

Jim's Perspective...

Happy Holidays!

'Tis the holiday season! Yes, the sun is low and the shadows are dark and long, and the day is short and the winter solstice is upon us, but the holiday season also often provides many opportunities to get together with family and friends. This Christmas season was especially unique for me because the grandkids are now old enough that they wanted to help Papa put up Christmas lights. I put up icicle lights on the gutter of the house, but the grandkids liked hanging and spreading Christmas lights on bushes, the front porch railing and other items in the front yard. They were so creative! They placed lights in various ways that I would never have thought of. Some of the lights were intentionally bunched together to look funny! The kids did this, and had a big laugh! They knew this was not necessarily the traditional stringing position of lights, but they wanted to have some laughs and fun! It is interesting to see them consider traditional activities and decide to depart from tradition to create fun and laughter. It is all part of growing up. All kids develop their own understanding of what is proper behavior based on traditional etiquette and conduct they observe in other children and adults. Kind of amazing to me, how the brain works this way.

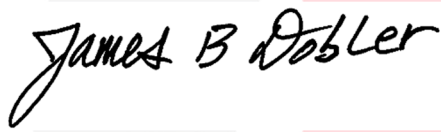
The day we put up the Christmas lights was pretty nice. The temperature was in the low 50's. I wore a heavy sweatshirt but no jacket. The grandkids, on the other hand, wore short sleeve shirts! But this is nothing new to me. Their physical system works fast and efficient . . . not slow and, well, more inefficient like an older person my age.

It was so fun that the grandkids wanted to work with me! They could have stayed indoors and played with their electronic gizmo's, but no, they wanted some traditional activity with traditional Papa, outside! The Christmas light activity also produced various questions from the grandkids that Papa had trouble answering. Some questions related to how electricity works. Some involved who invented Christmas lights and why are these lights part of Christmas. But then, I am used to questions from the grandkids that are real stumpers, such as, how far is "up" and why do some grandpas not have hair while others do? Grandpas must be ready to explain where the sun goes at night and where the moon comes from, why the birds sing, why does a tomato change colors, where do flies go in the winter, and on and on! At this point, the grandkids are beyond these types of questions, but it wasn't too long ago that I had to ponder such questions, Ha Ha!

While some questions are hard to answer, other questions simply raise various forms of awareness for me. For example, while working on the Christmas lights, one of the grandkids suddenly asked, "Papa, when were you born?" I told him I was born in 1950. I could see a funny look on his face as he pondered how long ago this was. The question raised a feeling in me that I am getting old. 1950 was a long time ago. I am sure my grandchild who heard I was born in 1950, was probably thinking that I was first around on the planet earth during the period when pioneers first arrived and settled in the Nebraska Prairie! But really, once upon time, I was a young boy just like my grandson, and I stood in awe at the many new toys invented when I was a little boy, such as

Mr. Potato Head, 1952 (had this)
The Pogo Stick, 1956 (never had, I was too clumsy to operate it!)
Hula Hoop, 1958 (had this)
Barbie Doll, unveiled at the New York Toy Fair, 1959 (both of my sisters had this. Not me!)

This type of question about how old I am, might be a little offensive in some situations, but for me, just visiting with the grandkids about anything is always fun! All of the Christmas light activity that day just made me more mellow and more in awe of the innocence of the very young or, perhaps, more amused at the striving for maturity on the part of the grandkids. It is amazing how their point of view is quite often about the future, and seen in breathless wonder of new life and new experiences that constantly come forth in their world. They may not know the exact nature of their new life experiences, such as spreading Christmas lights for the first time, but in each new life experience, they know there is some little part of them that is affected by a new experience, be it appearance, personality, intellect, state of health or what have you. In a sense, they simply experience new aspects of life all the time and they continue to grow and develop as a person, and in a sense, they go on forever! Not a bad note at all on which to conclude this article! Wishing all of you a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James B. Dobler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The letters are dark and the ink appears to be on a white background. The signature is positioned above the printed name and title.

Jim Dobler, CPCU

PIA Legislative Coordinator

Questions or Comments? Please email jbdobler@outlook.com