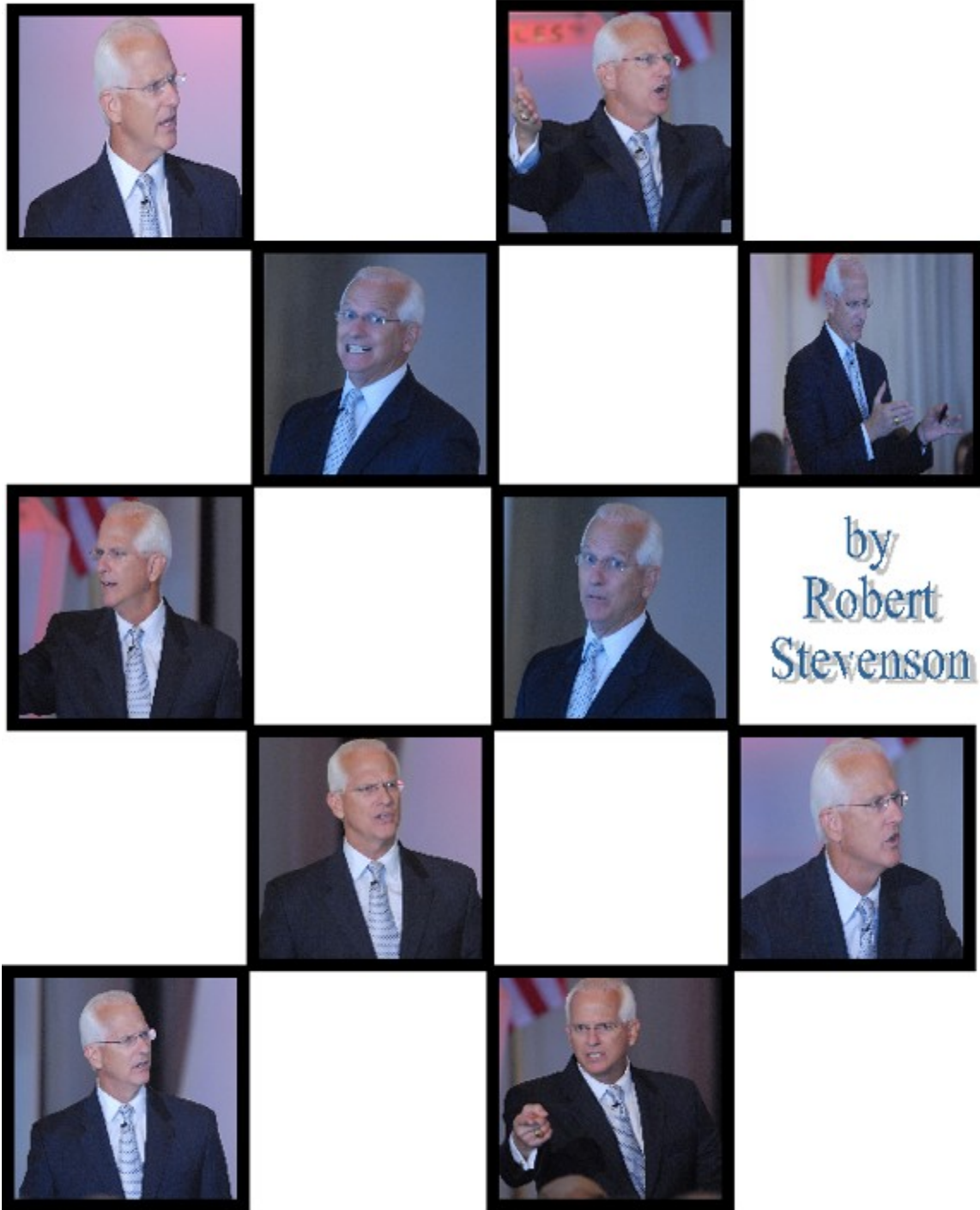


Consider This



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*Consider This Collection
By Robert Stevenson*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1) **Success Is Never Final**
- 2) **Finding The Time To Become Better**
- 3) **Limited Supply Of Marbles**
- 4) **The Power of Commitment**
- 5) **Getting The Most Out Of Life**
- 6) **The Power of The Female Buyers**
- 7) **The Power of Our Thoughts**
- 8) **Never Use Two Words When One Will Do**
- 9) **The Power Of Asking Questions**
- 10) **How To View Difficult Customers**

- 11) **Feeling Stupid – You’ve Got Company**
- 12) **The Most Powerful Form of Advertising**
- 13) **Do You Annoy People**
- 14) **Mean People**
- 15) **Guaranteed Formula For Success**
- 16) **The Meaning of “Final”**
- 17) **Change You First**
- 18) **People Who Really Make A Difference**
- 19) **Look For The Bigger Picture**
- 20) **Why, Why Not, Why Don’t We Try**

- 21) **Oh How Things Change**
- 22) **Chill**
- 23) **Developing Talent**
- 24) **It’s All About A Better You**
- 25) **Eliminating Bad Habits**
- 26) **I Shall Find A Way Or Make One**
- 27) **Life Is What You Make Of It**
- 28) **Making Sense of Nonsense**
- 29) **Success Is A Result of Achievement Not Good Intentions**
- 30) **Give More – Get More**

- 31) **Act As If The Whole World Is Watching**
- 32) **Desire**
- 33) **Smile – It’s Good For You And Those Around You**
- 34) **Capsule Course in Human Relations**
- 35) **Your Choices Will Determine Your Success**
- 36) **The Latest and Greatest Sometimes Isn't**
- 37) **Things We Take For Granted**
- 38) **Just How Badly Do You Want Success**

1 – Success Is Never Final

230 of the Fortune 500 companies that existed in 1980 are gone. Go back 10 more years and that number jumps to 74%. The simple point to understand is *if you do what you've always done, you'll be gone.*

Loyal clients in America are hard to find. Your competition is just waiting for you to drop the ball so they can scoop it right up and run with it. As I say in my programs; *“don't tell what you did for me yesterday, tell me what you are going to do for me tomorrow.”*

One of the big problems I see with companies today is that they don't really know what differentiates them from their competition. If I was conducting a Strategic Planning Session for your organization today, the first thing I would ask you is what does it take to be great in your industry. I would then ask, where are you excelling ... where are you meeting the standard ... where are you the weakest?

