

Editorial ? Mandela offered inspiration on many levels

It's hard not to be inspired by the example that was set by Nelson Mandela, the man whose life has been so eloquently celebrated over the last several days.

There are many who give him credit for his work in bringing down a system of government that basically institutionalized racism. True, apartheid had to go, and we think it probably would have gone eventually. But we think there's an argument that Mr. Mandela's true legacy was based on his attitude, as opposed to his deeds.

He was a man who would have had justification in displaying a bad attitude. He spent many years in prison because he opposed a system that he thought at the time (and most of the world now believes) was repugnant. And according to the reports that have been published over the last week or so, the conditions that he endured were very far from appealing.

Yet the man who emerged from prison did not reflect bitterness, but rather radiance. A man who could have gone off and sulked in private went public. A man who could have spent the rest of his days fuming spent them being a hero to people all over the world, and that includes people who wouldn't know how to spell apartheid, let alone understand what it meant or represented.

Beyond all else, he spent his post-prison years trying to make things better.

That is why Mr. Mandela is so admired today.

And in the example he set, there is a lesson that is applicable to all of us.

There are many things that go on in our lives that we don't like. We often don't like the decisions made by our parents, our bosses, our governments, etc.

We can raise stinks and try to gum up the works. The media reports efforts like that all the time.

The alternative is to be more positive and find ways to help make things work.

That's the approach Mr. Mandela used.

We believe that when history finally sums up his remarkable life, that's what is going to be remembered.