

An Honest Living

I consider the job of certified arborist an honorable profession. We should be proud of how we earn our money through challenging and potentially dangerous work that involves perseverance, physical ability and knowledge. While many work inside, we work outside in the elements. While many enjoy the warmth of a heated office in winter and the comfort of an air-conditioned environment in the hot summer, we endure exposure. While many live a lifestyle of comparative safety, our continued health and even existence depends on alertness, instinct, physical ability and discernment. Our money is made performing a risky job that far outranks firefighting and/or police work in the element of danger if we care to note the fatality/injury statistics on record.

All you guys and gals who work as climbers should be proud and not take second place to any who work in other professions. There are few jobs, if any, that represent such a physical challenge as ours. Our money is earned honestly if we consider the efforts, abilities, and knowledge needed to accomplish our work description.

Yes, this is an honorable profession, with no need to practice unscrupulous techniques to earn a fair living. Is there a solution?

I have always said, it is not the problem one has but what one does about it that matters. Like it or not, there is no easy solution to this problem. Humans are indeed inherently inclined to that which is not right as long as it advances them by hook or by crook. In every occupation, the problem of ethics exists, and will continue to exist, because the nature of humankind is inclined to self interest in every capacity. Yet, if each of us considers this as a personal issue and places himself under a process of introspection, that is, if we look after our own personal conduct, we will have done what is essential and necessary for our part in solving the problem.

Some may say that there is no reward for being honest. Some may say that the good guy always finishes last. Some will say that if others are being unethical, I must be the same in order to get mine. Well, these arguments are all sound and fine when one is seeking to justify what

is not right but they don't hold water when said with respect to unethical situations.

I have identified good people I choose to deal with who are ethical. The people whom I have as clients are ethical. My personal friends are ethical. My equipment suppliers are ethical. So ethics does have its rewards. Just as I choose to deal with ethical people, so too, do ethical people choose to deal with others who are honest. Yet, more than that, can anyone put a value on being able to look in the mirror with the accompanying peace of mind, pride, and clear conscience that comes from being ethical? I think not, but having said that, remember that as well as learning being a voyage, so is this thing called ethics. As good as we are, we can always be better. If you do not believe me, just ask my wife who after 25 arduous years of being married to me always suggests ways I can improve!

*Edward Kennedy, Harrowsmith, Ontario
613-372-1095, ekennedy@sprint.ca
Reprinted from Ontario Arborist, Vol. 32(2)
April 2004*