You've got to understand your strengths, especially those that differentiate you from your competitors. But you better fully understand where you need work. The Harvard business review stated, *1 in 24 customers complain, the other 23 just go somewhere else.* When your clients leave they are a great deal harder to get back than they ever were to get in the first place.

2 – Finding The Time To Become Better

According to the Nielsen Company, a firm who specializes in recording how many people watch television, the average person watches 6.5 hours of TV per day.

I find that really hard to believe, but if they are right, that means in an average life span we would spend about 11 years of our life watching television. If we quit watching commercials we would save about 3 years.

If you just reduced the time you spend watching TV by 1 hour, you would have an additional 365 hours per year to make yourself better. On a 40 hour work week, you just added an additional 9 weeks per year for perfecting your trade.

I don't know how much time you spend watching television, but I do know this. If you really want to rise to the top, invest 1 hour per day to learn more about your industry.

Developing this single habit can make you an expert in your field within 5 years. It's up to you to find the time, so make it happen.

3 – Limited Supply Of Marbles

I once read about a man who, when he was 55 years old, came up with a simple way to remind him to focus on the important things in life. He had read that the average life span for a man was 75 years. Now that might seem like a long time when you are 10, 20 or 30 years old, but at 55, I would think you may have a different perspective. He determined that with 52 weeks in a year, he had approximately 1,000 weeks left in his life, according to the experts.

So, he went out and bought a large jar and 1,000 marbles and filled the jar with the marbles. He then placed the jar in a very visible location in his home. Every week that passed he took a marble out. He found that by watching the marbles diminish it caused him to focus on the important things in life.

None of us know how long we have on this earth, but we all need to be reminded once in a while, it is a finite amount of time. Too many times I find myself wishing for a future date to be here rather than truly appreciating the day that I have.

*In 2 weeks I'm on vacation ...
just two more months until Christmas ...
when our son graduates we will have time to ...*

Don't be wishing your life away for tomorrow.

We all have a limited supply of marbles left, so enjoy today and get the most out of it.

4 – The Power of Commitment

Until one is committed there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation) there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance which no man could have dreamt would have come his way. Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it now.

By – Goethe

They don't write about people who are saying ... "I would've done that ... I could've done that ... I should've done that." They write about the people who are doing it. Five hundred millionaires were asked what really caused them to be so successful. Most said, "I finally decided to get serious." Many of those millionaires also said that they had faced their biggest adversity right before becoming successful ... in other words ... they hit rock bottom right before they hit their peak.

**You don't want to be a person with
PERMANENT POTENTIAL.**

Bring the magic you have in you out where we all can see it.

5 – Getting The Most Out Of Life

A professor stood before her Philosophy class and had some items in front of her. She picked up a very large and empty jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls. She then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was. So the professor picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. She shook the jar slightly. The pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. She then asked if the jar was full. The students agreed it was. The professor picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar and the sand trickled into the even smaller open gaps. She then asked if the jar was full and the students responded with a unanimous, “Yes!” The professor then produces two cans of liquid chocolate from under the table and pours the entire contents into the jar effectively filling any empty space remaining.

“Now”, said the professor, *“I want you to recognize that the jar represents your life. The golf balls are the important things – your family, your spouse, your health, your children, your friends, your favorite passions – things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full. The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house, your car. The sand is everything else – the small stuff. If you put the sand in the jar first, there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for your life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you. Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Take care of the golf balls first – the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand.”*

One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the chocolate represented. The professor smiled. *“I’m glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there’s always room for chocolate!”* - Author Unknown

6 – The Power of The Female Buyers

In 1970 only 1 percent of the American business traveler was female. They now account for roughly 50 percent. From 1970 to 1998 men's median income rose 0.6 percent, while women's median income rose by 63 percent. Six out of every ten new web users are women. Women-owned businesses in America employ over 27.5 million workers, which is more workers than the fabled Fortune 500 employs worldwide. Women-owned companies last year account for \$3.5 trillion in revenue, which exceeds the GDP of Germany.

The American's female economy now accounts for more than half the U.S. GDP; around five trillion dollars. Women are also the chief decision makers in just about every kind of purchase; commercial or consumer. Just how powerful is the female decision maker?

All consumer purchases	83%	Home furnishings	94%
Vacations	92%	New homes	91%
"Do It Yourself" home projects	80%	Consumer electronics	51%
Healthcare	80%	Back Accounts	89%

If your company, organization, association is not addressing the female market, speaking in female terms, researching female needs ... you are making a huge mistake.

7 – The Power of Our Thoughts

“The secret of living a life of excellence is merely a matter of thinking thoughts of excellence.”
— Charles Swindell

“If you change your way of thinking, you change your life.” — Brian Tracy

“All that we are arises with our thoughts.” — Buddha

“Daily we must train our thoughts to see only what we wish to experience; and since we are growing into what we are mentally dwelling upon, we should put all small and insignificant thoughts and ideals out of our thinking and see things in a larger way.” — Ernest Holmes

The starting point for bettering yourself all begins with your thoughts. You then turn your thoughts into a plan and your plan into action.

Don't tell me how bad it is, how wrong it was, how unfair they are; tell me what you are going to do about it. The first day of the rest of your life is today, so make it a great one.

Think it, plan it, do it.

What are you waiting for?

8 – Never Use Two Words When One Will Do

When promulgating your esoteric cogitations or articulating your superficial sentimentalities and amicable philosophical and psychological observations, beware of platitudinous ponderosity. Let your verbal evaporations have lucidity, intelligibility and vivacity without thespian bombast. Sedulously avoid all polysyllabic profundity, pompous propensity and sophomoric vacuity.

