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2nd Period

Book Review

Influencing People Everyday

“How To Win Friends And Influence People” by Dale Carnegie starts with an enticing story of “Two Gun” Crowley. The opening issue is about handling people, “If You Want To Gather Honey, Don’t Kick Over the Beehive.” Carnegie acquaints you with the story of two of America’s famous criminals in history, Al Capone and Crowley, and how they never blamed themselves for the many lives they took. Al Capone was actually quoted as saying that “I have spent the best years of my life giving people the lighter pleasures, helping them have a good time, and all I get is abuse, the existence of a hunted man.” Carnegie then explains how these notorious criminals can be blameless in their minds simply because people do not criticize themselves.

These stories surprised me in the fact that these criminals actually made these statements. I actually spent the time to verify this because I could not understand how someone could possibly say something so utterly immoral. Al Capone and even Crowley did in fact say those things and after reading the entire section I understand what they were possibly thinking. With the inability to condemn themselves for their mistakes, perhaps they did feel that they had done absolutely nothing wrong. According to Carnegie this is because criticism hurts ones pride and sense of importance, which to me makes perfect sense; however, I doubt that this is the reason behind these quotes. In

writing Carnegie seems accurate but I have never experienced denial to the level of his examples.

Carnegie, after two more stories, then moves on to the next topic of how to get people to like you. The most used word in telephone conversations is surprisingly the word “I”. The point is made that you can make more friends in a very short time by simply being interested in others instead of yourself. A psychologist made a very good observation, “It is the individual who is not interested in his fellow men who has the greatest difficulties in life and provides the greatest injury to others.”

It seems obvious enough that almost everyone in society today defiantly is all about “I” and not you. However, they expect the opposite reaction from others. Carnegie uses a perfect quote for this section. People do not realize it but caring about themselves only harms people rather than benefits them.

The third section discusses winning people to your way of thinking. Carnegie states that an argument cannot in fact be won, but only convinces the opposing sides that they are even more correct. So it is suggested to avoid arguments rather than arguing until one side is embarrassed and angry when proven wrong. Someone once said, “A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still.” This quote very merely states that when someone is confronted with an argument they will end up still of the same opinion they began with. According to Carnegie there is only one way to win an argument and that is to avoid arguments.

Carnegie makes perfect sense in this section. People will argue more and more when you stick to your opposing opinion. However, when someone simply agrees with you and backs down on their argument, it makes you feel surprised and unsure, possibly

changing your stand on the debated topic. Realistically, though, I do not believe that agreeing with people will change their mind. It may have worked for the example stories in Carnegie's book but I believe there are too many people who will just take advantage of you if you give in to an argument. Carnegie's story about the income tax consultant and the government tax inspector would rarely occur. Most people would take advantage of not having to quarrel and modestly have it their way. I tried this advice out with my parents, friends, and a teacher. The results were nothing like the examples Carnegie wrote in his book. I lost my argument and felt like all I accomplished was being a push over. Perhaps I approached it incorrectly or maybe it was the incorrect situation.

The last section is how to change people without offending or causing bitterness. One of President Lincoln's most famous letters was written to General Hooker, a Civil War General for the Union. The history at the time was the Civil War could have been ended if Hooker had attacked General Lee's remaining troops. Naturally Lincoln was livid and wrote General Hooker a letter. To Lincoln's credit he started of the letter with praise but then soon changed to pointing out Hooker's faults. Lincoln put the letter away when he was finished with it because he realized the letter would do no good for the country or General Hooker. President Lincoln was shot soon after that and the letter was never sent to General Hooker, but was found and kept to this day.

The last section is so applicable to anyone's life, no matter what scale it is on. From a president to a general, or even a teacher to a student, it is the same reasoning. Every student thrives on praise, either from teachers or parents. I know that when I get poor grades its seems that my dad only focuses on those bad grades and they are constantly shoved in my face. When I get an exceptional grade on a test I still feel like a

little kid bringing home a grade cause I want that little bit of praise from my dad. When I do bring home those grades and get one word of praise but a hundred words of criticism, it crushes that feeling of “I did so well”. A little praise goes a long way, and little criticism goes a lot farther in a negative way.