

THERMOSTAT VS. THERMOMETER

By Gary L. Richardson, noted trial lawyer and author of *Black Robe Fever*, *Fear Is Never Our Friend*, and *Thank God They Ate the Apple*.

www.garyrichardsonspeaks.com

NOTE: Industries that use thermostats and thermometers, for simplicity in written material and communication, refer to a Thermostat as T1 and to a Thermometer as T2. The same is true in this article, so if you get confused about what T1 or T2 means, just refer back to this note. **REMEMBER: T1-THERMOSTAT, T2 – THERMOMETER.**

Are you a Thermostat or a Thermometer in how you live your life? Before you answer, consider that a Thermostat (T1) can change the temperature around it, and a Thermometer (T2) adjusts to the temperature around it. Now, which one are you? Your response gives an enormous answer about how you live your life.

Maybe another way to address this question is to ask if you see yourself as a person of great conviction about what you believe or as a person who "goes along to get along." In other words, how much impact do you allow others, tradition, those in your past, and life itself to determine your life for you?

I am often amazed as I hear adults express their beliefs based on "my granddad said." Come on! How much has changed since Granddad said that? This is an example of what I call living in the past. I find that most people have never given any consideration to this subject. Life just seems to move along for them.

Years ago I ran for Congress as a Republican in the heavily Democratic Eastern District of Oklahoma. Registration was about 70 percent Democrat. I stopped by a church one day to meet with the pastor, who wasn't in, so I had a conversation with his secretary. When I asked for her vote she responded that she couldn't vote for me since I was a Republican, and furthermore, that she had served as the local Democratic women's chairperson. But, here was the clincher for her, she said: "besides that, my parents were Democrats and if they knew I voted for a Republican, they would 'turn over in their graves.'" WOW!!!!

Here's the resulting conversation I had with Mary:

Me: May I ask you a question?

Mary: Yes.

Me: Do you believe your parents had thought out their reasons for being Democrats?

Mary: Yes.

Me: Well, what are YOUR reasons? I ask because of your last comment. Why are you a Democrat today? Have you taken stock of what is going on in the world and in your local community and decided you are up-to-date in your thinking? Or are you still living your life based on well-thought-out decisions of years ago, and in some instances, by others? Mary, do you think your parents might "roll over in their graves" if they knew that you weren't using your God-given gift of a brain to stay up-to-date on what to do in your life? What do you think?

Mary: (quickly responding) I am going to vote for you.

As is evident, Mary obviously never had quit living in the past and all I did, in the period of about 10 minutes, was bring her up-to-date, at least in that particular area. How about you? Are you still living your life much like a T2?

I grew up on a farm, and when I left to go to college I said "so long and goodbye." I knew I never wanted to go back to a farm. I am the first in my family to get a college education. At the age of 28, after being highly entrenched in a certain church denomination – one in which my father was a pastor, one in which I went to our church college and on and on – I completely changed my Christian beliefs from Arminianism to Calvinism. Added to that, after extensive study of both the Democratic and Republican parties' national platforms, I changed my political affiliation. Now, as to this article, the only important part of all that is to ask, based on what you know so far, do you think I am a T1 or T2?

An important point is that I didn't just make these changes. I studied the subjects. For example, one day I told my wife that either something was not right about what we were being taught in our denomination or else something was wrong with me in my inability to live the life we were taught we needed to live to "go to Heaven." Keep in mind that I went to church every time the doors opened, sang in the choir, served on the church board, on and on. But I knew this wasn't working for me. So, I told my wife I knew what I was going to do, proceeded to study the scriptures and did so daily,

sometimes on the weekend as much as four hours a day, and after about six months concluded that I did not believe what I had been taught all through the years was actually scriptural. So, my family and I changed churches.

Now, what is important here is that I did not change out of "discontent" in our church. Rather, it was MY discontent that drove me to "study" and see what my understanding told me was best for me and my family. That was 43 years ago and I haven't wavered from what I came to learn during those six months. If there came a time that it wasn't working for me I would find out why. What do you think? T1 or T2?

