

So you want to be a Bookman

By: Linda Salters

On a calm evening nearly a year ago, as my husband and I shared the news cast with Dan Rather, the telephone rang. The conversation went like this:

“Hello!”

“Hi, Mom. This is Jeff. How is everybody?”

“Well, Hi Jeff. We’re all doing find. What’s up?”

“Not much. Things are going great at college.”

“That’s good, Jeff. Say, have you decided what you’re going to do this summer? You know Grandma Baker really wants you to take advantage of the job she can get you at that bank in Lake Forest. You know she’s impossible to say **NO** to.”

“Yeah. That’s why I’m calling. I have been interviewed to sell books door-to-door- and I have talked.....”

“Sell books!!!”

“Yeah...and I have talked to several people who...”

“A salesman!!!”

“Yeah...and I have talked to several people who did it and I’ve checked on the company and this is what I want to do.”

“Hold on, Jeff. Let me tell your Dad.”

The conversation to Jeff’s Dad:

“Jeff says he wants to sell books this summer and he has talked to several people who have done it and has talked to the guys in the company. What do you think?”

Dad’s answer:

“A book salesman. He’s asking for trouble. Especially from his Grandma Baker if he doesn’t go to Illinois. After all, she is asking friends in high places to give her grandson a job.”

Mom’s reply to Jeff on the telephone:

“Dad says that’s great. But you have to tell Grandma Baker **NO**. We love you, Jeff, and we are very proud of you and I’ll pray that everything goes good.”

When you hear the word SALESMAN, you immediately get a picture of a pushy, obnoxious, usually poorly dressed, but mostly just a poor person with his fat foot in you door selling you a product you don’t want, can’t use...and most of the time can’t afford. As soon as you forget that image and realize that your son or daughter had an opportunity to be with a large company, Thomas Nelson, and be one of the few brave, the bookmen of their Varsity Sales Program, you will know it is a right choice.

No one, especially our children, want to call us with a possible summer job and be told, “You’ll never be able to do it, or it’s too dangerous, or No, you can’t do that. I won’t let you.”

My husband Bob and I raised our five children to know right from wrong and we always told them that no matter what they decided to do in life, even if it was being a bum, be the best you can. Of course we want the best for our children and because we are older, we should be wiser. Once that child of yours has flown the

nest, they are responsible for their own life. That doesn't mean they don't come to us for approval, advice, love, respect and encouragement.

The decision to sell books door-to-door is a big one! Your son or daughter has been selected because someone saw 'the right stuff' in them. It may be something you never saw because our children are by no means all grown up when they head for college. The only way any of us discovers our capabilities is to experience all we can. We let Jeff make his own decision, but not without expressing our doubts and fears mixed with enough encouragement and confidence that Jeff felt comfortable with whatever he decided.

Naturally we are very proud of Jeff. He researched the company, talked with several people who sold for Varsity in the past, and prayed about his decision, and told his Grandma Baker, "thanks, but no thanks." Let us tell you, that in itself was a monumental accomplishment! In twelve weeks, Jeff grossed \$5,200.

In our case, Jeff made the right choice and he learned that there are good people out there and bad people out there. The tales he tells of his summer experience are heart warming. Somehow, all the awful things we knew would happen to him, never did. He learned skills that will be helpful no matter what he does when he 'grows up'.

So, don't be afraid to ask a million questions, but encourage your son or daughter to 'be all that they can be.' In most cases, when your child calls you about Varsity Book Sales, they have already decided and just want to know that you are behind them all the way. If your children are anything like our son, Jeff, you'll be amazed at the accomplishments they can add up!

God's blessings in all you do!

Sincerely,

Linda and Bob Salters

The proud parents of a bookman.