



How To Treat People

Providing Resources to Support Units, Chapters, and Lodges

Some of you probably have outdoor clothing made from Polartech or Polarfleece material. The company that makes these materials is called Malden Mills. The owner of the company is a deeply religious man of the Jewish faith named Aaron Feuerstein. On December 31, 1995 his factory caught fire and burned to the ground. The factory employed 3,400 workers and was the main employer for two neighboring towns. The area once had many mills but most had closed and moved to areas where the factories could pay people less money to work. Mr. Feuerstein felt that people should be paid a decent wage and so he wouldn't move his factory.

The fire occurred on his seventieth birthday. The workers believed it was the end of the line for their jobs. Surely Mr. Feuerstein would take the \$300 million in insurance money and call it quits—right? While the smoke was still rising from the charred remains of the factory, Mr. Feuerstein called his workers together at a school gymnasium and spoke to them. They were about to discover what kind of man they worked for.

He announced that he would not abandon them. He was going to rebuild the factory. He told them that he was keeping all 3,400 of them on the payroll for one month and that each would get a \$275 Christmas bonus. Once the factory was rebuilt they would get their jobs back.

Grown men wept in the audience as he spoke. After the first month ended he paid them for another month. After the second month ended he paid them for a third month. He also paid their hospitalization insurance. It cost him \$1.5 million dollars a week to do this. His employees responded by salvaging what equipment they could and in temporary buildings got production up to what it was before the fire, while the new factory was being built. Mr. Feuerstein received much praise from around the country but he said he did only what was the moral and right thing to do. He used his money to support his beliefs in God rather than make money his God.

As each of you lives your life, try to remember Mr. Feuerstein's example and treat people you encounter with fairness and kindness. You will be amazed at how much better you will be treated in return.