The story is similar when it comes to political parties. While serving as Assistant Insurance Commissioner for the State of Oklahoma, I quite often found myself without anything to do and would step over to the Capital building and listen to the House and Senate in session. This led me one day to ask my wife what our political affiliation was. I had no idea because I didn't grow up in a politically involved family. Our conversation went something like this:

Me: Are we Democrats or Republicans?

Wife: We're Democrats.

Me: Why?

Wife: I guess because that's what my family is.

Wow! T1 or T2, what do you think?

I do want to stress that just because we were Democrats because her family was doesn't mean it wasn't the thing to be today. You have to "get" this; otherwise you might conclude that I was just rebellious. **The point is, know why you are what you are** and if it is because your parents were such and such, do you not think it is time to "get up-to-date"? You may find that what you believe after studying the issue is the same as what you believed when you began researching the issue, but now you will know WHY and you will know it with present-day understanding. Then again, you just might change what you believe.

Anyway, I explained to my wife that not knowing what I was, politically speaking, I didn't know who I was "supposed" to be agreeing with when I heard arguments in the House or Senate but that I found myself more inclined to agree philosophically with what the Republicans said about where they were trying to take our country.

Note: With the way I think, I do not believe it would have mattered had I known that her family members were Democrats. Question: Did I go immediately and change to the Republican Party? NO. It was roughly four years later before I changed parties and that came about after I studied the national platforms of both parties, and after I made a trip to Washington, DC to just talk with some of the office holders. In addition, I knew that the earnestness of my search for what to believe had resulted in my "new" beliefs.

You see, at the time, I was considering running for Congress in District 2 of Oklahoma, which, as I said earlier, was 70 percent Democrat. But after studying I found myself believing more what the Republicans had in their national platform and what they were promoting in Congress. So, I switched parties and ran as a Republican. I didn't win the office, but did win two counties that never before had been won by a Republican, got the highest vote count of any previous Republican candidate, and think that most would say, helped pave the way for someone later for the first time in history to win the district as a Republican.

I might add that my wife, who was a State Delegate in the Democratic Party, and a lady whose family members were ALL Democrats, after learning what I learned while doing my research, also changed parties, even at my insistence that I didn't think she should at the time because of her family. Point – T1s study and come to know why, with current information, they believe as they do. T2s have had their belief systems for eons. Think about it.

As you know, by profession I am a lawyer, yet I also am a mentor, author, and seminar speaker, as well as a husband and grandfather. But regardless of what your profession or work is, being a T1 vs. a T2 has great impact. Typically, leaders are T1s and followers are T2s. It isn't my suggestion that everyone should become leaders, but it is my suggestion that everyone should, at the very least, know if they are a T1 or T2 and ask themselves if it is "working" for them. If not, then why not take a close look at what is going on in your life?

Too, it's important that you understand that I am not at all suggesting that one become difficult. I am suggesting that everyone should know what they believe and why they believe what they believe and let that guide their lives

rather than just simply blindly living their lives because of history or the beliefs of parents, grandparents or teachers, etc.

Get up-to-date about why you believe what you believe and stand for it, knowing that even that could change somewhere down the road of life. In other words, even what I believe today is subject to change as I grow and learn more and keep current in my thinking and understanding, not living in the past.

It IS NOT about "change." It IS about staying current and knowing why you believe what you believe and living it. Nor is it about being a "ditcher," as we often see. I define a "ditcher" as a person who, because of reacting to life events, goes from the ditch on one side of the road to the ditch on the other side of the road. The only answer they will give you is they are "reacting" to something that happened to them or someone close to them. This behavior is much different from "objectively" studying and coming to believe what one believes, based on the facts developed. If those facts change then usually that is when reevaluation takes place and growth occurs. Typically there is little if any growth in T2s because they are just living from the past, based on others' beliefs.

Nor am I suggesting that one doesn't give deep consideration to what others think/believe. Who knows, this could be a "growth" opportunity, much like I describe in an article I have published titled "Gifts." If you read the article you will find that I TOTALLY disagreed with a statement I heard in a speech at a seminar. TOTALLY!!! But, I found myself unable to put the statement out of my mind, so I decided to explore the concept of what was said, and after much research and meditation, I came to embrace that concept. Again, when we so strongly disagree with something we hear, the reason may be based on a childhood experience (a whole different but very interesting subject). Nonetheless, when this happens, I have found it profitable to find out why I so strongly disagreed. In other words, don't just disagree and not know why.

