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Speech on the Tides of Life

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1. RESPONSE:

THE
TIDE
OF LIFE

As we have looked to the past of ServiceMaster life and our own life we have confirmed that we are responsive beings. We respond to external forces as a tide responds to the moon, sun and rotation of the earth.

There is one such force that is constant, omnipotent, and immutable, yet not totally directive - God - the creator of the universe, the One who is above all and in all, yet whose force and power for good and the salvation of men can be rejected or ignored by his created beings.

This force has been a persistent positive influence in the lives of the leaders and many others of the ServiceMaster family. As we have seen in the past and can expect in the future - it is infectious in an encouraged environment.

And so the vision took hold of a company of men and women working together as a vehicle to serve and Honor God - a working philosophy not "form" but substance. Early in his experience Marion Wade recognized the difference and reminded those around him on a regular basis - "If you don't live it you don't believe it."

But each of us have also experienced the influence of a negative force. If we are honest with ourselves we will agree with the Apostle Paul when he said "Sometimes I don't understand myself at

all, for I really want to do what is right but I do what I don't want to do, what I hate. When I want to do good I don't, when I try not to do wrong I do it anyway".

We know that in the process of living and doing these two forces are at work and we are not always mindful of the long term result. We reach, we respond, we choose. God has made us with the freedom of choice, and with this freedom we can become more than reactors. We have the capacity to create and have an impact on the lives of others, and though there is the predicament of the conflicting forces of good and evil we have the choice to appropriate God's involvement in our life to be set free from this predicament and be a demonstration of His Power. The Apostle Paul in writing to his young friend Titus, he put it this way "Jesus Christ died for our sins so He could rescue us from the consequence and power of sin and make us His very own people with cleansed hearts and a real enthusiasm for doing good."

This freedom of ours is not a license but a true liberty and the lessons of life are all part of our learning a disciplined response and learning the importance of others in the process of giving up I, me and mine.

And so we are here today as a Delta group not just individuals, but a fellowship of friends and colleagues needing each other and together we will participate in the process of planning.

In response we recognize movement. We are in a changing, moving world. The environment, the people, and the markets are all moving and changing. Some changes are predictable - some have cyclical implications. The tides are always moving, there is no static state. As we look to the past we can see the wisdom of anticipating change and initiating response to meet change. Each of us needs to learn from those who have gone on before.

So we identify with Marion Wade and his search for a differentiated product to support a service business. The trial and error method of building a new business, learning by doing. The search and selection of the right people to support an expanding business. The repeated emphasis on doing right, avoiding questionable business practices.

The failures - the rug plants - learning lessons the hard way about yesterday's bread winners - and the acquisition period - imports for growth's sake without due regard for the business and people fit. The strategies of development of a franchise system to accommodate rapid expansion of the on-location business, shingles on a roof for two level distribution system, two new businesses - contract services and the hospital business. A organization for hospital, close to the customer.

With housekeeping as the spear - create a market - penetrate and dominate. A business that was successful as it emphasized the importance of people - the need to serve them and the need to develop them.

The movements and changes around us do have patterns. Cyclical patterns similar to the tides. In the past there are a series of "life cycle" patterns. As we anticipate and plan responses we must always be aware of this cyclical effect and not build a house on the assumption that there will be no high tide, or fail to move with the flood and find ourselves stranded on a sandy beach. We cannot base our judgments on a snap shot of events, but need to consider the effect of the entire cycle and in so doing we must learn from the past.

It is often difficult to understand the present. What seems like a flood may be the genius of an ebb, which taken together with the flood may be the needed base for a new flood.

