



Being a Responsible Citizen

From the Merriam-Webster dictionary:

Citizen: noun, from Middle English *citizein*, from Anglo-French *citezein*, alteration of *citeien*, from *cit  city* (14th century)

1 : an inhabitant of a city or town; especially : one entitled to the rights and privileges of a free-man

2 a : a member of a state **b** : a native or naturalized person who owes allegiance to a government and is entitled to protection from it

3 : a civilian as distinguished from a specialized servant of the state.

This dictionary entry has several interesting aspects. The first definition of citizen (and the etymological derivation of the word “citizen” from the word “city”) notes that citizens held certain rights due to living in a city or town. I’d have to give a summary of the development of the nation-state to examine this definition thoroughly, but (in short) the city was the building block of a new type of government that was not directly based on kings nor on religious powers.

The second definition is closer to the modern idea of citizenship: “a member of a state.” Here, of course, “state” means something akin to “nation.” This definition references the reciprocal relationship between citizen and state: the citizen gives allegiance and the state gives protection.

The third definition is more technical, distinguishing the citizen from the professional state servant. Soldiers, government workers, civil servants, and other such categories are contrasted to ordinary citizenship.

This newsletter deals with the second definition, and shows the relationship between being a re-

sponsible citizen and having a career you can be proud of, one in which you contribute as well as receive benefits.

“Me, me, me” or “us, us, us”?

Classic career development starts with self-analysis, and this is good. Until you know who you are, what you have done, what you’d like to do, and what matters to you in life, career development is impossible. You’ll be pushed around by the winds of current opinion, ending up pursuing a career that may have no connection with your inner values, goals, ambitions and interests.

So, yes, career development starts with you. But very quickly it moves to the question of what company, organization or cause needs you— your abilities, your skills, your qualifications—in order to succeed. The secret to happiness in your career (as well as success in your job search) is correctly matching your individual qualifications with the urgent needs of people who can hire you.

You may start with a “me first” attitude, but maturity will most likely involve you in a new quest, one to find out how you can fit in to your surrounding culture and live out your personal ambitions through your job. This change calls for a different attitude: we are all in this together, so your new mantra becomes “us, us, us.”

This changed, matured attitude is the core of being a responsible citizen and becoming a person whose career is an outgrowth of this attitude, as defined in the dictionary: “a member of a state; a native or naturalized person who owes allegiance to a government and is entitled to protection from it.” Realizing that you are part of a greater entity (your nation) gives your career purpose and meaning beyond “me, me, me.” to p. 2



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Selfishness or selflessness?

As a citizen, you are part of a greater entity (your nation) to which you owe allegiance and which owes you protection. This balance of responsibility and rights needs to be taken seriously, or the nation and its citizens will suffer.

You don't need to be an economic genius to see that the greed of some American-based banks, mortgage companies, realtors and house-hunters caused a huge collapse in the U.S. housing market in 2007, one that nearly toppled the American economic system. All involved were greedy, from the people who made questionable loans to poorly-qualified buyers to the eager buyers who didn't think through the consequences of home ownership.

You could say that the whole mortgage crisis was the result of a conspicuous lack of responsible citizenship on the part of millions of Americans. If any of the participants in the debacle had acted acting unselfishly, maybe the outcome would have been milder and less wastefully destructive to the social fabric of the U. S.

Regardless of what your social, economic or political background may be, it's undeniably true that you've benefited all your life from being a citizen of your nation. Most likely your formal and informal education came from the nation; even if parts of it were paid for by your parents, they, too, were most likely citizens, whose ability to pay for your education was enhanced by the protection of their nation.

Your nation's generosity

The highways you travel on, the airports and hospitals you use, the public libraries, post offices and social services that offer you assistance—all are paid for, at least in part, by the nation. The water and sewer system, the electric grid, and the weapons that frighten other, less law-abiding nations from invading yours (and imprisoning or murdering you, a citizen) are provided by your nation. Your police and fire protection, your parks, and your civil government (mayor, city council, etc.) are paid for by your nation, either directly or through federal grants. Isn't it only fair that if your nation is living up to its part in this definition, that you live up to yours?

“ a native or naturalized person who owes allegiance to a government and is entitled to protection from it.”

“Allegiance” is a complex concept, full of “ifs” and “buts,” but surely everyone can understand that, if you accept your nation's protection, you owe it your allegiance, or loyalty, in important ways.

One of these ways, I believe, is in your career. This is not to say that every citizen should enter professional public service; we need a morally-sound private sector to build a strong nation, and we need bright people to choose business, scientific and non-profit careers. In any career, you can show your gratitude to your nation by being a responsible citizen, by honoring in your job what your nation has done for you.

21st Century Jobs



Getting the Job You Like and Can Do Best

By Sara D. & Jaroslav B. Tusek

21st Century Jobs Seminar

The "21st Century Jobs Seminar" gives you access to the practical advice of Institute President Jaroslav Tusek, who has more than 27 years of experience in helping people get jobs that correctly match their skills, abilities, interests and goals with the right business or organization.

This seminar uses our newest book, 21st Century Jobs, as its workbook.

We aim to help you, the job seeker or career changer, to identify your unique set of gifts, talents, skills, interests, accomplishments, values and dreams--and then to find ways to make those dreams into reality, bringing all of your potential to the job which will use this potential to the fullest:

the job that you will love, and can do best.

Careers
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The next "21st Century Jobs" seminar will be in January 2010 in Lake Mary, Florida.

Please email Jaroslav at jbt@ili.cc for more details.