

From: [David Kraemer](#)
To: [Covid Affiliate Archives](#)
Subject: FW: One Person's Response to Communal Fear 7.13.20
Date: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 9:51:39 AM
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From: Morris Allen <mojo210al@icloud.com>
Sent: Monday, July 13, 2020 9:18 AM
To: MOJO210AL <MOJO210AL@aol.com>
Subject: One Person's Response to Communal Fear 7.13.20

WAGON WHEEL CENSUS 7 Cars 7 Trucks 2 People Fishing 1 Runner

Imagine our surprise and our joy yesterday when our daughter-in-law send us a picture of our grandson standing in front of a sign they had just placed on their yard. Unbeknownst to them, just a week or so before, Phyllis had placed the exact same sign on our yard. While we did not have a smiling toddler to have stand in front of it, you can see both pictures below. I tell you this because it is another indication of something that I learned as a child—know yourself, hold firm to your teachings and let people know where you stand. If Phyllis and I did anything right—and she did many things right—it was in working hard to transmit that value statement to our kids. While every generation must see the world through the eyes of the moment, certain values transcend time and place. I have been thinking a great deal about that, about the values passed on from one generation to the next, the role that grandparents play in the life of their grandchildren, and the importance of parents believing they are setting the tone and the message.

I have never mentioned the Brooklyn Dodgers as much as I have these past 2 weeks. While I loved Pee Wee Reese on the game of the week when he and Dizzy Dean called the games, those Dodgers were ancient history by the time the early 1960's rolled around. But as a result of a little musing I shared last week, I realized that I knew a piece of someone's core identity and from where it came by learning the full picture of a story they experienced as a child. Indeed, I also came to know their grandfather whose path never crossed mine and yet who I feel I now know as a result of learning the following. And I came to appreciate their dad even more—a man I knew and whose generosity of spirit provided the tallesim still in use to this day for the synagogue in which I was served. Here is the story as shared by her brother with whom she checked the facts: *"A guy came to the door when I was there as a little boy and there was a petition to keep the "colored person" out of the neighborhood because Branch Rickey who was the general manager of the Dodgers at the time had bought the house on behalf of Jackie Robinson. And Zaida took the guy by the collar and said I left Russia to get away from people like you and shoved him down the stoop. I was there but of course didn't understand what was happening but that's how Dad explained it."* That email paragraph sent to my friend about the story she also remembered, enabled me to know just who she was and who she will always be as a result. Her grandfather and my father had very different life experiences. But they both shared an uncanny belief in the importance of the same moral value—know yourself, hold firm to your teachings and let people know where you stand. In

the world in which we are living today, somehow that lesson is not always being transmitted.

It is not happening on the national scene and it is not happening on the communal level, and sadly it all too often is not happening on the personal level. We are living in a moment when too many people lick their right forefinger and hold it up to the wind to see which way it is blowing. National leaders who find nothing wrong with cozying up to authoritarian despots in contradiction to the ethos of the founding principles of this country—simply because they can. Local leaders who proclaim a belief in the importance of education and who could celebrate their teachers and honor the transmission of knowledge and yet diminish its communal significance through their budgetary decisions and official proclamations. We have all experienced friends for whom we spent years of our life developing trust and belief in, who hold up their finger (sometimes not the right forefinger) as they see an opportunity to “move on up” without need of your presence. And then you write a column about the Brooklyn Dodgers and learn the reassuring truth that for many people core values are evident regardless of the weather and the vicissitudes of life. And when you do realize that, you suddenly are reminded that the reason that such is the case is because core values are evident from the start in so many people. People know who they are, what their teachings mean and where they stand. In a world today where all is in play, it is so reassuring to see that core values still are evident inside so many people and that this painful moment in time will not be the final word on the world in which we live. And the reason I know that is not simply because of Branch Rickey buying a house in Brooklyn in the late 1940’s for Jackie Robinson and an immigrant from Russia standing up to a racist “bum”, but because yesterday in Columbus Ohio a little boy stood in front of a big sign with a smile on his face. He didn’t know what the sign said—but he is already learning what the sign means. (and the team to cheer for when it comes to baseball) And that, I believe, is a sign that the world remains good despite the pain we are feeling and work that needs to be done.





Morris

(For new readers, these are failing musings written and sent unedited immediately following my daily walk.)