

Irving Berlin Trick

In her autobiography, "Who Could Ask for Anything More," Ethel Merman tells how Cole Porter and a buddy of his had a game they played with Irving Berlin. Says Merman, "When they see Irving coming, they look at their wrist watches and make a \$5 bet. Then they pick a topic and start on it. Anything will do: Victor Moore, Mount Everest, volcanoes, Eskimo Pies, Philadelphia, the Dalai Lama of Tibet. The bet is based on the number of minutes it will take Irving to bring the conversation around to one of his own songs, no matter where it starts. The average time is said to be less than five minutes."

Merman notes, "I wouldn't go so far as to call this ego on Irving's part. It's just that he's so absorbed in his work and so intense about it that what he writes is the most important thing in the world to him. To me, he doesn't seem so much egotistical as enthusiastic."

It is interesting that Cole Porter would play such a trick since he once told an interviewer, "If I don't seem to be listening to what you're saying, it's because I'm writing a song in the back of my head. Some people think work is a four-letter word. I don't."

Labor is a noble pursuit, and particularly when it involves service to others, such as the calling in Life Care, American Lifestyles and Life Care at Home. The Bible, in fact, addresses this subject when it says, "He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster (Proverbs 18:9)."

Sadly, too many people in our society quit looking for work when they find a job.

--Beecher Hunter