The simple version of what you just read is, “don’t use big words.” Since time is a commodity you can never replace, you need to use it as wisely as possible. A good place to start is in your letter / memo / email writing. Cut out every word that you really don’t need. Don’t try to impress the reader with your knowledge of the English language. Change every inflated word to a simple equivalent (i.e. change *utilize* to *use*).

The Ten Commandments required less than 300 words, and Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address was a mere 10 sentences with only 271 words. It was Thomas Jefferson who said, “*The most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do.*”

9 – The Power Of Asking Questions

I guess I am one of the fortunate ones that have *finally learned* the power of asking questions. It is amazing what can be accomplished or learned by just asking questions. You can become a better boss, manager, salesperson, friend, and spouse by just asking questions. If you are the one doing all the talking, you are not giving yourself the opportunity to learn anything. If you want to learn something, why not ask a question and then “shut-up” and listen. Let their answers lead you to other questions.

I have found that in most cases, people love to talk. So, by asking questions and letting them answer, you are allowing them to do what they like, thus making them comfortable, resulting in their seeing you in a more favorable light. You can also steer the conversation in the direction you want it to go by merely asking the right questions, allowing them to tell you what you need to know.

It has been said that you can gain and hold someone's attention better with a question than a statement. As long as you ask questions in a manner that invites a response rather than putting them on the defensive, you will learn more about the person, situation, problem, condition, etc.

If you want to be more successful, become more intelligent, and also be known as a great conversationalist, then start asking questions and listen intently.

10 – How To View Difficult Customers

The Harvard Business Review once wrote that *1 out of 25 customers complain, the other 24 go somewhere else*. Those are extremely scary numbers. It doesn't matter if you do or don't agree with their findings. What matters is how you, your associates, your organization perceives an unhappy customer. Are they perceived as a complainer, bellyacher, griper, villain, and/or jerk? If they are perceived that way, you are going to need to do a major paradigm shift in this costly perception.

You need to label your outspoken unhappy customers as *customer service consultants*. They are unhappy customers who haven't walked away, YET. They are actually giving you the opportunity to correct a situation. Their complaint can help to serve as a contribution to the future success of your organization.

It is time to start viewing these difficult customers as allies. They can help your organization prosper by identifying areas of discontent. Thank them for their feedback. If you can, figure out ways you can reward them for their feedback. Celebrate in the fact that you have been given a second chance; a chance to fix, adjust, tweak a problem you weren't aware of. You can't fix what you don't know about. Be grateful they came forward, rather than deciding to say nothing and just go somewhere else.

11 – Feeling Stupid – You’ve Got Company

Have you ever said something that really made you look stupid? Have you ever done something and wished you hadn’t. Well don’t feel alone. Your past, present and future will be riddled with people doing the same thing. Customers have called computer manufacturer help desks and ...

▶ said they could not locate the “Any” key on their keyboard to comply with the instructions of “Press Any Key.”

▶ actually opened a window in their home when the tech told them to click on the icon and open the window.

▶ said their cup holder was broken on their computer. The computer phone tech finally figured out they were referring to the disc holder that pops out.

Past Presidents and Vice Presidents of our great country are not exempt from an occasional brush with stupid statements. Some great examples would be:

▶ *“When more and more people are thrown out of work, unemployment results.”*

▶ *“I have opinions of my own, strong opinions, but I don’t always agree with them.”*

▶ *“I love California. I practically grew up in Phoenix.”*

If you are really feeling stupid just remember that in a survey conducted by The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation on historical knowledge, 55 percent of the people surveyed identified Obi-Wan Kenobi as the person who said, *“May the force be with you”* in Star Wars. Only 9 percent knew George Washington was a general in the Revolutionary War. The actor James Caan turned down the starring roles in a string of box office hits, including MASH, Love Story, One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest, Superman and Kramer vs. Kramer.

So when you are feeling a little down on yourself because of something you have said / done, or a bad decision you have made, don’t feel alone; learn from it, get over it and move on.

Remember the words of Jonathan Swift – *“A man should never be ashamed to own that he has been in the wrong, which is but saying, in other words, that he is wiser today than he was yesterday.”*

#12 – The Most Powerful Form of Advertising

Last week I had the opportunity to present two programs to one of the leading property casualty insurance companies in the country. They have been in business since 1950 and now have over 2,900 associates working at corporate and over 1,000 working in the field as Field Claims Representatives. From their humble beginnings they have grown to a \$3 billion corporation earning 11 cents on every dollar taken in. I find that to be a pretty amazing number considering the amount of hurricanes we have had in the last year-and-a-half.

After I had presented my programs, one of their senior executives asked me what I found to be the most interesting fact I had discovered about their company while I was doing my research to prepare for the engagements. I replied, *“That’s easy ... you don’t advertise. You’re doing over \$3 billion in sales with no advertising.”*

He responded, *“Our claims department is our advertising; that is where we shine. Our Field Claims Representatives are our Promise Keepers. An insurance policy is only as good as how well the Promise is backed-up. We believe that if you deliver exceptional service, you don’t need to advertise; people will hear about you.”*

The most powerful and trusted advertising in the world is
“Word of Mouth.”

#13 – Do You Annoy People

Do you annoy people? Do you have a certain habit that really bothers the heck out of family, friends, and associates? I have one relative who blows their nose at the dinner table every time they come over. Right in the middle of eating, out comes the handkerchief, and BAM, you know what's coming next. Every Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, birthdays, no matter what the occasion, you can count on *the big blow*. There are people who follow almost every sentence with the phrase, "*you know*" or "*you know what I mean.*" You might know that person who uses the term "*like*" in almost every sentence; "*Like, you know what I mean ... Like, they really bother me ... Like, get over it.*" Do you smack your food when you eat? I'm not real fond of the person who chews their gum so you get to see it quite often. The list can go on and on; talking loud on your cell-phone, wearing too much cologne or perfume, twirling your hair, biting your nails, always late.

