

Pride and performance

As I was driving down the freeway the other day, I passed a freight truck that bore a legend on the side.

The legend said "Pride through performance."

For the next 60 miles, that phrase kept turning around in my mind, as I thought how in many ways, our society has separated the two – we are often told to be proud, even when we don't really contribute anything – and performance is often expected, but is not adequately rewarded.

In short, although it's rare that I see anything on a freight truck that would deserve a second look, I think this phrase is one we ought to look for.

What do we mean by the phrase? That we earn our keep -- do something in order to earn the good feelings we seek.

I doubt there are many shrinking violets among our ranks – heavens, I may be the most shy person here. I imagine we've got enough pride to carry the day, and then some.

But without the performance to base that pride on, our victories become hollow and empty. Without the effort, we don't really enjoy the reward.

Think about it, if you will. The greatest growth most of us have ever gained was brought about as the result of the application of our talents and abilities. We have every reason to feel pride for our accomplishments and performance. Our pride grows as we contribute even more. More performance = more pride.

When we seek pride without performing to our best, our mind refuses to lie to us. In such circumstances, our mind discounts our self-image. In effect, we actually take a "hit" on our self-image, because we know we haven't earned it.

My chance encounter on the freeway has brought home a great truism. In order to increase our self-worth, our pride, and our self-esteem, we have to earn it through effort and performance.

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