

Gay and Transgender Issues in the Workplace

Thanks for What Has Been Loaned to Us

Posted: 22 Nov 2010, 1:54PM

At this time of year, Americans give thanks for their blessings. Many people assume that whatever good fortune they enjoy is a gift from a god who favors them. They don't pursue the logic of this, as it would force them to concede that their god favors some people more than them. Fundamentalist social conservatives, for instance, might become apoplectic peeking through the dining room windows of some gay families.

When we join hands around the Thanksgiving table in our home, we try to acknowledge our bounty with awareness that we are undeserving of our life's good fortune, and that we are simply caretakers of the goods that will one day be enjoyed by others.

We all forget from time to time that our lives are filled with emotional bills of sale for people, places, and things we don't actually own. No matter what role we had in their acquisition or creation, we serve only as their custodians. Everything belongs to the earth and its generations of inhabitants.

It is said, "The shroud has no pockets," and, "You can't take it with you." We don't own, we borrow.

Sometimes, people hold on so tightly to the things they think of as their own that they destroy them. Kings, queens, tsars, popes, and CEOs have strangled to death that which they think they own. Many people believe that's what happened with Dick Fuld and Lehman Brothers.

In every civil rights movement, the same phenomenon exists. People who start organizations sometimes over-identify with their groups, and nearly kill them. Like parents who hover over adult children, executives of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender organizations can smother their creations because of their inability to let go.

The idea of ownership in life is ludicrous. Ted Turner may have the deed to thousands of acres, but they were occupied by someone before him, and they will be occupied by people who follow him. One day, no one will remember his name, but the land will endure.

As we acknowledge our good fortune, let's try to remember that we're not being rewarded with riches for good deeds we've done in this life or the last one. There is no justice to the distribution of wealth, no ownership to what we enjoy, and no sense in trying to cling to that which has been loaned to us.