I had a terrible habit of always stealing the punch line when my wife was telling a funny story. One day she finally said, "*do you always have to interrupt me and tell the ending.*" I remember saying, "*but I thought you had finished.*" Her reply was, "*no, I just took a breath.*" I hadn't realized that I was doing it. I just got wrapped up in her story and was helping her finish. Now that's annoying. Having a fourteen year old son will also help to identify any annoying habits you may have. One day my son said, "*hey Dad, you enjoying those peanuts?*" I said, "*yeah, why do you ask?*" He said, "*because I can hear you eating them all the way over here.*" I can't stand people who eat loud ... but there I was ... eating loud.

Being a professional speaker there are many times my program is videotaped. Each one of those tapes is a great learning experience for me when I review them. Tapes don't lie; they show you everything you are doing right and anything you may be doing wrong. The audience might not pick up on it, but I do. In fact, if I catch myself over-using a particular phrase, I will write that phrase out in large print on a 3 X 5 card and place it close by me when I speak for the next several weeks, to remind myself to not over-use that phrase.

It is most likely that you won't be videotaping yourself to help catch you doing those annoying things. You may not have that teenager who will help you change your ways. But it might behoove you to ask a few close friends or relatives if you do have any annoying habits. Don't take umbrage with what they say. Remember, you asked. Now, you may think you don't have any annoying habits ... and my response to you would be ... *think again!*

#14 – Mean People

I just don't understand why some people in positions of authority think that being mean, condescending, and/or cruel are effective ways to get the most out of people. I have unfortunately, run across numerous bosses, managers and teachers who are just plain mean. I guess some folks feel that when they are given a position of authority, or the title of *Supervisor, Vice President, District Manager, etc.*, that they are now entitled to say and do whatever they want because they have "*the authority*" ... they have "*the title.*" Their associates, employees, or students are now below them and they can treat them as such.

Depending on what industry you are in, it costs somewhere between \$5,000 to \$75,000 to properly train an employee. I have had several clients tell me they have spent a great deal more. So why in the world would you spend all this time, effort and money to then have some manager rip into an employee and start to drive them away from your organization. You also might want to heed the old wise tale, "*As you treat your employees, they will in turn treat your customers.*"

I believe words like respect, fair, concern, help, assist, facilitate, teach, show, lead, and care are far more effective than push, yell, scream, force, scare, intimidate, bully, threaten, harass, and drive. I have always tried to follow the simple rule of "*Praise in Public, Criticize in Private.*" I would also suggest that if you have to criticize them, try and find something they are doing right, and talk about that for a few moments before sending them out to deal with fellow employees or customers.

My son's history teacher last year was tough. He was an African-American teacher, retired military, a couple of years away from retirement, who had total control of his class. He demanded a lot of his students and my son had to work hard in his class, but my son still liked him. I asked him one time why he was his favorite teacher. He said, "*Well Dad, he's fair. He told us he wouldn't try and trick us on tests. If we listened in class, took good notes and then studied the notes we would do well.*" He then added, "*And then after a test, if there was any time left in class, we would do some fun things. He likes to laugh and make others laugh.*" Let's see what we have here: a tough, demanding, old school, of a different race, teacher being respected and liked by a teenage student. Who would have ever thought that possible?

I don't like mean people; never have, and never will. I don't want to be associated with them, work for them, or be taught by them. And if I have a choice, I will go somewhere else.

15 – Guaranteed Formula For Success

Successful people do what unsuccessful people won't. Successful people don't just arrive at the top of the heap. They had a personal discipline coupled with boundless energy and decided to make things happen. We are all creatures of habit. The problem is, some of those habits could be greatly improved upon. It's your daily habits that will determine your future. I'm not going to get into helping you identify your bad and good habits today, though that is an excellent exercise for improving yourself. Today, I am going to share with you just one short story that could have a profound, positive effect on your future.

A man approached the late JP Morgan, held up an envelope and said, "Sir, in my hand I hold a guaranteed formula for success, which I will gladly sell you for \$25,000." JP Morgan replied, "Sir, I do not know what is in the envelope, however if you show me, and I like it, I give you my word as a gentleman that I will pay you what you ask." The man agreed to the terms and handed over the envelope. JP Morgan opened it and took out a single sheet of paper. He gave it one look, just a mere glance, and then handed the single sheet of paper back to the man. JP Morgan then paid the gentleman \$25,000.

Here is what was written on the paper.

1. Every morning, write a list of the things that need to be done that day.
2. Do Them!

Would you pay someone \$25,000 for that advice; most people wouldn't. The problem is, by not following the advice, it will cost you a great deal more.

16 – The Meaning of “Final”

On January 2nd, 2006 my father passed away. The response I received from friends, family, and associates was overwhelming. So many people shared stories, poems and articles to lift my spirits and help me cope with my grief. I don't want this *Point To Ponder* to be sad or depressing. On the contrary, I want it to be uplifting and hopefully a bit insightful.

My wife Ann had lost both her parents when she was in her early 30's and it is not until now that I have any idea what she really went through. Probably the most profound thing I now realize is the meaning of “final.” Webster's dictionary gives the definition of final as – *of or coming to an end. Leaving no further chance for action; conclusive.* Webster got that right. There will be no more conversations, hugs, kisses, or laughs. I can pick up the phone and call his phone number, but he will never answer again. *So, don't leave anything unsaid because someday the word “final” will have a new meaning to you, too; if it doesn't already.*

One note I received from a dear friend ended with two sentences that really struck a chord with me; I think they will with you as well.

*When you were born, you were crying and everyone around you was smiling.
Live your life so at the end, you're the one who is smiling and everyone around you is crying.*

My Dad got that one right.

