

I'm hoping they were only having bad days. I'm hoping they woke up the next morning with a more promising view of their profession. I'm hoping, but I'm not real confident that my assessment is correct.

I spoke with two superintendents recently from two different areas of the country, but they had one thing in common: They were both feeling out of sorts and jaded about their careers.

I don't know them well, but I feel sympathy for them. It's a shame because they are veteran superintendents who hold pride in their jobs. I assume they bust their butts daily to achieve the nicest-looking golf courses in their respective neighborhoods.

"It's a shame we're at the bottom of the totem pole, and we have been for way too long," one of the superintendents said of the profession.

Another superintendent, who talked of getting out of the business, lamented that few of today's golfers know the rules and the nuances of golf course maintenance. "I find myself having to defend myself to them," he told me.

OK, we've heard all this before. Superintendents felt underappreciated 10 years ago and 10 years before that. Heck, most everybody moans about their jobs.

But these two superintendents weren't whining, and they didn't come off as "we're doomed" pessimists. They seemed more concerned and alarmed about their feelings because they were down on what they love to do.

They didn't mention money, so it's clear to me they were talking about respect, not financial reward. They were also concerned about security in a field that's as fickle with its employees as professional sports teams are with their players.

"Ninety percent of the people in this business enjoy what they do and will go almost to the point of sacrificing their marriages and families to make sure their golf courses are in shape and admired," one superintendent said. "But if someone has one bad year, that person is gone."

I wonder how many superintendents feel the same as these two. I wonder if they carry their bitter feelings with them and how those feelings affect them mentally, physically and spiritually.

So Let Yourself Enjoy Work *Now*

BY LARRY AYLWARD



IF YOU'RE DOWN ON
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If they are down on their profession, they owe it to themselves to try to make their circumstances better. But they must be proactive.

If it's the golf pro you have problems with, sit down with him and try to come to an understanding. If the general manager is breathing down your neck, tell him in a polite way that the added pressure doesn't help your stress level.

If you're in a no-win situation and you're job has become unbearable, quit and find a new job because chances are your family and social lives are suffering because of your stressful work life.

We spend most of our lives working; you, as superintendents, perhaps more than others. It's vital that we are content in our work, and a major part of that gratification results from feeling appreciated.

All of this reminds me of a passage from the book of Ecclesiastes. I can't tell you that I found these thought-provoking words while perusing the Bible; I discovered them, of all places, on the back of a John Mellencamp album. Just the same, the passage inspired me. I hope it will make you think, too. I leave you with these words of wisdom:

"Generations come and go, but it makes no difference. The sun rises and sets and hurries around to rise again. ... Everything is unutterably weary and tiresome. No matter how much we see, we are never satisfied; no matter how much we hear, we are not content.

"So I saw that there's nothing better for men than that they should be happy in their work, for that is what they are here for. And no one can bring them back to life to enjoy what will be in the future. So let them enjoy it now."

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