

Pass It On®...

If a Man Asks for Bread, Will You Give Him a Stone?

Treating people, even prisoners, with respect is what food service giant Bill Mouskondis is all about.

Bill Mouskondis is always smiling. He is the son of a Greek immigrant who started a food service company with an old truck and cases of dented cans scavenged from railroad cars. Bill remembers long days riding his bicycle as a kid, delivering restaurant supplies to local cafes. Before semi-retiring, he worked six days a week, making sure his customers got the food they needed to keep their diners and cafes open during the Depression, World War II, another recession and a pandemic.

Now, at 89 years old, Bill checks in with the office daily to ensure things are running right. Every morning at 2 a.m., over 100 semi-trucks are loaded and shipped out. Six hundred deliveries a day to fast-food chains, high-end hotels and restaurants, and the state penitentiary. This last account is one Bill has been taking care of for 70 years.

"My parents had a lot of faith," he recounts. "They believed God takes care of us if we take care of others."

The Greek Orthodox Church is a tight community. Its members are living proof that hard work and faith deliver you to a better place, and they believe in lifting those around them. So, when the penitentiary needed a new supplier, Bill was willing to go through all the red tape it took to provide it. He started by visiting with the logistics people, the guards and the prisoners.

"I wanted to know what kind of food they liked," Bill says with a laugh. "And they told me everything they didn't like." Bill's smile tells you he enjoyed bucking the system a little bit. "There was this attitude that prisoners didn't deserve to eat well," he says. "But my father taught me that everybody deserves to be treated with respect."

Bill developed a healthy menu. He brought in chefs to train the prison cooks, and he cut into his profits to provide fresh ingredients. Little did Bill know at the time that major studies in prison systems would prove that his approach would improve the community. When inmates are treated with respect,

when they eat better food and are given time to exercise, recidivism rates go down.

For Bill, he just knew that it was the right thing to do. He carried that same attitude with employees. His expectations are only exceeded by his expressions of appreciation for his people.

"He treats people the way he expects to be treated," says Dan, a warehouse foreman. Dan would know. When his own father came home from the Vietnam War, work was hard to find. Bill Mouskondis made sure he had a job and was treated fairly. "He gave my dad a chance when nobody else would," remembers Dan. "When it came time for me to work, I only had one place in mind."

Dan, the prisoners, the restaurateurs, the mom-and-pop diners and the managers of hotel chains are all treated with the same respect.

"People gave my father a chance to feed his family," Bill says. "I thank the Lord for those people every day. Our business is built on that heritage of giving back."

Respect... [PassItOn.com](https://passiton.com)

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