**Corporate Love**

*by Shannon Warren, for The Journal Record*

Does your CEO cherish you? How about your co-workers – do they love you?

The thought of a business column exploring such a touchy-feely concept probably evokes scoffing or even gagging. However, the idea of love in the workplace deserves serious consideration and one that is often misunderstood.

We’re not talking about office romances. Instead, the type of love that belongs in the workplace goes far beyond superficial platitudes to authentic, deeper initiatives. It is well worth the sacrifice. Just ask Joel Manby, CEO of Herschend Family Entertainment (HFE) who believes that loving relationships are a powerful buttress against greed, stress, poor performance and internal conflict.

Over 18 million viewers watched Manby on the popular CBS show *Undercover Boss.* It highlighted the success of HFE’s 26 theme parks (including Silver Dollar City and Dollywood) where 10,000 employees host 16 million visitors per year. Moved by the audience’s response, Manby recently released his book, *Love Works.* It chronicles his remarkable career from humble beginnings in Battle Creek, Michigan to Harvard Business School, the unprecedented launch of Saturn and a stint as CEO of SAAB Automotive. He humbly shares the situations that brought him to his knees as well as loving actions from caring bosses who lifted him up. Ultimately, it offers a bright, alternative approach to hardnosed corporate tactics.

Manby makes no apologies (nor should he) for the fact that his approach is based on Jesus’ teachings. As he puts it, “…being patient, kind, trusting, unselfish, truthful, forgiving and dedicated doesn’t mean you’re religious…it just means you’re leading with love and that’s how people are wired. We all long for closer relationships in life, and those can only develop when we treat each other with agape love.”

The book outlines his successful formula for thwarting greed, offers guidelines for arriving at the truth through healthy “fuss and discuss” sessions and suggestions on how to consistently demonstrate love for employees even when correcting performance issues. Equally important, he redefines success into something durable and truly satisfying by wisely recognizing that love is something we need to embrace as an enduring and sound practice in our corporate lives. *Love does work.*

*Shannon Warren is the founder of the Oklahoma Business Ethics Consortium, a non-profit organization that hosts monthly forums on business ethics in Oklahoma City and Tulsa. Visit* [*www.okethics.org*](http://www.okethics.org/) *for more information about Joel Manby’s presentation on December 7.*