

Careful listening vs. fast-food society

Hello, I'm one of KRWA's "new guys". Some of you may have heard about me from that somewhat embarrassing introduction that Elmer printed in the December 2003 issue of KRWA's clarifier newsletter. That guy in the picture is really not me.

What you see is what you get!

First, I never wear a collared shirt. That's just for the photo. I am more at ease in old grubby clothes, knee deep in concrete or mud. But by looking at that picture, one may come to the inaccurate conclusion that I am a

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clean-cut somewhat intelligent individual. That picture and article has drawn me out to be someone that I may want to be, but in all reality, am not. If a person got to know me, they would find that I like to keep the mood as far away from the serious side as possible. The more people laugh, the more they will forget about their worries and the less stressed a situation will become.

Because this is my first attempt to prepare an article, I'd like to take this opportunity to further introduce myself. I like to be outdoors in the elements. Hunting and fishing are two of my favorite things to do. Just walking around in a streambed in the middle of spring is so invigorating that it takes a person's breath away. My two girls and my new son are my pride and joy. Watching them

grow is as rewarding an experience as one can ask for. And my wife is my best friend with whom I would share any and all experiences.

And so your question may be "Why is Pete Koenig offering all of this information and what's the reason?" First, I do not mislead anyone. I certainly wouldn't want someone to think that they are having an international expert come and speak to them about something as important as digitally producing a mapping system for their water district, or the correct layout of rebar in a 4-inch thick concrete floor, or the minimum amount of cover needed over a

mind taking an extra minute to explain something.

Shane Holthaus and others at KRWA, are caring and thoughtful people whose priorities are definitely in order. This seems to be the norm here at my new place of employment, KRWA. That is not shocking to all the folks who've known KRWA and what it represents and has done over the years. But to me, it's new. Sure, I've worked for some really nice people, even some that would bend over backwards for me, but never any who are as accommodating as this group. They take the time to help us newbies.

Twenty years from now, who is really going to care if the house you live in was completed two months ahead of schedule if it is crumbling down around you?

6-inch diameter yellow mine casing containing a 4-inch, 200 psi water line going under a state highway in northeastern Kansas that carries 104 psi. Someone just might get the wrong impression!

The truth is, one can't be sure about who they are talking to until they get to know them a little better. Just like with me. It would be presumptuous to think that I have a firm grasp on the numerous programs being delivered by Kansas Rural Water. I work with Shane Holthaus on KAN STEP projects; I ask a lot of questions. He's going to get sick of me before long. But I've come to know Shane as a patient individual and one who doesn't

Beware first impressions

What should a person do? Take his time. Impetuousness is the mother of all mistakes. We who live in this fast food society seem too often to forget about others' feelings, and about what is really important. In the construction industry, quality is what counts. Twenty years from now, who is really going to care if the house you live in was completed two months ahead of schedule if it is crumbling down around you? It's hard to live in rubble, and the more one tries, the more life begins to resemble the pile of stuff he or she is living in. Take your time, build a big beautiful house of a life – and enjoy the time you have with your friends and family.

It's all right to get things done in a timely manner as long as speed isn't the focal point. The more speed one has, the more devastating the crash can be. The same can be said about a relationship. If a person hurries through any aspect of it, they may miss the person that they are trying to get to know and the resultant loss of a potential friend, associate, employee, or employer may be that devastating crash that we all want to avoid. Take the time to get to know the person in front of you. They may turn out to be that diamond in the rough.

Being deliberate

I believe that the best course of action is usually the most conscious and/or deliberate one. By slowing down and taking in all of the information about a person, situation, or idea, a rational, non-hurried and usually correct decision can be made for whatever lies ahead. To rush into

any decision is irrational unless it's truly a life/death situation.

This is nothing more than common sense. Yet, it is sometimes difficult to stay the course because of certain pressures caused by time constraints or the opinions of others. If a person just had the staying power to do what he knows is right, things will always come out squarely in the end. This, in turn, leads us back to the previous statement about impetuosity. It usually leads to mistakes.

I try to get to know the next person in front of me as opposed to passing judgment based on his/her first few words. One never knows whom that person may turn out to be. He could be a president, a concrete foreman, or just the new KRWA tech named Pete.

I want to take this opportunity to put in a word for the KAN STEP program. It's personally very rewarding to

help local people work in their goal of building their community center or fire station. I'm looking forward this summer to helping the small town of Corning in southern Nemaha County install an entirely new water system.

Since I joined KRWA in December, there's been a lot of planning and effort going in something they call "conference." I'm looking forward to attending that event March 23 - 25 at Century II in Wichita. I hope that you are too - and I look forward to meeting many new people there. The session on KAN STEP will be presented Wednesday morning after the opening session in Room 209A at 10:45. The session will be presented by Marilyn Graham, KS Dept. of Commerce. I hope to see you there.



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