



A Time for Reflection

- Al E. Bavry

We're in unprecedented times...like Duh! Everyone knows that. Yet in my over eighty years, I have to admit these are times that really test a person. Who'd a thunk that plain old sheet plywood "wood be" North of fifty dollars a sheet! And these escalating prices seem to experience one trajectory ...Up! So, in times like this, or back in the "Great Recession," I look to history, and people and events that were as rock solid in their truths back then and continue to apply today.

To lead into this message, several years ago I read two great books by Amor Towles...*A Gentleman in Moscow* and *Rules of Civility*...Both great reads I'd recommend. The second one referenced something that occurred back in our history and the founding of this country. While little is really known about one of the most obvious founders of this great country--George Washington--he was a person of impeccable honesty, integrity, and wisdom. He left something "timeless" that a lot of people are not aware of...Starting as a teenage boy, he wrote in his notebook: "110 Rules of decent behavior in company and conversation" ... (a lot of it originated from a Jesuit textbook). Everywhere he went, he lived by these rules. Now some of these rules have little relevance today...such as: "Spit not in the fire" (a time when polished brass spittoons were common) or "Kill no vermin (such) as fleas, lice, ticks, etc. in the sight of others." But the majority are truly timeless...And maybe even just as important today as back then.

A few examples: * Every action done in company ought to be with some sign of respect to those who are present. *Do not speak badly of those who are absent. *Show not yourself glad at the misfortune of others. *Submit your idea with humility. *Sleep not when others speak, sit not while others stand, speak not when you should hold your peace, walk not on when others stop. *If you are corrected, take it without argument. *If you were wrongly judged, correct it later. *Labor to keep live in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience...And many, many more. Hope that shortlist of "civility" will prompt you to look up George Washington's "Rules of Civility."

Although we don't see too many brass spittoons sitting around waiting to be properly used, most of these "rules" he wrote and lived by are every bit as timeless today as way back then. I guess my final comments would be to deal with and try to understand what's going on today...And figure out the best practices and ways to cope with it. But in the long-range scheme of things...We will emerge on the other end...And hopefully for most, come out of it stronger, more focused, and with better understanding... even maybe with a new-found humility. We are certainly in "A Brave New World." And learning how others have successfully dealt with adverse situations can only make us stronger and better as humans...

Good luck and good selling...