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That's the Spirit!

by
**Darwin
Gillett**



Sharing the Wealth of Corporate Energy

Several years ago I spoke to a group of strategic planners, financial consultants and business executives about the role of human energy in the functioning of organizations, specifically the role of "heart energy" such as faith in positive outcomes, trust in fellow workers and a sense of service to customers.

Toward the end of the presentation, a planning executive could no longer contain herself. She burst out, saying, "Your comments make me feel emasculated!" I was stunned; while I knew beforehand that I would be challenged in trying to describe the qualities and importance of the heart to a group of executives, I had not expected such an emotional outburst.

Rather than try to explain further or defend the position, I chose to step back to let nature take its course. Within a few seconds, an older gentleman in the back of the room spoke. "I think I know what Dar is referring to." This man then proceeded to tell the following story:

"When I was a young financial analyst at Xerox many years ago, I went to get on the elevator to go home after working late. When the doors opened for me, the company's CEO and an important visitor were already inside. The CEO first greeted me then turned to his

visitor and said, 'I'd like you to meet Jim. Jim works in the financial analysis department and he's one of the reasons that our company is so successful.' Until that moment, I had no idea that the CEO even knew my name. Yet here he was, introducing me to an important outside guest and honoring my contributions to the company! No amount of financial compensation could have bought the loyalty that I immediately felt for my company and for that CEO."

A hush fell over the group. Everyone sat quietly, awed by this simple testimony to a heart connection in corporate America.

To this day, people who attended that program still remind me of what a great meeting it was. For me, it's a vivid example of how one person can make a difference in another person's life and how that person, in turn, can pass it along to others. That "spark" can't be captured in a phrase or a concept. Rather, it's an important energy that in the end is the fuel of all human endeavor.