

An Inconvenient Truth

Can we talk about an “inconvenient truth”? One that I’m pretty certain we’ve all been guilty of, but try to tell ourselves we don’t?

I’m talking about how easy it is to make a snap opinion of a person based on how they look. That whole judge a book by its cover thing. Even as I write this, I hate admitting it has and still happens, though I am working on seeing past it and have been for years.

The biggest mistakes I made in judgment used to be in hiring new employees, but a chance encounter on a Saturday afternoon changed my whole perception which, in turn led me into altering my way of thinking.

About four years into owning the store, I met a woman at the home of a house estate sale. I was there to pick up clothing to put on consignment and she was running around barking orders and telling everyone the sale was ending in 15 minutes and we had to get moving. She was a little older, kinda dishelved-looking with a red bandana holding her flyaway hair back from her face and a no-nonsense stance in her old baggy overalls. I had no idea who she was other than someone helping out.

As she approached me, I told her who I was and she greeted me like we were old friends, wrapping me up in an exuberant hug. During our conversation, she told me her name was Astrid and we chatted as she escorted me to where I needed to go and as she helped carry items out to my car. Absolutely lovely woman, and certainly not what I expected at all, but she was authentic at a time when she could have just told me what to do and left. Instead, her energetic actions backed up her kind words and I left wishing all my employees were like her.

In fact, just prior to this, I met Kate. She showed up to her interview dressed in a trendy outfit and abundance of energy throughout her interview. She gave all the “right answers” and portraying the epitome of what I wanted in my employees.

As she left I realized I needed to immediately offer her the job so she wouldn’t apply somewhere else and I’d lose her. I literally chased Kate down in the parking lot and asked her to come work for me. Walking back into the store, I was so proud of myself and relieved that now I had her. I got eight hours out of her before she no call – no showed.

Without knowing it at the time, Astrid and Kate became the tipping point for change. And the catalyst for when you know better, you do better. That meant to look beyond what is seen in a cursory glance. That meant to create an even playing field for hiring based off answers and actions, not if they fit the image.

Sure, you need someone who can understand fashion and/or home trends. That is definitely an important factor to being able to fill the essential job functions. But at what point does it become too much of a requirement? You can teach that. You can help someone come into their own style of fashion. You can walk them through the elements of creating a fabulous room. In a heartbeat I’ll take someone who is willing to learn over someone who thinks they know it all.

Continued on page 9.



—Angie Houloose

The Consignment Consultant
angie@theconsignmentconsultant.com

An Inconvenient Truth

(Continued from page 7)

It's much harder to teach someone how to be outgoing if they aren't. Or about being honest, kind and compassionate. Of course, we model these actions in our day to day running of the business, but some people just aren't cut out to be nice for whatever reason.

Because here's the deal...equating a trendy outfit with a great employee may be setting you back. And when you equate a person's rough first impression, you really might lose out on a fun connection.

Surround yourself with the best people who bring out the best in others and do amazing work. When you know what you're looking for beyond appearance, it's easier to actually see it when they are standing in front of you being authentic in their words and their actions.

Which brings me back to Astrid. I wish I could say I ended up hiring her. But I didn't. I did however follow her husband's hiring advice which never once mentions anything about how someone looks: "In looking for people to hire, you look for three qualities: integrity, intelligence and energy. And if you don't have the first, the other two will kill you."



Her husband? The Oracle of Omaha...Warren Buffet. ♻️