"Things My Father Would Say" ***by Charles McGarvey***
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Looking back at my years in the roofing industry, I can still hear things my father, who started in the roofing industry after coming out of World War II, used to say,

1) "A roofer has to do everything, but no one can do a roofer's job."

What he meant was, at different times and to varying extents, during any given roofing system installation, a roofer has to become a carpenter, electrician, insulation contractor, mason, mechanical contractor, painter, plumber, sheet-metal worker, and siding and window installer.

Furthermore, according to many people, a roofer must also be able to use their x-ray vision to discover unknown conditions before the start of a roofing system installation.

How many other construction trades are so demanding that they need to be knowledgeable about just about everything?

2) "A roofer has to be part monkey and part mule"

Well, the monkey part of being a roofer is just a roofer's everyday work experience of climbing.

The mule part can be both good and bad. It is a combination of strength and stubbornness. Strength has to be both mental and physical. However, the stubbornness can be a double-edged sword. It keeps you going when any reasonable person would have given up, which eventually leads to success. But if not kept under control, stubbornness can also cause a roofer to keep making the same mistake over and over without ever learning from their mistakes.

3) "Dammit, if you go any faster, you're going to stop"!!!!!!

This was always shouted in an angry tone when someone was not working fast enough.

4) "He has a penny in front of his eye, and he can't see the dollar".

These words were said when there was a disagreement about spending money that wasn't there, but needed to buy better equipment.

5) These are words that I had completely forgotten about until Mike Donnelly recently reminded me of the same words he was told, "Just sit in the truck and I will be right back".

Without a doubt, these are the earliest words I remember that I can relate to as being in the roofing industry and feeling like a roofer. I don't think I could have been more than 6, but it seems like I heard those words hundreds of times before I was 10.

6) But the words I remember most, and just have to laugh, had to do with a younger brother.

I have six younger brothers, and all of us, at one time or another, spent time on the roof. My one brother was just not cut out for construction. My father used to tell me, "Charlie, Joe only has two speeds, slow and stop. I don't know what he is going to do for a living, he just doesn't have it".

Of course, my father judged him as unable to be a roofer, and he was right.

So, what did my younger brother do? He went to college and, after getting his degree, had a very financially successful career in accounting. He once told me, "Maybe I wasn't smart enough to be a roofer, but at least I was smart enough to get a job that had heat in the winter and air-conditioning in the summer".

Respectfully Submitted,

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