

# Gregg Breningmeyer:

## *Dad Taught Me to Maintain Integrity*

BY LARRY AYLWARD

**E**verette Breningmeyer taught his son Gregg plenty about living a worthy life. But one of Everett's teachings hit home more than the others with Gregg.

It focused on integrity.

"He taught me that you have to maintain integrity above all else," says Gregg, director of marketing and sales for John Deere Golf & Turf One Source. "If you lose your integrity, you lose everything."

Integrity is defined as a "firm adherence to a code or standard of values." Breningmeyer says his 74-year-old dad lives the definition.

Gregg, who grew up in Oak Park, Ill., is close to his father, even though they live apart (Gregg near Raleigh, N.C., and Everett near Atlanta). They speak weekly.

As a kid, Breningmeyer says he learned a few of life's lessons the hard way. That's because he might get himself into a jam and try to get himself out of it without owning up to being wrong. Everett, who still works as a psychologist, told his son that he had to fess up to his mistakes, no matter how difficult or embarrassing that was.

Gregg says he learned from his dad that it takes guts to admit you're wrong, but you feel better for it. "Then it's over, and you move on," he adds.

Integrity intertwines with credibility, Gregg believes, and credibility is about trust. In his relationships with distributors, Gregg realizes he needs their trust.

"If I don't have the trust of our distributors, One Source would never happen," Gregg says. "Our distributors must trust that we'll do what we say we're going to do."

Breningmeyer says his father also taught him it's vital to trust others to gain their respect. Gregg's philosophy is to trust the people he oversees and not micromanage them. "I let them do their jobs."

If you've ever met Breningmeyer, you know he's approachable. He's the type of guy who treats the janitor of a company with the same respect as the CEO. He's friendly and outgoing.

Breningmeyer says integrity pertains to self-esteem. He believes that an outgoing person is most likely a confident person.



*Gregg Breningmeyer (second from left) with his dad Everett (standing) and sons Josh (left) and Zac*

Interestingly, Everett, recognizing that his son was an extrovert, advised him to go into sales. Gregg couldn't thank him enough for that. "I love what I'm doing," he says convincingly.

Gregg's respect for his father is infinite. As the father of an 18-year-old son, Gregg jokes he can empathize with Everett about the challenges that come with raising a teen-ager.

"The older I get the more I appreciate him," Gregg says.

One thing is for: Like his dad did for him, Gregg will teach his son the value of integrity. He's already begun. ■