

Integrity Matters Broadcast

Movie reminds us of our 'Field of Dreams'"

By James F. Bracher

Question:

Can a movie pass along values like integrity?

Response:

Yes. In the 1989 fantasy movie *Field of Dreams*, the values advocated were admirable. Ray Kinsella (played by famous actor Kevin Costner) comes face to face with his father, John Kinsella, and the two of them ask important questions of each other. The ghostly father, John, presented in his youth as a professional baseball player, looks around the beautifully manicured baseball field and asks of the young farmer, his son: "Is this heaven?" "No," replies his son (Costner), "this is Iowa."

After a short pause, Ray, the son, appearing uncertain and perplexed, inquires of his father - "Is there a heaven?" "Oh, yes, there is a heaven," says Ray's father, John, "**heaven is where dreams come true.**"

Kevin Costner portrays Ray Kinsella, a farmer who constructs a baseball diamond in his Dyersville, Iowa corn field at the repeated urging of a mystical voice that intones to him, "If you build it, they will come. . ."

Fellow actor in *Field of Dreams*, James Earl Jones, plays the 1960's activist and writer, Terence Mann, summarizes the meaning of the moment for the Iowa Farmer, offering this insight: "Here we are today, longing for the past and for all that was good then, and could be good again." The movie makes the point that we can capture the best of who we were by being the best of what we know to do, now. *Field of Dreams* is about integrity, accountability and stewardship.

Earlier in the film, the young farmer is carefully watching his father, explaining to his wife that he "really only knew his father when he had been worn down by life." Once again, the message from the film is clear, life is a precious cycle and constructive relationships are what make it meaningful and hopeful.

Field of Dreams teaches: "What we do, both the good and the generous, quite often we do for ourselves." Giving can be a selfish act of caring. Exhibiting constructive behaviors: character, honesty, openness, authority, partnership, performance, charity and graciousness is an effective way of passing along life-affirming values. There is no substitute for being a positive role model.

Field of Dreams applies to the nitty-gritty challenges people face every day. Every individual is responsible for being a good steward, of land, ideas, friendships, family values. Dreams can come true. They have in the past and they will in the future. Providing the roadmap of integrity-centered living is the greatest legacy that can be passed along to our children and the grandchildren of our grandchildren. Our individual "Field of Dreams" is that portion of the world for which we accept responsibility. The relationships we build and sustain will be the true measure of who we are and how we operate. **If you build them** (substantive relationships); **they will come.** Invest the energy in people and savor those heavenly moments when your dreams come true.

Published for Jim Bracher's Integrity Matters newspaper column in "The Californian," Salinas California - July 13, 2005.

James F. Bracher is the Founder of Bracher Center for Integrity in Leadership - www.brachercenter.com