

This past January term I was asked to interview for an internship at Costello Companies in town. Going into the interview I had no idea what to expect. All I was told was I had been selected and the interview process would explain everything to me. Having little interviewing experience I ran home and immediately typed Costello Companies into my computer and found out they were an affordable housing management company. I did my research and thought I was going into the interview very prepared, oh how wrong I was. I got into the interview and the first thing set in front of me was a balance sheet. The interviewer went on to explain they were looking for someone with an accounting background to come in and help with the development side of the business. Being a marketing major this scared the living daylights out of me. I went into marketing to get away from accounting and now I was interviewing for an accounting position. Needless to say I ended up taking the internship.

My first couple days at the internship went really well and I felt like everything was running really smoothly. Dan one of the owners took me on a tour of the properties and gave me a two-hour lesson on the background of Costello Companies. Dan's dad had started the company on his own and had put just about everything he had on the line. He had been the first person in South Dakota to build affordable housing and now Dan had taken over to continue the business. Coming out of that two-hour drive I realized I had stepped into an experience of a lifetime. The passion that Dan showed and the story surrounding his dad starting the business dripped with passion and concern for the people his company was helping.

This passion and concern I later found out did not just resonate solely from him but also out of my boss, Joan. We were up in Aberdeen at a rehab project of some old worn down apartments that Costello was fixing up. We got into one of the last apartments we were touring and she finally said, "I want a shower in this half bath." The construction was about half way through and she was changing the plan. The construction manager looked dumb founded. He turned to her and said, "I don't think we can fit it in." 15 min later Joan had finally convinced the manager to include the shower after scratching 5 different ways to fit the shower in due to space

constrictions. Later as we were hitting the road to come back to Sioux Falls Joan started thinking again. The property next to the one we were working on had a pretty nice playground. Joan wanted one better than theirs, one that all the kids in both complexes would want to play on. The budget originally set out did not include a very big set but once we got back to Sioux Falls Joan was bound and determined to find the best play set for the kids that would move into those apartments. It hit me again in those moment that there was passion in this company, and that the passion they had came from the attention paid to details. Most people working on projects like these would not care about small details like a shower or a play set yet these people did.

It did not matter that these apartments they were building were only affordable housing, they wanted each project to be the best. I experienced time and time again situations where some tiny little detail was changed, even though the people moving into these places would probably never even noticed whether it was there or not. It is this type of thinking that is portrayed in this scripture today. "Be open handed and freely lend them whatever they need," God says. This is not just a call to give to the poor but rather to go further and pay attention to the details.

Without these details you are only going through the motion. Once you start paying attention to the details do you truly care and start to show a passion. It is through paying attention to the details that people are able to help those in need and work through the Lord.

Mother Theresa once said, "Let us not be satisfied with just giving money. Money is not enough, money can be got, but they need your hearts to love them. So, spread your love everywhere you go." It is this love, the attention to the details, that really makes those in need appreciate what you do. Throwing money at those in need will only go so far, but giving out your love and having a passion will resound for a lifetime. When you do not care for and love what you are doing for others the action is just that, an action. Once you start to care about what you are giving to it starts to turn into more than an action, it turns into a life style, one that each and every detail has significance to you.

Just this past week I met my cousin to talk about finding a job. He said to me “This is where the pavement hits the road isn’t it?” As I sat there and thought about what he just said I realized that he was right. If I did not get out there and sell myself, put some time into talking to employers, I would not get a job. I had to go out and pay attention to each and every detail and make all of the employers realize that as well. It’s the same thing as caring for those in need. If you don’t put some meaning into all of your giving actions they will fall on deaf ears. I am not here to say that recognition is what helping others is all about. I am here to say if you make the “pavement hit the road” while helping others you will get so much more out of it. It’s the exact same thing as the people working at Costello Companies are doing. They are out there caring about their work, caring about the way the buildings are put together, paying attention to each and every detail. In turn they can go home each night with a smile on their face and know that they have made every effort to build something that a person in need will call a home, not just a house.

As I get closer and closer to graduation I realize that paying attention to the details is what will take me far in life. The classes here at Augustana have prepared me to take on any challenge presented, but it is up to me to pay enough attention to the details to meet the challenges. I strongly believe that experiences are what make you and by accepting the internship at Costello companies I have taken the chance to learn more about those in need. I now feel as if I have the ability to live out my life through God in a way that will allow me to pay attention to the details and help those who need it.