

The Demoralization of Young Workers

For those who readily engage in discussing societal issues, a conversation on youth, crime and violence will undoubtedly capture their interest. The discussion could be broadened by the addition of a fourth and fifth element, with these being unemployment and poverty. Some discussants may argue that political promises, broken political promises and other developments of the day, have to some measure, contributed to the burning societal problems which are being experienced. While civil society organizations have generally accepted that the world has changed, the current cultural shifts, beg the question as to whether civil society has generally failed the youth and young people. In attempting to come to a conclusion on this matter, it requires that a study is directed at examining the state of parental guidance, the contribution of the church, the failings of the education system, the impact of the mouthings and actions of politicians and the political directorship, and finally, the exercise of the social corporate responsibility of the business community. In the discussion, it would be not be advisable to ignore the social ills that plagued the society, the form they take and factors that ignite them.

The accusation can be levied that this unfortunate state of affairs is driven by the lack of leadership and guidance at all levels in our society. The global society has to question itself whether those who are supposed to be role models, are setting the correct and good examples for the young people to follow. One definition of a role model, identifies with *a person whose behaviour or success can be emulated by others, especially by younger people*. It therefore goes without saying that a role model should have clearly defined attributes, and by the qualities they exhibit, serve to inspire and motivate others.

Some may wish to question what does the subject of role models has to do with the demoralization of young workers. It should not be difficult to make a connection between the behaviours and actions of some of those who serve in public life, that can be best described as despicable and disgraceful. You may wish to consider how the loss of faith in the system and the loss of confidence in those who lead, can demoralized, demotivate and fail to inspire the confidence of young workers. The fact that what is promoted as best practice, is often in the breach of not being practiced. With such poor examples being on show, it can in fact create a platform for young employees to take short cuts, or to take inappropriate risks in an effort to achieve personal goals or ambitions.

Much of the negativity which is reported in the mass media that involves high profile persons in public life, identifies with corruption, deception, breaches of the law in all forms and fashion, unethical behaviour and even being supportive of bad management practices. The level of

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indifference now extends to some who are willing to turn a blind eye to indiscretions, and moreover, engaged themselves in fake news. Young employees are not blind to these things.

Bearing this in mind, it becomes imperative that attention is paid to protecting young workers from acts on indiscretion or being victims based on their vulnerability. The intention should always be that of ensuring that young workers are not enticed to turn away from what is good, true or morally right. It is the responsibility of management and coworkers to help young workers to overcome any feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. This is necessary if they are to avoid the pitfalls of exploitation and temptations because of their vulnerability.

In the current economic climate, it is not surprising that young workers are feeling demoralized, given the difficulty they face in accessing jobs. Although many have high level academic qualifications, they face fierce competition for the available jobs. Moreover, they are forced to accept sub- standard or poor quality Jobs, where the pay and conditions of work are far below expectations. Finally, many are left out in the cold in being unemployed, simply because they don't have the job experience that is now being demanded by employers, or lack the basic entry qualifications for work. The end result is that many young persons are left to do menial work.