



The Building Community Institute

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E-Newsletter

"The Foundation"™

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COMING SOON

Clifton L. Taulbert's
Monthly e-Video Series*:
Unleashing the Power of Community

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2009– Let's Talk Habits

Habits are difficult to break.

We all know this, yet many of us continue down a familiar path of bad habits ignoring the negative impact upon self and others. During the month of December, I spent a great deal of time in several California Prisons, working directly with inmates who, for the most part, were incarcerated due to bad habits. Habits, once formed can be controlling as if they have a mind and destiny of their own. In my talk with the inmates to begin a mental process of thinking differently to change their habits, I came to the realization of the challenge that would face them. Bad habits act as if they are kin and deserve to remain a permanent part of our lives. But they are not kin! We picked them up along the way, maybe without realizing the consequences of doing so. While on the other hand, good habits, if not picked up early on are as difficult to start as bad ones are to break! My conversations with the inmates drove this reality home to me. In a recent meeting with my doctor who was prescribing for me, a new eating and exercise regimen, I too realized the difficulty of dropping my old habits and picking up good ones even though they could extend and impact the quality of my life. For me personally, to break my old habits, I'll need a new vision of who I want to be and how I want to live the rest of my life. According to one Dr. Martin Luther King, "Without a Vision, the People will perish." And I say, without a positive vision to drive our daily personal actions, we will continue to do what we have always done. If we continue bad habits, we will continue to reap bad consequences, but we have a choice. Remember, good habits are also hard to break.

So let's talk 'Good Habits' as we embrace the New Year and our new opportunity.

Let's talk about the good we want to do on a consistent basis. Let's discuss what we'd like to start and continue without interruption. Let's think about forming good habits that become a way of life-for us as individuals, for us as employers, for us as employees and for us as citizens of our country. This may be the ideal time to think about embracing and becoming, the "Eight Habits of the Heart." Yes, you are right; I always come back to the foundation I know to be sure and solid. The Eight Habits, I encountered while growing up in the Mississippi Delta-Nurturing Attitude, Responsibility, Dependability, Friendship, Brotherhood/Sisterhood, High Expectations, Courage and Hope. If embraced and intentionally lived out, they can indeed change the picture of inmates being released to society. They can also show up in paneled board-rooms causing members to make decisions, not motivated by greed, but decisions that reflect honesty and integrity. Good habits can be powerful!

Beyond home, work and play, we also have responsibility for the well-being of our nation.

What we, as citizens, do on a daily basis matters. The longevity of a nation so conceived and so dedicated depends upon the type of habits of life we embrace and live out daily. On Main Street and Wall Street... good habits matter! Our democratic form of government depends upon relationships being built and connectivity among its people. This was recognized nearly two hundred years ago by the visiting Frenchman, Alexis de Tocqueville. In spite of our economic downturn, this year starts out with incredible promise-a reality that de Tocqueville would not recognize. We have much to celebrate and even more work to do. As a nation of diverse people, we must be resolute in our decision to live by, and govern by positive timeless and universal principles as embedded within the Eight Habits of the Heart. The regimen to ensure our nation depends upon each of us stepping up to become and remain a community of citizens where all are valued and sharing our lives comes naturally. Let's become the 'good habits' we wish to encounter.

A Continuing Conversation -

Join me at my blog (<http://www.thepowerofcommunity.blogspot.com>) and let's discuss the 'Good Habits' we want to see and how we can bring these habits into our lives. I look forward to our conversation...

- Clifton L. Taulbert