

STOCK IN YOUR CORPORATION

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

"How could this possibly apply to me?" you may ask. "I don't even have a corporation." Yes you do -- a corporation that you have allowed others to hold stock in, with voting rights. All of us have been doing this our entire lives.

It's time you find out about this corporation and consciously decide which people you want to allow to have stock in it and if so, how much stock. You have already issued voting stock to some individuals, stock that most probably in some instances you will take back once you learn about this corporation, your life. And you have allowed others to possess so much stock that they control your corporation. Again, once you learn about this corporation and the value of the stock you have allowed others to obtain, I am positive some changes will take place.

No, this is not a typical corporation but one that has enormous value, possibly more value than many corporations that you could be thinking about. This corporation has a major impact on your happiness, your joy, and your peace of mind. What am I talking about? I am taking about YOU.

The question is, "Which people do you allow to have voting stock in your corporation, IN YOU?" You are the chairman of the board of this corporation and you get to decide who can vote and the extent of their voting rights. You, at all times, have the power/right to increase or decrease the amount of stock you have allowed others to own in your corporation, you. You have complete and total control.

As you begin to get a better picture of what I am talking about, you will understand how important it is that you have this type of power/control over your corporation, over yourself and your emotions.

Here is what I am talking about. Everyone that we allow to have an "impact" on us regarding how we feel or think about ourselves, as well as the mood we are in as a result of what that person says, is someone we have allowed to have voting stock in our corporation. Typically who are these people that we

allow to impact us with what they say? Allow to vote in our corporation? The answer is: those that we are in a relationship with – our spouse, parents, children, neighbors, co-workers, friends, and the list goes on. In other words, anyone that affects us, impacts us, by what he/she says or does owns stock in our corporation. If you examine this list, you might ask yourself if you allow your neighbor, whom you casually see once a week, to have as much voting rights/impact in your corporation as you might have given to your mother. Probably not.

Let's take, for example, that a stranger says something unkind about you. How will his or her comments affect you? Possibly somewhat, but most probably not at all unless you have seriously thin skin and a very weak ego. The point is that you shouldn't allow just anybody and everybody to affect how you feel about yourself. And the bottom line is that unless what someone says has an effect on how you feel about yourself, it WILL NOT have an effect on you. That is a fact. We can try to hide it all we want, but I'll say it again. **UNLESS WHAT SOMEONE SAYS ABOUT YOU AFFECTS HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT YOURSELF, IT WILL NOT HAVE AN EFFECT ON YOU.** Take the total stranger, for example; typically if you hear something that he/she has said about you, it has no effect on you.

On the other hand, if it is someone we are in relationship with and care about, then it stands to reason that what they say/do will have an effect on us and we will want to give thought to the possible truth of the comment to see if we should reevaluate our conduct that caused the person to say what he/she said. We are not talking about becoming PERFECT; we are talking about growing. Too, we are talking about those we love and choose to have relationships with – those that we choose to allow voting rights in our corporation.

We have all heard the saying, "Those closest to us are the ones that hurt us the most." Sure they are and you now understand why, do you not?

We decide who has sufficient voting power to "impact" our corporation, our emotions and feelings. I'd say most of us probably don't have more than three or four people, or even less, that we give sufficient voting power in our corporation to allow what they say to have serious impact on our emotions. If so, you may want to take stock of how you feel about yourself and why you are so easily impacted by others, even those that shouldn't have stock in your corporation. There may be many that have some stock and may impact

us somewhat, but typically there are only a few that have enough voting power to "tip the scales."

It's important to know that when we "dismiss" what someone says with a "catty" or angry response that is EVIDENCE that the person making the statement does have voting power in your corporation. If the person truly has no voting power in your corporation, then what he/she says won't trigger any emotional reaction from you at all.

Are you getting this? Those closest to us have more impact on us than others when they say something that "hurts." Those farthest from us have little, if any, impact on us. We get to decide who those individuals are. And when they do say hurting things, we get to decide whether or not to "reduce" their stock and in some cases, to totally remove them as a stockholder. This is often done thru the process of a divorce, which is a good example of becoming physically detached from someone and yet often not emotionally detached. In other words, even going through a divorce doesn't necessarily diminish their stock in our corporation unless we truly are unaffected by what they say. Again, just saying we aren't affected, or passing comments out of anger, isn't evidence at all that we have removed their voting power in our lives.

If you want to have a great marriage, and most of us do, there is no option but to give up sufficient voting power that has impacting consequences in your corporation. Why? It means you care a great deal about how your spouse feels about you. The less you care (truly care) about how someone feels about you, the less impact that person has on you. One of the keys is to identify the people that you have allowed to have sufficient stock in your corporation to really impact you. Identify them by name. Maybe even write the names down. This helps with your awareness, and awareness is a big part of dealing with things. Now you realize why they can hurt you so – you care!

Again, we do need some relationships where we care to the extent that our lives are impacted. Those who claim not to care what anybody else thinks are not being honest with themselves. If they truly didn't care, they would be very isolated. In fact, those who do not allow others to have stock in their corporation are very lonely people.

Keep in mind that some people have given you stock in their corporation and what you say to and about them will have an impact on them. You can know how much voting power you have by the degree to which they are affected by your comments. Knowing this should help in your relationships by making you more careful about what you say, thus helping you protect the feelings of those who have given you this power in their lives.

Life, to a large degree, is about RISK, which is another subject. But, the prison is full of those who don't care. They totally, in many instances, live their lives for their own needs/desires and don't allow anyone sufficient voting power in their corporation to the degree that they are impacted by the vote.

Let me finish by referring us to Psalm 55:12-14. In these verses, David laments, "For it is not an enemy who reproaches me; then I could bear it. Nor is it one who hates me who has exhaled against me; then I could hide from him. But it was you, a man my equal, my companion and my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in the throng."

Our sorrow mirrors David's when we are hurt by the words of those whom we sit with, talk with, spend time with. We spend holidays, attend social functions and share offices with them. Or perhaps they are even those closer. We grow up with, confide in and sleep next to them. The closer the relationship, the more severe can be the offense. We find the greatest hatred among people who were once close.

Just remember, it's your corporation and you are the one that issues the stock. You have the power to give it and you have the power to take it back.

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