**The *Fish!* Angle**
*by Shannon Warren, for The Journal Record (November 2012)*

Can one have fun at work, be productive and still maintain integrity? The latter part seems counterintuitive as it conjures up images of Dana Carvey’s Church Lady character on *Saturday Night Live: a* sourpuss who points fingers and constantly brings down others with a condescending reference to their evil-doing. However, being ethical does not necessarily equate to being a wet blanket. It’s all about one’s choices.

For instance, I occasionally hear people lament about their terrible boss or the dastardly deeds perpetuated in their organization. More often than not, this is coupled with a sense of hopelessness propelled by a fear of what might happen if they dare speak up. While a job loss may indeed be a reality for an unlucky few, I sometimes wonder if these individuals are incarcerated in a prison of their own making. In essence, by not speaking up in a gracious manner or seeking higher ground in the form of a new job or transfer, they are choosing to be powerlessness. They get stuck on a treadmill of anxiety and pessimism, closing their minds to new options and opportunities.

In the bestselling book *Fish!,* author Harry Paul offers advice for those whose work environment is a “toxic dump” that sucks the lifeblood out of every living creature trapped there. It is entirely possible that it may be a prison of their own making and the right choices could make all the difference.

Inspired by one of the most successful retail operations in America, the Pike Place Fish Market in Seattle, author Paul offers suggestions on how to get out of the detention mindset: “We have a choice to make everyday. That is, to choose to be magnificent. If we don’t choose magnificent we may be choosing ordinary by default. When we choose to be magnificent, we get to be our best, make a difference for others, and make the world a better place.”

It doesn’t matter if you are working in a fish market or a cubicle, the potential for fun, productivity and integrity are realistic attainments. The secret to success involves choosing to practice magnificent ideals of optimism, grace, courage and gratitude.

*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 Harry Paul’s presentation on November 15.*