



*“Get involved, speak up, read, and most importantly, share our story!”*

Halloween is coming up soon. It has been many years since I donned a costume for Halloween but we all take on multiple costumes daily. Most people assume different roles throughout their days. We have our day job and we assume that “costume” with its expected dress code and social constructs. We have our parent/fan for which our costume is spirit gear and an unrealistic expectation of our son’s or daughter’s skills level. We have our fan costume with our team jersey and inappropriate comments about the team to our east. We have our wedding costume where we get dressed up and mocked about how well we clean up.

My point is that we have multiple facets to our lives beyond our work. Our attire and our attitudes change as we take on these different roles. The risk of defining ourselves by one aspect of our lives is that if that piece of our life is taken away, we have lost our identity. I coach fastpitch softball for high school age girls. I’d argue that teenage girls have the deck stacked against them as far as finding their identity. Television and magazine overwhelm them with images of how they are supposed to look and act. One way I help to combat this as a coach is that I remind them that softball is something they do, not who they are. If they identify themselves as only an athlete and that ability is taken away or they don’t excel and get cut from their high school team, then who are they? By understanding that we are all a sum of all our interests and abilities, we can have a more balanced and healthy self-awareness.

Where am I going with this?

In September we celebrate National Truck Driver Appreciate Week. We rightly honor the people

that provide the labor that make the economy work and I know in my case, they produce the service that puts bread on my table. We all know that we should honor and respect this profession every day, not just during this September week each year. So how can we do this practically?

Sit down and talk to a driver about their life rather than their job. Find out what makes them tick. Do they have a family? If so, who are they and what type of relationships do they have with them? What are their hobbies? What is important to them – faith, family, work, etc.? What are their struggles? What do they need help with?

Strip away the costume we see them in and find out who they are as individuals. This is how we can truly honor our drivers, make this profession one that is respected and begin to address the labor issues our industry is facing. I was told once that no matter what business you are in, you are in a people business. This message is one that I am reminded of often. **TM**

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