with gratitude. I am grateful for my family and for their health. Not all of us can say that this year, and for that I am truly grateful. I am grateful for my relationships, both professional and personal. This past year has shown the strength of these relationships and the faults of others. Some date back only a few months, others date back to preschool. It is through times of challenge and hardship when you really find out, and are reminded, of who your true friends are and who has your back.



OPINION PIECE

Below is an anecdote that I recently read that, unfortunately describes so much of our society today:

“One day a teacher wrote 10 math problems on the board, intentionally answering the first one incorrectly. Upon completing the task, the students began to snicker and laugh – pointed out how silly and “dumb” the teacher was for answering the first problem with the wrong answer. When the laughter subsided, the teacher sat on the edge of the desk and in a calm and quiet voice said, “I wrote that first one wrong on purpose because I wanted you to learn something important. This was for you to know how the world out there will treat you. You can see that I wrote the RIGHT answer 9 times, but none of you congratulated me for it. But you all laughed and criticized me because of one wrong thing I did.”

The story can teach us all a valuable lesson: in this day and age, we do not tend to focus on the good or the uplifting; instead, the attention is often purely on what we or someone has done wrong. We are quick to criticize others, rather than embracing the positive outcomes, successes, and the overall achievements. As we have turned the page on 2020 and look to 2021, I look forward to embracing a more positive mindset, both personally and professionally, and to start celebrating the small things rather than dwelling on the negatives and failures.

Finally, I am grateful for my own health, both physically and mentally. Too often, it seems, we put undue pressure on ourselves and take on the burden of companies, organizations and even communities. This weight that we carry can be a financial burden, but it can also take on many other forms. I was hosting a management forum and was asked how, as leaders, can we manage everything that is thrown at us on a weekly, daily, or even hourly basis. After talking through a few ideas and tools, I reflected and made one more comment, “... and be kinder to yourself.”



OPINION PIECE

About the Author

Matt Peterson has been active in executive search since early 2005. Prior to joining his father at Greger/Peterson Associates in 2007, he served as a Director of Recruitment for Rydek Professional Staffing in Los Angeles. In this capacity, he filled pharmaceutical and IT positions, and was responsible for both developing new clients and filling their needs on a national level. Matt began his recruiting career as a research analyst for the Cates Consulting Group, also in Los Angeles. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business and Economics from the University of California, Santa Barbara and a Masters Certificate in Hospitality Management from Cornell University. More recently, Matt has furthered his education at the University of California, Los Angeles studying personal and corporate tax.

Matt is actively involved in the Alumni Board of Loyola High School, sits on the Board of United Cerebral Palsy's Los Angeles Chapter and is a Member of the Board of Trustees for Children's Bureau.

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