

What Paula Deen teaches us about ourselves

It's been a very long time since I watched Paula Deen on the Food Network. As a fitness professional, I just couldn't stomach watching her cook some of her recipes. And, I will admit that her accent began to make my skin crawl. So, I watched other shows (Rachael Ray is still at the top of my list).

But it came as little surprise last year when Paula Deen announced she had Type 2 Diabetes.. And then she announced her partnership with a company that, coincidentally, makes diabetes drugs. Hmmm, OK. Sounds like a mostly sound business strategy.

I remember the problem people had with her announcement was that she waited two years before revealing she had the disease. Which meant there were two years of very unhealthy recipes being promoted by her show, website and magazine. At least, that's where I saw the problem.

Unfortunately, thanks to the Internet, it revealed a very ugly side of people. So many people used the very public forum of the Internet to wish her ill and push their own agendas at her expense. It was a little nuts.

Now, Paula Deen finds herself at the center of something far worse.

Due to allegations of racism and sexual harassment and what we have learned from a legal deposition and Deen's own apology, she has lost her job at the Food Network, and at least one sponsor/partner is terminating their relationship with her.



(Via the Paula Deen Facebook page)

And the public reaction? It varies anywhere from people who claim they hate her

and are glad to see her gone, to people who wonder why she is being unfairly targeted for a statement she made years ago.

My personal opinion is that it wasn't about what she said, but rather her attitude about what she said. I don't know much about the pending litigation, but I know that this scandal has, once again, shown how truly ugly and unforgiving we can be.

Who hasn't figured out that the media, and we who tune in, like to hear a good story. We are quick to build someone up, and even quicker to tear them down. Does that excuse what Paula Deen said? No. But it serves as a reminder that our celebrities, sport stars, and politicians are not God. They are not perfect and neither are we.

Should people in the public eye be held to a higher standard? No more than the rest of us. We all have a duty to behave and treat others as God would. And to that end, forgive as God has forgiven us.

Just because we forgive, it doesn't mean we forget. And just because you remember, it doesn't give you the right to hold it over someone.

So what are we supposed to do? How are we supposed to react to someone like Paula Deen or even the plaintiff in the lawsuit?

I think it starts with a basic respect and understanding of the humanity of others and ourselves. This doesn't excuse wrong, bad, or illegal behavior, but it does give us pause to remember that we aren't perfect either. Justice has it's recourse but we do not repay evil for evil. Last I checked, that wasn't the standard Jesus set for us.

I truly feel sorry for Paula Deen. Her situation is likely to get worse before it gets better. So why can't we pray for God to grant her and us all peace that surpasses all understanding? Pray for the ability to distinguish the son from the sinner. Pray that we remember pride comes before the fall.

But what do you think? Do you have an opinion on the Paula Deen situation?