



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

QUERIES FOR NADLER

Dear Sir:

This is my reaction to David Nadler's article in the January *Journal*.

Nothing seems more offensive to a young person than to be grouped with his peers. It shouldn't seem too surprising then that mature people resent being stereotyped by the young.

Where are these ignorant, dollar-hungry, insensitive businessmen that we hear so much about? Who are these ignorant adults who stand in such dire need of counsel from children?

And whence this vast erudition that the young of this generation supposedly have? It must spring from intuition since experience is so sparse.

What makes the young of today suppose that they are so unusually unique? Every generation is unique, and so is every individual. The most unique thing about the present generation is the excessive attention they have received from adults; hence, their delusion that they know something of earth-shaking importance.

"How can they condemn such actions as building takeovers and campus disorders while completely ignoring and refusing to listen to the reasons behind such actions?"

What preposterous arrogance! Most of us have indeed listened and observed, and the thoughtful ones among us have grown weary from listening to ignorant rowdies who presume to sit in judgment on the world . . . sans sense, sans experience and very often sans education.

Is our patience to be endless? Go back to your studies. Do a little work. Learn something of worth, and then speak. Perhaps then there will be something of worth to listen to.

Funny thing . . . just a few weeks ago, I gave a seminar to youngsters who are mostly in college or recently graduated from college, and I found few with the SDS presumption. A couple of months ago, I had another seminar which was attended by Yalees in New Haven and

found none with the SDS bug. All of the young people I've chatted with have had nothing to say about occupying campus buildings, etc. but condemnation. Where are these clucks we hear so much about?

G. ARTHUR BLACK
McKenzie Associates, Inc.
West Hartford, Connecticut

Dear Sir:

I would like to ask three questions about an article in the January issue of the *Journal*. The article is "Training and Development and the Youth Problem" by Mr. David Nadler.

1. What is the difference between the "new morality" and the "old immorality"?
2. Why have a "hippie, peace freak, or radical" on the program?
3. Does Mr. Nadler ever listen to the news on the radio or TV? If he did, he would learn the reasons for such actions as "building takeovers" and "campus disorders." One reason for the recent M.I.T. takeover was some protesting the arrest of their constituents, who had been arrested for criminal acts. They were protesting being treated as criminals.

LLOYD WENK
Ark-La-Tex Chapter
ASTD

NADLER RESPONSE TO WENK

Mr. Wenk has expressed his views by asking three questions pertaining to my article on ASTD and the challenges posed by youth. I am glad that Mr. Wenk asked these questions, as I imagine that there are many others who read the article and might have asked the same questions. Before responding specifically to the three questions, it is important that the thrust of the original article be understood. The basic contention was that there is a new group of young people entering the job market. These people have different values, ideas

and perspectives. It is important to understand this group, *not judging whether their views are right or wrong*, but realizing that this group does exist and will be a factor in the work force. The major question therefore, is not whether one agrees with young people, but whether one can understand them, and then make use of this potential human resource which can contribute to the organization.

The first step in this process is to find out about what young people feel, what they have to say and what makes them tick, *before* making value judgments.

The first question asked the difference between the "new morality" and the "old immorality." The answer to this question alone could easily fill several volumes. Briefly, however, in the eyes of many young people, the old immorality symbolizes people paying lip service to a standard of behavior prescribed by accepted values, moral concepts and social taboos. The idea of immorality enters when people pay lip service to this standard of conduct while secretly acting in a contradictory manner. For example — advocating strict sexual standards while participating in extramarital sex; or condemning a thief, while cheating on income tax; etc. In the eyes of the young person, the old immorality was as immoral in its inherent hypocrisy as in the actual acts themselves.

The new morality is a much different concept. It rejects the acceptance of social standards which do not have valid justifications or are based on ignorance or superstition. It rejects ideas such as being ashamed of the human body, viewing sex as an immoral act, placing great value on material possessions, irrational enforced conformity of appearance and other such concepts. Each individual, in the new morality, must define for himself a set of values and a standard of conduct which is relevant to him in the context of his environment. Most importantly, this behavior is not hidden or secret. The young person does not try to hide his acts, but seeks to

behave openly in accordance with his concept of moral conduct.

This, of course, is a gross oversimplification of the concept of new morality. The important point, however, is not that one accepts the morality, not that one judges the new morality, but rather that the employer realizes that his young employees may adhere, in varying degrees, to these concepts of morality, and that this may explain certain behavior or attitudes on the job.

The second question asked why we should have a "hippie, peace freak, or radical" on the program at Miami? The rationale for having them on the program seemed obvious. The young American radical has played an important part in our society. His impact has been greatest among his peers. Surveys indicate that a majority of college students sympathize with the goals of the radical student. What the radical has to say, therefore, has relevance to our understanding of the motivations and frustrations of the young employee.

At the Miami Conference this type of person would have been even more relevant. The theme of the conference was "Revolutions of Our Times." Would one deny that the revolution on the campus is not one of these significant revolutions of our times, and therefore relevant both to our lives and our profession?

Finally, the question comes to mind — what are people afraid of? Do they fear being tainted or converted into a radical merely by listening to one? How many people, ready to condemn the actions of the New Left, have ever sat down to talk seriously with a young radical and found out something about him other than what is heard or seen in the news media?

When one gets to the point when he is afraid to give the other side a chance to speak, when he will not even listen to what the other side has to say, then perhaps it's time for a re-evaluation of one's own motivations and values.

The third question asked — "Does Mr.

Nadler ever listen to the news on radio or T.V.?" If I did, I would have learned, according to Mr. Wenk, that takeovers are in support of criminal acts, as was the case of M.I.T.

The vast majority of campus demonstrations have had its roots in issues such as the war in Vietnam, university reform, student rights and other related issues. What I urged in the article, is that people attempt to find the real reasons for these incidents. A superficial look at the situation indicates that some disruptions are in support of criminal acts, as Mr. Wenk stated in regards to M.I.T. Had Mr. Wenk bothered to inquire, to look closer and find the real reason for the M.I.T. disturbance, he would have found an answer which would have been less simplistic, but which would have given him more insight into the crisis on the campus — which may soon be the crisis of the work organization. (The basic issue at M.I.T. was war-related research conducted by the school. The students protested, police were called in, and the usual pattern of events resulted — arrests, protests, more arrests, etc. As in most cases at this stage, the original issue had long since become obscured.)

In summary, I do not want to be put in the position of defending the acts of every young person. I am saying that some effort must be made to understand the young generation. No one can deny that, in light of their numbers, attitudes and level of education, they will have a tremendous impact on the world of work in the next few years. The key to understanding is to get the facts *before* putting a value judgment on them. This job of getting the facts and helping the established or older employee understand and utilize young people is the job of training and development.

DAVID NADLER