#17 — Change You First

The other day I was correcting my son about something annoying he was doing. I was trying to explain to him why he shouldn't do it and that other people might also find it annoying. Tyler and I have a pretty open relationship and I try to encourage him to speak freely to me on any subject. So, after I corrected him, he asked me what he should do if I did something that annoyed him. I said that he should let me know. Tyler then proceeded to mimic a couple of things I do that annoy him. My wife happened to be in the room and I thought she was going to break a rib, because she was laughing so hard at Tyler's depiction of a couple of my annoying habits. He kept going and Annie kept laughing.

There I sat in all my glory, receiving a mirror image of a couple of my annoying habits from my son. What should I say now ... how should I react to this telling depiction of myself? Do I take umbrage because my 15-year-old son is correcting me? And don't forget, my wife is not coming to my defense; she is just about on the floor, she is laughing so hard. So what did I do? I started laughing, too. Tyler really wasn't trying to be mean. He had hit the nail right on the head and the nail was me. Annie was probably thrilled with what Tyler had done. Maybe I would actually try and change as I was suggesting he do.

I make the statement in my programs, *“Before asking others to change, change you first.”* Maybe I should take my own advice. So, the next time the “Tyler” in your life makes a suggestion about something you could improve upon, change, or quit doing ... before taking offense ... give it some thought. It may make you better ... and that's good.

#18 — People Who Really Make A Difference

The following is the philosophy of Charles Schultz, the creator of the "Peanuts" comic strip. You don't have to actually answer the questions. Just read the e-mail straight through, and you'll get the point.

1. Name the five wealthiest people in the world.
2. Name the last five Heisman trophy winners.
3. Name the last five winners of the Miss America.
4. Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer Prize.
5. Name the last half dozen Academy Award winners for best actor and actress.
6. Name the last decade's worth of World Series winners.

How did you do?

The point is, none of us remember the headliners of yesterday. These are no second-rate achievers. They are the best in their fields. But the applause dies, awards tarnish, and achievements are forgotten. Accolades and certificates are buried with their owners. Here's another quiz. See how you do on this one:

1. List a few teachers who aided your journey through school.
2. Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time.
3. Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile.
4. Think of a few people who have made you feel appreciated and special.
5. Think of five people you enjoy spending time with.

Easier?

The lesson: The people who make a difference in your life are not the ones with the most credentials, the most money, or the most awards. They are the ones that care. Pass this on to those people who have made a difference in your life.

#19 – Look For The Bigger Picture

Sometimes we get so wrapped up in the fine details that we never move forward. Sometimes all we see is what is wrong with a new idea rather than what might possibly be right with it, even if only a portion of the idea will work. Maybe we should take a lesson from our own mind (brain).

According to a researcher at Cambridge University, it doesn't matter in what order the letters in a word appear, the only important thing is that the first and last letter be at the right place. The rest can be a total mess and you can still read it without a problem. This is because the human mind does not read every letter by itself, but the word as a whole.

I remember doing a program once where a lady came up to me afterwards with a hand written note pointing out the one misspelled word in my program. I had over 150 slides in my program that day, with several thousand words and she found one typo. I wonder how long she sat there thinking about my typo, excited she found my typo, relishing in the fact that she found a mistake I made ... rather than trying to get something out of my message.

My message to you today is get past the little things. Look for the bigger picture. It is safe to say that most great discoveries came out of countless attempts, errors and mistakes. If you are going to ...

- ▶ base a person's creative intelligence on their ability to spell every word perfectly
- ▶ shoot down an idea because it has never been done before
- ▶ not promote someone because they are not as detailed as you
- ▶ fire or not hire someone because they don't conform to your fashion beliefs

then do yourself a favor and don't pursue a career that has anything to do with managing a company, leading people, or creating new and better ways to succeed.

Yes, sometimes it is tough to see the big picture when all you are doing is finding fault.

#20 — Why, Why Not, Why Don't We Try

Nobel Laureate and physicist Richard Feynman said that it was no coincidence that **virtually all major discoveries in physics were made by those under the age of 25**. When he was asked why he concluded, ... “*you don't know what you don't know.*” I guess another way you could put it is, when you are unaware of something that supposedly can't be done ... you go at it with a blind determination to see if it CAN be done.

Any time I do a strategic planning session for a company, I always ask them to make sure they have some of their younger talents in the room. If you want fresh, new ideas, I think it is only appropriate to have fresh, new, young employees in the room sharing their ideas. You won't hear statements from them like, “*that's the way we've always done it,*” because they've never done it. What you will hear are challenging statements like, “*Why,*” ... or ... “*Why not,*” ... or ... “*Why don't we try ...*”.

I am not saying that the veterans in a company should be “put out to pasture” when it comes to coming up with ideas that will improve it. I think experience is an incredibly powerful resource. Intellectual capital is one of the most valuable assets of any company. What I am saying is don't discount an idea from a young associate by saying ... “*What could they know ... they are too young to know anything ... they haven't been here long enough to know how we do it at our company.*”

In the mid 1800's the head of the Patent Office in Washington recommended that the Patent Office be closed, because everything that could have been invented had already been invented. That same Patent Office rejected the patent applied for by the Wright Brothers for their flying machine ... stating they believed machines that were heavier than air could not fly. Someone forgot to tell the Wright Brothers. They just kept asking themselves ... “*Why*” ... “*Why not,*” ... “*Why don't we try ...*”, and aren't we glad they did.

Our young ones have **grown up in a world of speed, multi-tasking, constantly changing technology where virtually anything is accessible through the Internet**. I don't care what they don't know ... I want to hear what they want to change, don't like, think is stupid or is a waste of time. **If you want to say young ... then stay curious and keep asking WHY, WHY NOT, WHY DON'T WE TRY.**

#21 – Oh How Things Change

I recently received an email that had some interesting statistics I wanted to share with you.

THE YEAR IS 1907

One hundred years ago. What a difference a century makes! Here are some of the U.S. Statistics for the Year 1907.