If you don't know whether you are a T1 or T2, I am sure you have some friends that can help you figure this out. For example, when you walk into a roomful of people who know you, do they know you as someone that has deep convictions about things – convictions based on facts, not just because "Granddad said it," or do they know you as a "go along to get along" person, which I venture to say most people are. And why not? Those people don't

make waves. They find it easy to be friends and buddies with everyone because they are like a T2 – they just adjust to the temperature around them.

On the other hand, if you are a T1, that does not mean you have to be difficult or obnoxious. There are T1s, and listen closely to this, that want everyone else to believe what they believe. I admit that there have been times in my own life when I have been difficult and obnoxious, wanting others to agree with what I believed. There is a better way and that has been part of my growth over the years. I have found that it's not so much what one believes that can become offensive, but what one does with what one believes, in trying to force that belief on others. We all want to see people's eyes opened to more "truth," and when we think we have it, it isn't easy to restrain from trying to force our belief on others.

I want to address this further by saying that to help us in this area we again need to focus on a T1 and a T2 and think about how they operate. A T1, in changing the temperature of things around it (much like changing others' thinking), does it slowly, much like slowing down an out-of-control train. This seems all too obvious, but I have learned over the years that something can be obvious, yet not consciously used in day to day handling of events in our lives. It is true that often a quietly spoken word is far more powerful than a loud voice. In the legal profession it has been said that when we don't know for sure what we are talking about when addressing the court, to speak more authoritatively and raise the volume of our voice. Get my point?

In conclusion, I am not saying that anyone should just jump up and say, "I want to change." The purpose of this article is to get you to "think." Figure out what you are, a T1 or T2, and decide if that is how you want to live your life. Is it working for you? Know why it is or why it isn't working for you. THINK, THINK, THINK!

###

THERMOSTAT VS. THERMOMETER

By Gary L. Richardson, noted trial lawyer and author of *Black Robe Fever*, *Fear Is Never Our Friend*, and *Thank God They Ate the Apple*.

www.garyrichardsonspeaks.com

NOTE: Industries that use thermostats and thermometers, for simplicity in written material and communication, refer to a Thermostat as T1 and to a Thermometer as T2. The same is true in this article, so if you get confused about what T1 or T2 means, just refer back to this note. REMEMBER: T1-THERMOSTAT, T2 – THERMOMETER.

Are you a Thermostat or a Thermometer in how you live your life? Before you answer, consider that a Thermostat (T1) can change the temperature around it, and a Thermometer (T2) adjusts to the temperature around it. Now, which one are you? Your response gives an enormous answer about how you live your life.

Maybe another way to address this question is to ask if you see yourself as a person of great conviction about what you believe or as a person who "goes along to get along." In other words, how much impact do you allow others, tradition, those in your past, and life itself to determine your life for you?

I am often amazed as I hear adults express their beliefs based on "my granddad said." Come on! How much has changed since Granddad said that? This is an example of what I call living in the past. I find that most people have never given any consideration to this subject. Life just seems to move along for them.

Years ago I ran for Congress as a Republican in the heavily Democratic Eastern District of Oklahoma. Registration was about 70 percent Democrat. I stopped by a church one day to meet with the pastor, who wasn't in, so I had a conversation with his secretary. When I asked for her vote she responded that she couldn't vote for me since I was a Republican, and furthermore, that she had served as the local Democratic women's chairperson. But, here was the clincher for her, she said: "besides that, my parents were Democrats and if they knew I voted for a Republican, they would 'turn over in their graves.'" WOW!!!!

Here's the resulting conversation I had with Mary:

Me: May I ask you a question?

Mary: Yes.

Me: Do you believe your parents had thought out their reasons for being Democrats?

Mary: Yes.