We have all had this type of experience in our personal lives. I can remember such a time in my own life - I was striving hard to be a successful lawyer, I wanted to build a practice - I left the security of a large . We were building a law firm and a practice. By 1971 we all were moving - we had ten lawyers. I had just completed work on a successful merger of one of our clients with a major company on the New York Stock Exchange and our firm had been designated as counsel to the surviving corporation. From a monetary and professional standpoint I was at a flood - not realizing that certain ebb currents were already at work. The monetary success of the firm resulted in tension within the firm - loss of some - my health came to a sudden low and I found myself in the hospital for six weeks recuperating from a serious operation and with the forced time of reflection. I also realized that I had

effectively excluded my wife and family from the floods of my professional life - but these ebb experiences were all part of preparation for new opportunities apart from the practice of law. Changes that brought me to Wheaton and then to ServiceMaster.

So we are in movement and there are the waves of life for us to ride. Where will they bring us.....

FIRST FILM CLIP

Movement is always pregnant with opportunity. The challenge is to catch and mold movement to a desired result. To do so, necessitates clear objectives, mobility, and a risk of loss. There may be tension and conflict as we find competing movements, but this also may provide the slack which enables movement in a direction which otherwise would not be possible. Remember the boat that was able to pass by the islands in the St. John River only at the time that the force of the ocean and river were in equilibrium. Tide and opportunity wait for no man. There are no fail safes with an opportunity seeker. The standard of accomplishment is always before us and those who are wrong more than they are right or who are late in seizing the opportunity may become white elephants with the effect of having their finger on the scale. Opportunity means pruning as well as adding. We don't have the option of being spectator or consultants. Thus as we look at the opportunities of the past and consider those before us, and recognize our responsibility to each other and the necessity of a team effort with the contribution from each person being an important part of the whole.

A lost opportunity is sometimes painful to recall - we have all had them and learned from them. I can remember a most distressing such experience.....Here give story of tax case.....

Now we see opportunity all around us. As we look at this next film clip reflect on the force and challenge of the opportunities to be gained.....

NEXT FILM CLIP

There is one word that we have intentionally omitted during our presentation. For most, it is the one word that best described the success of ServiceMaster....GROWTH.

Meaningful words often repeated sometimes lose their meaning and effectiveness and become nothing more than cliches. When we speak of growth, what are your immediate thoughts? Some may think of people, their abilities, limitations, jobs, fit, appraisal. Others may think of organization, bigness, power. Some may think of markets, number of hospitals, franchise services, product differential, penetration. Still others may think of family, children, relocation, government, inflation, population.

Let me suggest that each of us have been conditioned by our own experience and environment to understand the concept of growth only with a framework of given limitations. So we know that people grow only so tall and then stop. We know that cities grow - but only within defined limits. Markets are finite and a business is

limited by the size of market it serves. People learn, but only within the limits of their intelligence.

As we look to the future I want to suggest an additional dimension for our thinking. The primary issue is not the growth of things, all with defined lives and limitations. No, the real issue is the growth of people. Not just people who are so tall and have certain physical characteristics and specific I.Q's. No, it is - the being of man - that being that was created in God's image and as such is an eternal being with a potential for the infinite. As C. S. Lewis reminded us, "There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations, these are mortal and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is the immortal whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit."

What is life - the earth, the sands of the sea, the tides of life
....where are your foot prints going?

FILM CLIP

As we gather here today the question for the future is not what shall we do, but what shall we be, and in responding to that question we recognize our potential to appropriate the infinite power of God, and in so doing, to create, initiate, shape, influence, and be agents for change in our relationship to people, markets, and the world around us. We are the becomers, understanding that there is gaining in giving, that credit for accomplishment is best shared with others and not retained for kingdom building. That passing it

on is a process that requires investment of one self in the life of another, and that each new step of the future requires relinquishment of some of the security of the past, and so, with God's help, we are able to embark on planning for the future with a sense of infinite capacity.

There is a tide - which taken at its flood - leads on - and on such a full sea we are now afloat.

SLIDE ON

Remember, ships are safe in the harbor, but ships were never built to stay in the harbor.

Listen now to the words of the past and present, and ask yourself these questions:

Where have I been?

Where do I want to be?

What can I contribute?

.....WORDS

END WITH LAST FILM CLIP