**Oil Patch Positivity***Prepared for February 1, 2016 Edition of The Journal Record*

Oil prices are down. People are stressed. Positivity is suffering.

Not to be confused with Pollyanna notions of self-serving happiness, positivity is defined by Strata Leadership as “maintaining a *good* attitude in the face of adversity.”

From my perspective, “good” means understanding that hard times may elicit appropriate responses of sadness or disappointment. Although unpleasant, pain can teach us valuable lessons that can spur better outcomes in the future.

On the other hand, prolonged negativity such as sarcasm, venting, or a myopic focus on problems can destroy resiliency and creativity. It can also lead to dysfunctional ethical decision-making. Popular OK Ethics presenter, Dr. Nathan Mellor who is CEO of Strata Leadership and Principal Technologies recently remarked, “One of the responsibilities of being an effective leader is having the discipline to remain positive in the face of uncertainty. The reason we are inspired by the attitudes and actions of leaders such as Franklin D. Roosevelt or Winston Churchill during World War II is because they retained their composure in times of unprecedented challenges. Their presence of mind and their willingness to acknowledge the reality of their situation without giving into hopelessness gave people confidence the Allies would be victorious. The need for leaders to retain their composure, to remain positive is no less important today.”

Our state is known for The Oklahoma Standard which encompasses virtues such as bravery, compassion and generosity. After all, our ancestors made it though Dust Bowls and the Depression. We’ve overcome terrorist attacks and tornadoes. This foundation for positivity is enhanced by practicing simple daily habits such as:

Be thankful. Look for something good in all circumstances. The extra effort helps maintain a better attitude and productivity, even on difficult days.

Do good. Even simple acts of kindness promote positivity. Consider bringing coffee or a snack to a co-worker who seems depressed. Surprise the boss by offering to work late. Treat someone to lunch. Bring brownies to share (chocolate is always a good idea).

Change the conversation. Put-downs are unprofessional and, besides, involvement in office drama does not help overcome the situation. If you can’t be kind, then be quiet and find something more productive to do.

Positivity is contagious. Played forward, we can inspire others to overcome obstacles by embracing possibilities to persevere with forbearance, grace and integrity.

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