Me: Well, what are YOUR reasons? I ask because of your last comment. Why are you a Democrat today? Have you taken stock of what is going on in the world and in your local community and decided you are up-to-date in your thinking? Or are you still living your life based on well-thought-out decisions of years ago, and in some instances, by others? Mary, do you think your parents might "roll over in their graves" if they knew that you weren't using your God-given gift of a brain to stay up-to-date on what to do in your life? What do you think?

Mary: (quickly responding) I am going to vote for you.

As is evident, Mary obviously never had quit living in the past and all I did, in the period of about 10 minutes, was bring her up-to-date, at least in that particular area. How about you? Are you still living your life much like a T2?

I grew up on a farm, and when I left to go to college I said "so long and goodbye." I knew I never wanted to go back to a farm. I am the first in my family to get a college education. At the age of 28, after being highly entrenched in a certain church denomination – one in which my father was a pastor, one in which I went to our church college and on and on – I completely changed my Christian beliefs from Arminianism to Calvinism. Added to that, after extensive study of both the Democratic and Republican parties' national platforms, I changed my political affiliation. Now, as to this article, the only important part of all that is to ask, based on what you know so far, do you think I am a T1 or T2?

An important point is that I didn't just make these changes. I studied the subjects. For example, one day I told my wife that either something was not right about what we were being taught in our denomination or else something was wrong with me in my inability to live the life we were taught we needed to live to "go to Heaven." Keep in mind that I went to church every time the doors opened, sang in the choir, served on the church board, on and on. But I knew this wasn't working for me. So, I told my wife I knew what I was going to do, proceeded to study the scriptures and did so daily,

sometimes on the weekend as much as four hours a day, and after about six months concluded that I did not believe what I had been taught all through the years was actually scriptural. So, my family and I changed churches.

Now, what is important here is that I did not change out of "discontent" in our church. Rather, it was MY discontent that drove me to "study" and see what my understanding told me was best for me and my family. That was 43 years ago and I haven't wavered from what I came to learn during those six months. If there came a time that it wasn't working for me I would find out why. What do you think? T1 or T2?

The story is similar when it comes to political parties. While serving as Assistant Insurance Commissioner for the State of Oklahoma, I quite often found myself without anything to do and would step over to the Capital building and listen to the House and Senate in session. This led me one day to ask my wife what our political affiliation was. I had no idea because I didn't grow up in a politically involved family. Our conversation went something like this:

Me: Are we Democrats or Republicans?

Wife: We're Democrats.

Me: Why?

Wife: I guess because that's what my family is.

Wow! T1 or T2, what do you think?

I do want to stress that just because we were Democrats because her family was doesn't mean it wasn't the thing to be today. You have to "get" this; otherwise you might conclude that I was just rebellious. **The point is, know why you are what you are** and if it is because your parents were such and such, do you not think it is time to "get up-to-date"? You may find that what you believe after studying the issue is the same as what you believed when you began researching the issue, but now you will know WHY and you will know it with present-day understanding. Then again, you just might change what you believe.

Anyway, I explained to my wife that not knowing what I was, politically speaking, I didn't know who I was "supposed" to be agreeing with when I heard arguments in the House or Senate but that I found myself more inclined to agree philosophically with what the Republicans said about where they were trying to take our country.

Note: With the way I think, I do not believe it would have mattered had I known that her family members were Democrats. Question: Did I go immediately and change to the Republican Party? NO. It was roughly four years later before I changed parties and that came about after I studied the national platforms of both parties, and after I made a trip to Washington, DC to just talk with some of the office holders. In addition, I knew that the earnestness of my search for what to believe had resulted in my "new" beliefs.

You see, at the time, I was considering running for Congress in District 2 of Oklahoma, which, as I said earlier, was 70 percent Democrat. But after studying I found myself believing more what the Republicans had in their national platform and what they were promoting in Congress. So, I switched parties and ran as a Republican. I didn't win the office, but did win two counties that never before had been won by a Republican, got the highest vote count of any previous Republican candidate, and think that most would say, helped pave the way for someone later for the first time in history to win the district as a Republican.

