



# Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

Summer is a great season for me. Though we don't conduct sessions for most of our Master's Program groups, I spend time catching up on everything else. During the dog-days of August, I also allow myself the indulgence of time to just think. One of my thoughtful moments this week delivered a strange revelation: most of my ongoing relationships are with peculiar people.

I don't mean that in an accusatory or demeaning way. After all, it takes one to know one! I use the term in its healthiest form: to be peculiar is just to be one of a kind. That's the best you can be, since that's the way God made all of us; one-of-a-kind, no numbered prints or cheap xerographic copies.

Chuck - one of my peculiar friends - attended the Naval Academy. One morning over breakfast, he told me about his college years. When you attend Annapolis, you have no stories of wild parties or raucous dorm life. The Navy runs a tight ship; in fact, the cadets (think students who march in parades instead of in protests) live under the onus of a demerit system.

They keep score at Annapolis. They don't leave the boundaries to chance or personal, subjective definition. Instead, they have all of the expectations pretty well defined. Stay in-bounds, and you'll go far; live like a Hollywood



celebrity... and you'll probably go home.

At the Academy, they have a bulletin board on which the Brass posts notices for the cadets. It's no secret; upon arrival at the first get-acquainted session, the cadets hear about the postings.

These days, lots of people walk together for cardiovascular benefit. At Annapolis, that's nothing new. They've always walked together: in formation, in uniform, hours on end. When they line up to walk -- march, really -- everyone has a particular place to stand, where they look just like the guy next door (no peculiarity allowed!). If anyone is missing, it isn't hard to spot the hole in the formation.

What happens if you miss the meeting... or, are late in arrival? Easy question: demerits. You're busted, baby. "But, wait: I didn't know there was a formation called for this morning!"

Chuck says you don't want to say that, ever. No leniency at the Academy, especially if

you plead ignorance. Better to keep your trap shut and run the laps. Why? Didn't they understand? Did they miss the class on Sensitivity Training for Upper Management?

The Brass make it simple: the formation was announced on the cadets' bulletin board. It was the cadets' responsibility to check the board. If there was a mandatory meeting called and they miss it, and then plead the defense that they were uninformed, it's double demerits. One charge of missed meeting... and one charge of failure to get the word. Rather than an excuse, demerits. Stop your moanin', sailor...

In the Navy, they seem to have this highly-developed belief in personal responsibility. What a bizarre -- dare I say, peculiar? -- concept: big people should be capable of big-people behavior. Would that work with college-aged people in your neighborhood?

God has his own bulletin board: he uses the wide-expanse of his creation. He has communicated with his direct-reports, and his ground-rules are similarly spelled out: "... what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse..." (Romans 1:19-20).

In case you missed the announcement, He has called a meeting at his place, just after we leave here. Everyone has to be in uniform - the orders say we are to dress "in the righteousness of Christ." Miss the meeting - or, come out of uniform - at your own risk. No second chances. That's no time to take unnecessary chances...

I'm dressed and ready to go ... along with most of my peculiar friends. Are you dressed... and ready to go?

*Bob Shank*

*Bob Shank is Founder and Chief Mentoring Officer of The Master's Program (TMP).*

*To read prior issues of the Point of View visit:*  
[www.mastersprogram.net](http://www.mastersprogram.net)

*To learn more about TMP visit:*  
[www.mastersprogram.org](http://www.mastersprogram.org)

*To read a Program Summary of TMP visit:*  
[www.mastersprogram.org/summary/](http://www.mastersprogram.org/summary/)

*RSVP for a TMP Executive Briefing:*  
[www.mastersprogram.org/Briefing.aspx](http://www.mastersprogram.org/Briefing.aspx)