The average life expectancy in the U.S. was 47 years old. Only 14 percent of the homes in the U.S. had a bathtub. Only 8 percent of the homes had a telephone. A three-minute call from Denver to New York City Cost eleven dollars. **There were only 8,000 cars in the U.S and only 144 miles of paved roads.** The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 mph. Alabama, Mississippi, Iowa, and Tennessee were each more heavily populated than California. There were a mere 1.4 million people in California, which was only the 21st most populous state in the Union. The tallest structure in the world was the Eiffel Tower!

The average wage in the U.S. was 22 cents per hour. The average U.S. worker made between \$200 and \$400 per year. A competent accountant could expect to earn \$2000 per year, a dentist made \$2,500 per year, a veterinarian between \$1,500 per year, and a mechanical engineer about \$5,000 per year. **More than 95 percent of all births in the U.S. took place at home.** Ninety percent of all U.S. doctors had no college education. Instead, they attended so-called medical schools, many of which were condemned in the press and the government as "substandard." Sugar cost four cents a pound. Eggs were fourteen cents a dozen. Coffee was fifteen cents a pound. Most women only washed their hair once a month and used Borax or egg yolks for shampoo. Canada passed a law that prohibited poor people from entering into their country for any reason.

The five leading causes of death in the U.S. were: 1. pneumonia and influenza 2. tuberculosis 3. diarrhea 4. heart disease 5. stroke. The American flag had 45 stars. Arizona, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Hawaii, and Alaska hadn't been admitted to the Union yet. The population of Las Vegas, Nevada, was only 30! Crossword puzzles, canned beer, and ice tea hadn't been invented yet. There was no Mother's Day or Father's Day. **Two out of every 10 U.S. adults couldn't read or write. Only 6 percent of all Americans had graduated from high school.**

Now I have forwarded this message to you and others all over the United States and abroad in a matter of just seconds with just one click on a computer! Just try to imagine what it may be like in another 100 years! IT STAGGERS THE MIND! Oh, how things change.

#22 — Chill

The other day my son Tyler and I were driving around running a few errands and to our misfortune we encounter a jerk. Now jerks can come in all shapes, sizes, ages, genders, and calibers. I use the word caliber in context to the degree of jerk they are; inconsiderate jerk, pestering jerk, annoying jerk, or off-the-chart jerk. The one we encountered was an off-the-chart.

I popped off in the car to Tyler about what a jerk this man was, yada, yada, yada, and Tyler can hear and see that I am noticeably angered by the situation. He looks at me and says, "*Dad, CHILL!*" Now if I had ever said that to my father, you probably wouldn't be reading this today. Tyler and I have a different kind of relationship. He wasn't being a flippant teenager with a smart mouth. He was actually concerned about my health.

He went on to put the matter in a very proper perspective. He said, "*Dad, in the last seven months we have moved out-of-state into a rental home, then moved into a home we purchased in that state, then moved back to Florida. What this man is doing that bothers you is nothing compared to what we have been through.*" You know what, he was right. I was wound a little too tight from all that we had been through and was letting something trivial get to me. I decided to do something with Tyler's so appropriate word **CHILL**, and make an acronym for the word as a reminder of his excellent advice:

CHILL = Calm Helps Individuals Live Longer

So, the next time you get angered, annoyed, or frustrated about something, just remember to **CHILL**. It will be better for your health, your attitude and especially those around you who are witnessing your angered state.

#23 — Developing Talent

How much time per year do you think a person should spend perfecting their profession? Should they work 99% of the time and study 1%? Should they study 2%, 5% or 10% of that time trying to learn how to become more proficient at their job? **According to the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) the average number of hours spent in a classroom by an American worker is 26.3 hours.**

If you had 2 weeks vacation per year and added another week for holidays, that would give you 49 workweeks. Based on a 40-hour workweek, you would have 1,960 work hours per year. According to the ASTD, 26.3 of those hours are spent in the classroom. That would mean the average American worker spends less than 1.5% of their workday perfecting their profession. To look at these numbers in simpler terms, **on average American workers spend 6.5 minutes per day developing their talent.**

If you are an employee of a company reading this article please don't rely on your company to make you better at your profession. I suggest if you want to catapult yourself to the top of your company/profession, you spend a minimum of 30 minutes per day studying / reading / learning ways to get better at what you do for a living.

If you are a manager or company owner reading this article, I suggest you make the investment to enhance the talent level of your people. Make sure they have the necessary time allotted to them so they can study ways to perfect their profession.

Jack Welch, the former CEO of General Electric, spent over 70 percent of his time on finding and developing talent. During Mr. Welch's tenure as CEO of GE he increased its market capitalization by \$400 billion, making it the world's most valuable corporation. McKinsey & Company, one of the foremost consulting firms in the world stated; "Mr. Welch was arguably the Best Talent Developer in the past century to occupy a corner office in America, or perhaps the world.

Years ago in one of my programs I stated: ***"Your only true security in life is your ability to perform."*** Never let a day pass that you can't say, ***"I learned something today that I didn't know yesterday."*** Make the investment, spend the time, reap the benefits.

#24 — It's All About A Better You

People are often unreasonable and self-centered.
Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of ulterior motives.
Be kind anyway.

If you are honest, people may cheat you.
Be honest anyway.

If you find happiness, people may be jealous.
Be happy anyway.

The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow.
Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough.
Give your best anyway.

For you see, in the end, it's between you and your success.
It never was between you and them anyway.

Anon.

#25 — Eliminating Bad Habits

The renowned author Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, "*We all need an education in the obvious.*" Our problem is sometimes we fail to see, admit and/or identify what is really obvious to others; our bad habits. It has been proven time and time again that successful people are creatures of "good habits." So what could be holding you back from reaching your goals is *an education in the obvious*; identifying your bad habits.