I might add that my wife, who was a State Delegate in the Democratic Party, and a lady whose family members were ALL Democrats, after learning what I learned while doing my research, also changed parties, even at my insistence that I didn't think she should at the time because of her family. Point – T1s study and come to know why, with current information, they believe as they do. T2s have had their belief systems for eons. Think about it.

As you know, by profession I am a lawyer, yet I also am a mentor, author, and seminar speaker, as well as a husband and grandfather. But regardless of what your profession or work is, being a T1 vs. a T2 has great impact. Typically, leaders are T1s and followers are T2s. It isn't my suggestion that everyone should become leaders, but it is my suggestion that everyone should, at the very least, know if they are a T1 or T2 and ask themselves if it is "working" for them. If not, then why not take a close look at what is going on in your life?

Too, it's important that you understand that I am not at all suggesting that one become difficult. I am suggesting that everyone should know what they believe and why they believe what they believe and let that guide their lives

rather than just simply blindly living their lives because of history or the beliefs of parents, grandparents or teachers, etc.

Get up-to-date about why you believe what you believe and stand for it, knowing that even that could change somewhere down the road of life. In other words, even what I believe today is subject to change as I grow and learn more and keep current in my thinking and understanding, not living in the past.

It IS NOT about "change." It IS about staying current and knowing why you believe what you believe and living it. Nor is it about being a "ditcher," as we often see. I define a "ditcher" as a person who, because of reacting to life events, goes from the ditch on one side of the road to the ditch on the other side of the road. The only answer they will give you is they are "reacting" to something that happened to them or someone close to them. This behavior is much different from "objectively" studying and coming to believe what one believes, based on the facts developed. If those facts change then usually that is when reevaluation takes place and growth occurs. Typically there is little if any growth in T2s because they are just living from the past, based on others' beliefs.

Nor am I suggesting that one doesn't give deep consideration to what others think/believe. Who knows, this could be a "growth" opportunity, much like I describe in an article I have published titled "Gifts." If you read the article you will find that I TOTALLY disagreed with a statement I heard in a speech at a seminar. TOTALLY!!! But, I found myself unable to put the statement out of my mind, so I decided to explore the concept of what was said, and after much research and meditation, I came to embrace that concept. Again, when we so strongly disagree with something we hear, the reason may be based on a childhood experience (a whole different but very interesting subject). Nonetheless, when this happens, I have found it profitable to find out why I so strongly disagreed. In other words, don't just disagree and not know why.

If you don't know whether you are a T1 or T2, I am sure you have some friends that can help you figure this out. For example, when you walk into a roomful of people who know you, do they know you as someone that has deep convictions about things – convictions based on facts, not just because "Granddad said it," or do they know you as a "go along to get along" person, which I venture to say most people are. And why not? Those people don't

make waves. They find it easy to be friends and buddies with everyone because they are like a T2 – they just adjust to the temperature around them.

On the other hand, if you are a T1, that does not mean you have to be difficult or obnoxious. There are T1s, and listen closely to this, that want everyone else to believe what they believe. I admit that there have been times in my own life when I have been difficult and obnoxious, wanting others to agree with what I believed. There is a better way and that has been part of my growth over the years. I have found that it's not so much what one believes that can become offensive, but what one does with what one believes, in trying to force that belief on others. We all want to see people's eyes opened to more "truth," and when we think we have it, it isn't easy to restrain from trying to force our belief on others.

I want to address this further by saying that to help us in this area we again need to focus on a T1 and a T2 and think about how they operate. A T1, in changing the temperature of things around it (much like changing others' thinking), does it slowly, much like slowing down an out-of-control train. This seems all too obvious, but I have learned over the years that something can be obvious, yet not consciously used in day to day handling of events in our lives. It is true that often a quietly spoken word is far more powerful than a loud voice. In the legal profession it has been said that when we don't know for sure what we are talking about when addressing the court, to speak more authoritatively and raise the volume of our voice. Get my point?

In conclusion, I am not saying that anyone should just jump up and say, "I want to change." The purpose of this article is to get you to "think." Figure out what you are, a T1 or T2, and decide if that is how you want to live your life. Is it working for you? Know why it is or why it isn't working for you. THINK, THINK, THINK!

###