

Digging and filling holes



From our guest contributor, Michael Josephson.

Charlie, a road crew supervisor for highway landscapers, came upon a pair of workers from one of his crews seemingly hard at work. He watched one fellow dig a hole while his partner waited a few minutes and then filled the hole. After a few repetitions Charlie demanded an explanation. The hole-filler was offended: "We've been doing this job for 10 years. What's your problem?"

Charlie sputtered: "You've been digging and filling empty holes for 10 years? That makes no sense."

"Not exactly," the worker replied. "Until a few months ago, there was another guy who would put a bush in the hole. He retired and when management failed to replace him we figured they wanted us carry on as best we could."

Obviously, these fellows didn't think much of their management and the fact that they were digging and filling holes without planting bushes for months seems to justify their cynicism. Still, the incompetence of a manager doesn't justify the indifference of employees.

There is a moral dimension to work, an obligation to be both engaged and accountable.

Being engaged means being involved, pursuing excellence and taking personal pride in your work..

Being accountable means accepting personal responsibility to make things better. Outdated or foolish procedures are common in lots of organizations, but they shouldn't be perpetuated by a mindless "I'm just doing my job" mentality.

Remember, if you don't take pride in what you do, you can't take pride in what you are.

This is Michael Josephson reminding you that character counts.

☒ *Michael Josephson is an influential and internationally renowned champion of character education for youth and ethical conduct in business, government, policing, journalism, sports, healthcare and law. He is credited by many as the person most responsible for reviving and professionalizing the character education in school and youth-serving organizations. In 1992, under the auspices of the Josephson Institute he created CHARACTER COUNTS!, the world's most widely implemented character development initiative based on a common language of shared values – the Six Pillars of Character) and Pursuing Victory With Honor (1996), a companion program promoting ethics in sports.*