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Basic Problem is our Attitude

But I think the basic problem, which if we solve it will solve most of these others, is the problem of attitude. It's right here with us now. We go to bed with it, we wake up with it, we eat with it, we live with it.

It's our false pride — not so much environment, for things are rough all over for everybody, not just us. The corn doesn't grow for other people, too, you know, and other people don't get the rain, either.

Our biggest problem is our attitude. We're lazy. We're lazy and we're proud that we're little babies sitting in a mud puddle sitting there and wishing that someone else would come and pull us out.

We're saying to ourselves, "I'm just a poor little Indian. I'm ignorant. If I go to school, I won't make it. I just know I won't make it!"

You know, your thoughts defeat you before you even start. You're quitting before you even get started. You're sitting there in that mud puddle watching the world go by.

And I'm telling you, it's passing by fast, faster every day. The man who gets anywhere in this world is the man who gets out and works. Oh, some people get things by luck, certainly; that's always going to be. But how many of us here can count on luck for getting ahead? I know people say, "I've never been lucky a day in my life."

No, we're sitting in our little mud puddle, watching the world go by. We're letting our white neighbors do everything, and we're sitting here wishing we could do the same thing, but we're not doing anything about it. We're lazy.

I don't think we're even nearly the proud Indian that used to live long ago. I don't think we even have a right to be proud that we are their descendants. Those old Indians had the right idea. Maybe they never got far. Maybe they never got farther than the back of a horse. Maybe they never created anything more with their hands than a crop of corn. But they did more than you're doing here today, people.

They had courage. They had pride and they had self-discipline. Those are things we seriously lack today. We don't have them anymore. We're cowards. We can't face the world. We can't look the world in the face and say, "Listen, have you got problems to give me? Well, I don't mind. I'm gonna look you in the face and I'm gonna solve those

problems. Other people around me are doing it, so can I."

Have you ever seen Gallup when time for the bars to close? Have you ever been at the jail at nine o'clock in the morning? Women and children come out of there as well as men. Indians. They're not proud. If they were, they'd be home, they'd be respectable people, wouldn't they?

Respectability Comes from Inside

Respectability comes from inside. It's you, people. It's in your hearts. So, when you think how clean your mind is, how clean you live, that's respectability.

No, we're not proud. We're not proud at all. We don't even care about ourselves. We don't really care whether we get an education or not.

When I was young, my father told me stories about my grandfather. I was too small to know him—really know him—but I think back now, and I think, "What a wonderful man he must have been!"

He used to get up early in the morning, when the sun came up, and he used to go down to the fields, pick the dirt up in his hands and look at it and thank God for it. And it wasn't good dirt, either. A good farmer today a farmer with education, wouldn't even farm it. But my grandfather thanked God for the right to walk the way he was walking, thanked God for the two hands given him to grow corn with.

He had so much less than we have and yet he was thanking God for what he had. He didn't feel sorry for himself for one moment and he wasn't expecting help from anybody. He knew it was poor dirt, but he knew that if he worked at it hard enough it would produce. He was no coward; he had pride. He was proud that he was a man and he wasn't the only one who was like that. They were just about all like that.

That's why we live on the respect they gained. People all over the world respect Indians. Why? Because of what those Indians, those old Indian people stood for—those old fogies we sometimes call them—because of what they stood for. Because of the work they did, because of the pride they showed, because of their greatness.

You may not know it, but we have a large amount of flunkouts among Indian students in college. I'll put it bluntly; we get about thirty here a year, and at the end of the year maybe we have two. And we are lucky if we graduate two or three a year. Why?

Why, because you don't really want to go to school, that's why. Because you just come here

thinking, "Well, it's going to be easy to go to school," and then impress people with, "I'm a college man."

No, people, you've got to want to give everything you've got. If you want to be an engineer, you've got to burn it into you now. "I want to be an engineer. I've got to be an engineer." and you've got to burn with that, because when you come here you'll find some who will say, "You'll never make it." That's what they told me. "Oh, Beryl, you'll never make it; you don't have a chance." You know, if you listened to everything everybody else said, you'd be in a heck of a mess.

Other People Have Troubles

If you want to go to school, you've really got to want to go. And when you get here, don't think you've got problems that others don't have. If you're bashful and shy, you're not the only one. If you're scared to ask questions in class, you're not the only one. If you're broke and haven't any money, you're not the only one. And if you're working hard and staying up studying all night, and you think you've got it rough—well, just look around you and you'll see somebody else who's got it rough, and he may not even be an Indian.

We complain about the troubles we have, but other people have just as many. And yet, we expect them to come and pull us out of our rut. We just sit, waiting and waiting.

People, when you've gone through college and you reach up and grab that degree, you're going to have callouses. I don't care what kind of a person you are. Your spirit's going to get hurt, you're going to think people don't care, you're going to think a lot of things.

That's why I say you've got to want to go; down deep inside you've got to want to go like you've never wanted to do anything. Then you'll get through, even if you're not smart, even if you're a little backward, even though it looks like the world's against you. And every time you think you're down in the dumps, just look around you, just look at other people. They're just as bad off as you, and sometimes worse.

You Can Make A Dent

You're the ones we're depending on, whom these old people in their old age are depending on now. They don't want to die thinking the world is as bad as it is now for the Indian. They want to think that maybe somebody has put a dent in it. They want to think that maybe something can get done. They want to think that if they have to go to a

hospital, there will be Indians there who will smile at them no matter what they look like, and say, "Come on in and let me help you."

We've got to come back to our people and work among them. We're not getting an education for ourselves alone. The white man's race doesn't need us now, but ours does. It needs everyone of us. And if you're going to sit there in your little mud puddle and wait for someone to pull you out, you're just working against the race you were born in, and it's a crime!

People, there's nothing to this talk that you're bound to be backward because you're an Indian or that you're anything because you are an Indian. You're just as good as anyone else in this world. You can make a dent as deep as anyone else, if you want to. All you have to do is get out of your rut.

It's easy to say? I know it's easy to say. But we've got to do justice to our parents, because, regardless of what you say, they raised us; and much of the reason you want to be an engineer, say, is tied indirectly to what they said. Maybe they didn't get much of an education; but if you've got ambition, that ambition was in them someplace. They gave a little bit of it to you. You owe them something for that.

You've got to get out and do justice to your parents. You've got to get out and do justice to yourselves. You've got to get out and do justice to the God you believe in, because He made you, and He gave you just as much as He gave anyone else!

Seniors Invited To Contact Ed. Program

All enrolled members of the Klamath Tribe who are now in their senior year of high school and who are interested in continuing their education after graduation are invited to contact the Klamath Education Program. This program has been set up under terms of Public Law 587 to provide training opportunities to tribal members and this year's High school graduates, among others, are eligible to participate in it. Training under the program can be taken in any accredited vocational school or college in the State of Oregon. Those who are interested in enrolling for the next fall term should make the necessary arrangements at as early a date as possible.

High school seniors who are interested in the program should contact the Klamath Education Office, Phone 661, Chiloquin, Oregon.