

The Mouse and The Lion

Most of you may know the Aesop fable regarding a mouse and a lion. If you haven't, please allow me a moment to elaborate:

"A Lion lay asleep in the forest, his great head resting on his paws. A timid little Mouse came upon him unexpectedly, and in her fright and haste to get away, ran across the lion's nose. Roused from his nap, the lion laid his huge paw angrily on the tiny creature to kill her. "Spare me!" begged the poor mouse. "Please let me go, and someday I will surely repay you."

The lion was much amused to think that a Mouse could ever help him. But, he was generous and finally let the mouse go. Some days later, while stalking his prey in the forest, the lion was caught in the toils of a hunter's net. Unable to free himself, he filled the forest with his angry roaring. The mouse knew the voice and quickly found the lion struggling in the net. Running to one of the great ropes that bound him, she gnawed it until it parted, and soon the lion was free.

"You laughed when I said I would repay you," said the mouse. "Now you see that even a Mouse can help a Lion."

This fable isn't about just a mouse and a lion's disagreements, it's about the value of team work. As big and as strong as that lion was, he was no match for the netting that trapped him. It took the knowledge, skills and patience of a little mouse to break him free.

Just like that lion, we here at APC cannot break free and succeed without the help of all of you. That's why we invited you all here to this wonderful retreat. Our goal is to help our divisions to re-energize our staff as we head into this next phase of negotiations involving our deal to purchase Value Rent-A-Car.

Lately there has been a lot of tension building in the corporate office. Part of that is because APC has recently delved into a wide variety of products. All of which have been very successful. But the other part is bringing on new employees from a recently acquired company. I for one know how hard change is. Change is stressful. Some of you were asked to move across the country leaving everything you know behind to start over in a new company in a new state. Some of you were asked to work with people you have never met before in your life and feel as though they were thrust upon you. Both views are right. However, all of you are here because you are exceptional people and the continued success of APC is because of people like you.

Going back to the lion and mouse's relationship we can learn a lot about how to accrue trust, openness and sensitivity amongst our peers. This retreat is a way to increase our group cohesiveness and allow for staff members to learn more about one another. It will help to break down the walls that you might have unknowingly built. We are going to ask you to do things that you might be uncomfortable with such as a trust fall or completing the obstacle course. Who knows, you might not even like eating the s' mores I have planned for Saturday night.

My wife always tells me and our children to at least have a "no thank you" bite when trying new foods. And that is exactly what I am asking of you. Have a no thank you bite. Allow

yourself to be open to new experiences and to see other points of view over the course of the next few days. I promise you won't be alone.

Although this is the first corporate retreat in the history of The Associated Products Corporation, your continued support will make sure that it is not the last. Thank you for coming and for giving us your time and attention. Let's have a wonderful weekend everyone.

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