This is not a pleasurable task, but it is a highly necessary one if you plan to grow, prosper and succeed. Over the years in training workshops I have conducted, I have collected a plethora of material on good and bad habits. Let me share with you some of the most common bad habits my attendees have identified:

- ▶ *Taking work home with you*
- ▶ *Getting no exercise*
- ▶ *Socializing too much on the phone*
- ▶ *Wasting time surfing the Internet*
- ▶ *Allowing bills to go unpaid*
- ▶ *Having your cell phone on all the time*
- ▶ *Not paying off your credit card monthly*
- ▶ *Shuffling papers on your desk*
- ▶ *Not following through on promises*
- ▶ *Not having a "Things To Do list"*
- ▶ *Not following your "Things To Do List"*
- ▶ *Lack of defined goals*
- ▶ *Watching too much television*
- ▶ *Associating yourself with losers*
- ▶ *Wasting time gossiping*

I don't have enough time right now to go into all of the possible bad habits we all can have. That's your job. **If you don't like where you are in life, get honest with yourself and start eliminating the things that are holding you back.** The only person who can fix you, is you.

#26 — I Shall Find A Way Or Make One

Admiral Robert Peary had a dream. He was committed to be the first to find the exact location of the North Pole and be the first to stand upon it; the first to stand on top of the world. He had failed seven times trying to reach the North Pole. 756 other men before him had attempted the quest only to lose their lives. Admiral Peary had encountered enormous hardships, broken bones and lost several toes to frostbite in his attempts, but at least he was still alive.

On April 6, 1909, on his eighth attempt, he finally reached his goal. At his gravesite in Arlington National Cemetery you will find written on his tombstone his personal credo:

Inveniam viam aut faciam, “I shall find a way or make one.”

I once heard the statement that the difference between a “Big Shot” and a “Little Shot” was that *the “Big Shot” was a “Little Shot” who just kept on shooting.* Right now things might not look so bright for you. You may have been passed over for a promotion, had a terrible sales year, lost money in a business deal or the stock market, been fired, feeling old / tired / out-of-shape, or just seem to be in a really bad rut. You may be wondering how you are ever going to possibly turn things around.

The first thing to understand is that many extremely successful people have lost their direction, made wrong decisions or just failed miserably. The difference is that their failure was for the moment. To them, it was just a setback. There is an old Japanese proverb for success: *“Fall seven times, stand up eight.”* The only person you need to believe in you, IS YOU. Ted Turner, Donald Trump, Walt Disney, Winston Churchill, Albert Einstein, Lance Armstrong, Oprah Winfrey, and Christopher Reeve, to name just a few, all overcame some major setback in their lives.

There is nothing you can do about your past; what is done is done. It is what you are going to do now that counts. Failure is just an experience that didn't work out. Learn from it, reorganize, re-energize, redefine your focus, redirect your efforts, and move on.

In other words ... *to Find A Way or Make One ... you must Keep Shooting.*

#27 — Life Is What You Make Of It

How old would you be if we didn't keep track of time?

How pretty would you think you were if there was no such thing as a picture or reflection?

How smart would you think you were if you didn't know your IQ or you were never compared to anyone else?

How rich would you feel if worldly possessions had no value?

How important would you feel if there was no such thing as socioeconomic status?

If you want to have a better life, then quit counting birthdays, wrinkles and gray hairs.

Remember a smiling face is an appealing one. Hold yourself in a higher opinion and people will start asking your opinion. When the question was asked, *"How much money did billionaire Howard Hughes leave behind"*, one person responded, *"All of it."*

Start putting your value on friends and family, because your legacy will live on through them. Remember, success at the expense of your family is not true success. Headlines fade from memory, movie stars are replaced by new movie stars, and fame is a fleeting thing. **Your importance lies with your family; everything else is merely commentary.**

#28 — Making Sense of Nonsense

The English language is a discombobulation of suffixes, prefixes and root words from many different languages. This being the case, we have endless combinations of words with contradictory meanings. Why do we call them apartments, when they are all stuck together? Why do we drive on a parkway, but park on a driveway? Why don't shelled peanuts have shells? If you're clothed, then you are wearing clothes, so if you are shelled, then you should have shells. I would think you would call peanuts that don't have shells, "unshelled" peanuts.

It gets even worse. We call them pitted prunes, which should mean that they have pits, but they don't. We call it "boned chicken" which again should mean it still has bones; but no, there are no bones. Wouldn't it be simpler to call it "de-boned chicken? Some of my other favorite confusions of contradictory grouped words would be; *plastic glass, uninvited guest, new tradition, original copy, and authentic reproduction.*

The plural of tooth is teeth, but the plural of booth is not beeth. The plural of mouse is mice, but the plural of noose is not nice. Button and unbutton are totally opposite, but ravel and unravel mean the same thing. You can tell somebody they have a slim chance or a fat chance to do something, and there is no difference in what you just said. How can slim and fat mean the same thing? The same way flammable and inflammable do. I guess because "*someone*" said they mean the same thing.

A painter will paint, a skater will skate, a teacher will teach, but a violinist will not violin. Why, you ask, because "*someone*" said so. There is always going to be "*someone*" out there who really knows how to complicate things. So, when you are communicating with people, make sure you aren't confusing them like "*someone*" else can.

#29 — Success Is A Result of Achievement Not Good Intentions

At the beginning of every year many people make a *New Year's Resolution List*: lose weight, stop smoking, exercise more, learn a second language, lower their cholesterol, spend more time with their family, etc., etc., etc. Making a list is a great idea because "*How do you know you got there, if you don't know where you are going?*" Unfortunately most people never accomplish anything on their list. Why?

There can be many reasons why people fail at achieving their *New Year's Resolutions*: lack of commitment and resolve, poor planning, poor organization, lack of time or poor time management, letting trivial things interfere, choosing too many, depending on others to help, family demands. With all the surprises and demands that pop-up in our daily lives, "New Resolutions" start getting pushed further and further back until they just disappear.

This year I have decided to simplify this process in hopes of helping to ensure my success. I have decided to chose only "One" goal in each of "Four" important areas of my life. Areas you may want to consider are family, health, business, leisure, financial and personal. The key here is to limit your areas, because the more you pick, the greater your chance for failure. It is better to pick one and achieve it, than it is to choose five and fail.

