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"Community Capitalist," May 7, 2009

Where have all the good people gone?

By Ron Kitchens

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One of my favorite singers/songwriters is Jack Johnson. In one of Jack's more introspective songs, he asks the question, "Where have all the good people gone?"

I am not unlike Jack; sometimes, I find myself thinking the same thing. These days, it is easy to lose faith in your fellow man and our future.

It seems lately that we are constantly bombarded by the national media and gossipmongers with stories of our fellow man's bad behavior. For instance, businessmen are portrayed by the media as greedy crooks and buffoons. Yet there are no stories of the great companies that continue to create jobs, contribute to charity and build wealth.

I was born to be an optimist, but even I have been catching myself dropping into a funk. But, I am quick to remind myself that these are isolated accounts. In truth, the above examples are the equivalent of a media car crash. It is hard to drive by without looking, but, like cars on the side of the road, it is a rare percentage that is actually in the crash.

In truth, there are heroes everywhere. Ever been on an airplane with a crying baby and forgot to focus on all the other passengers? You just have to take the time to look around yourself and focus on the good rather than the bad.

There is little doubt that this summer is going to be a difficult one in terms of our economy and the incessant negativity that it will bring. But I refuse to allow this negativity to define who I am and what success my company will achieve this year and in the future.

So here is my plan for the summer:

I am going to laugh. I am going to surround myself with people and places that bring me joy.

I am going to reread "Atlas Shrugged" by Ayn Rand. This is without a doubt the best book ever written about capitalism and what can happen if we get too far away from it.

I am going to exercise. There is little I can do about the shape of my 401(k) but there is a lot I can do about the shape of me. Not to mention studies show people who work out daily achieve 15 percent more than those who don't.

I am going to work harder than others think is sane. It is during down times that great companies are cast. During the Great Depression, the Procter & Gamble Co. went

from a small regional company to the dominant consumer-products company in the world. It achieved results not because it cut back its efforts but because it doubled its efforts.

I am going to spend a few minutes each day in humble gratitude for the grace in my life and for the great men and women who get up daily, committed to doing the right thing. I will ask that God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

There are good people and good stories all around us. Our challenge is to see them, to celebrate them and to make a personal commitment to not allow the negativity of others define our future.

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