

GRANNY SAID ...

Dear *Tennessee's Business* readers:

I loved my Granny. She worked in a laundry to support her family. In spite of being uneducated, she was very wise. She did not like my brother and me to fight and call each other names. When we were caught at this, she would say, "I guess I'll just whip you both so I'll be sure I got the right one." That caused us to decide that it wasn't in the interest of one to try to get the other in trouble.

Names and words are so powerful; they have the ability to bring together and the ability to pull apart—particularly when used as labels.

Take the words *labor* and *management*, which conjure up divisions, strict boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. One cannot be both. You must choose: are you labor or management?

The same thing happens in academia, where the labels are "faculty" and "administration." When longtime faculty members take administrative positions, they are suddenly "administration." Did their values change? Are the things they worked for and cherished for many years no longer important? Did the goals they held in common with colleagues vanish?

We might be well advised to find commonalities—shared visions, consistent values, congruent goals—and internalize what seems obvious on the surface, that all parts are necessary and the whole is more than the sum of the parts when the parts work together and seek the common good. But history indicates that this is difficult to implement.

The idea that all parts are necessary has been around at least since Biblical times. In 1 Corinthians, chapter 12, in a section referred to as "One Body, Many Parts," we read:

- 12 *The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts: and though its parts are many, they form one body.*
- 25 *There should be no division in the body, but its parts should have equal concern for each other.*
- 26 *If one part suffers, every part suffers with it: if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.*

This analogy utilizes body parts to illustrate commonality of interests and the necessity for all to work together for the whole person to perform at a maximum level—hardly a difficult

concept to grasp, since we see it constantly at work in our own bodies. As an illustration, tape your thumbs against your hand to render them unusable and go about your normal tasks. Even though you still have four other digits on each hand, you will quickly discover the contributions made by the thumbs. Can you do many, maybe most, things without thumbs? Probably! But it certainly is harder. Or consider the situation when just one of your teeth hurts. Doesn't your whole body seem to hurt?

So we should be able to learn from our own experiences and translate these into organizational concepts and truths. Unfortunately, that is not always the case.

The Tennessee Center for Labor-Management Relations recognizes the significant value each group—labor and management—brings to business and recognizes the multiplier effect that can be attained when the groups work together to achieve a common purpose. The center works with organizations to help these groups understand and internalize that there is only one body, one organization, one highest and best good. Working together, that can be attained. Working independently, it cannot. Working against each other, it cannot even be dreamed of.

Some would say the center doesn't take sides. More accurately, it works to help find the best side, involving cooperation, joint effort, and perhaps even some sacrifice of independence.

The center is a partnership of the Tennessee Department of Labor, labor, management, and MTSU. Each brings something unique and necessary to the partnership; without each, the center would be less than it is. So it is with every organization.

With this issue of *Tennessee's Business*, we celebrate the contributions of labor and management to the growth and prosperity of Tennessee and the contributions of the center to the businesses of Tennessee.

Perhaps you were not so fortunate as to have a Granny like mine. For your organization, the center might sometimes be that Granny, and it would be advisable to contact the center and see what "Granny" says.

Sincerely, 

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ARTVILLE

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