When you concentrate your focus on just one goal, many other positive things can occur. A simple example would be to decide you are going to exercise more. Exercise will improve your health and your appearance, give you more energy, slow the aging process, cause you to sleep better, and reduce illness. (One goal - many results)

My suggestion for you this year is to **Simplify** (1 goal), **Decide** (4 areas) and **Abide** (Do).

Success is a result of achievement, not good intentions.

#30 — Give More Get More

Sometimes you can end up getting more by giving more than is necessary. I think the following old story gives a great example of what I mean.

Years ago a city man bought a farm. After taking ownership of his new farm the city man found out the previous owner had been quarreling for years with his neighbor over the location of a fence.

The neighboring farmer immediately tried to quarrel with the new owner, telling him that the fence was a full foot over on his side of the property. The new owner did not get upset, defensive or confrontational with his neighbor. He simply stated, *"Very well, I will set the fence two feet over on my side."*

His surprised neighbor said, *"Oh, but that is more than I claim."* The city man then said, *"Never mind about that. I would much rather have peace with my neighbor than two feet of earth."*

Completely taken back by what the city man had offered to do and his reasoning for doing it, the neighboring farmer replied, *"That's surely fine of you sir, but I couldn't let you do a thing like that."*

The fence was never moved.

So many times in life we have the opportunity to diffuse a situation by merely considering the other person's point of view. We should all try to be reasonable and fair in everything we do. But if you throw in a little generosity, you'll find you have fewer problems, leading to less stress and an added bonus; have more friends.

#31 — Act As If The Whole World Is Watching

Thomas Jefferson said,

"Whenever you are to do a thing, though it can never be known but to yourself, ask yourself how you would act were the world looking at you, and act accordingly."

Even though that was said over 200 years ago, it is still great advice for today; especially in this technological world with people carrying mini video-recorders in their cell phones. The next thing you know, your actions are being shown on national TV or on the internet, for all the world to see.

So, behave as if there is a camera on you at all times and act accordingly.

#32 – Desire

Socrates was once asked by a young man how he could gain wisdom. Socrates asked the young man to accompany him while he took a stroll around a lake and he would discuss the matter with him. Socrates then asked the lad to follow him into the lake where they were standing in water that was chest deep. This seemed odd to the young man, but who was he to question Socrates. Then all of a sudden, Socrates grabbed the young man and pushed him down until his head was fully submerged under the water and held him there. At first, the young man thought this was just a joke, so he didn't fight back. Socrates held him longer and longer until the lad panicked and started struggling to free himself from Socrates grasp. He was running out of air, his lungs were aching for oxygen, his heart was pounding and his adrenalin was sky-high.

Socrates finally released his grasp so the young man could emerge. Grasping for air, panic-stricken from the ordeal, the young man screamed out in a barely audible voice, *"What are you doing?"* Socrates calmly replied, *"When you desire wisdom with the same intensity that you desired to breathe, then nothing will stop you from getting it."*

I can share with you the wisdom of the habits I think are essential to being successful. I can put them in a format that will help make them a part of your daily life. But, until you have the burning desire to learn, change, adapt, and commit to them, this will only be a futile exercise. To paraphrase Socrates, *"When you have the desire to become successful with the same intensity that you have to breathe, then nothing will stop you from getting it."*

#33 — Smile - It's Good For You And Those Around You

To be successful in dealing with people you need to create trust, confidence and rapport. It is a proven fact that the simple physical response of a smile will help to create all three. If you want to be more successful, have less stress, more friends and better health, then smile more. *Smiling is good for you and it's good for the people around you.*

Make it a habit to smile when you answer the phone, shake someone's hand, or greeting anyone. When you are asking someone for help, smile. It's tough to turn down a smile. If you want to change your negative state of mind, smile. People want to be around people who are in good moods and being in a good mood all starts with a smile. Smiling displays your frame of mind and warmth without having to say a word and it puts you in a positive mood; this is all good. Again, it's your choice.

#34 — Capsule Course in Human Relations

The five most important words in the English language:

"I am proud of you."

The four most important words:

"What is your opinion?"

The three most important words:

"If you please."

The two most important words:

"Thank you."

The least important word:

"I."

Robert W. Woodruff
Retired Chairman
The Coca-Cola Company

#35 — Your Choices Will Determine Your Success

Choose to	not live a life of mediocrity
Choose to	not argue about trivial things
Choose to	not worry, fret or cry about small injustices
Choose to	not let others control your destiny
Choose to	never give up
Choose to	guard you integrity
Choose to	be punctual, orderly and diligent
Choose to	believe in yourself
Choose to	live a life of action not words
Choose to	practice, drill and rehearse
Choose to	be a positive person
Choose to	never quit learning

And by making these choices,
you have now chosen to be successful.

#36 — The Latest and Greatest Sometimes Isn't

I recently made it down to the final cut to speak for a Fortune 500 company. Then I received the call they had chosen another speaker over me because of a word I used in my video demo tape. It wasn't a curse word, a crude remark, a sexist term, an ethnic, racist, or religious slur. In the opinion of this meeting planner, the word I had spoken was an out dated term. I guess by using this out dated word I was showing that I wasn't with it, cool, or on the cutting edge of the latest and greatest "fad" in management.

The term I used was "*paradigm*". She was right, the word does have a little age on it. Paradigm first appeared in English in the 15th century, coming from the late Latin word *paradīgma*, and from the Greek word *paradeigma*; meaning "an example or pattern," and it still bears this meaning today. Since the 1960s, paradigm has also been used in science to refer to a theoretical framework, as when Nobel Laureate David Baltimore cited the work of two colleagues stating they had "*really established a new paradigm for our understanding of the causation of cancer.*" Dictionary.com also gives the definition as, "*a set of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality for the community that shares them, especially in an intellectual discipline.*"

In our quest to stay up with the latest and greatest technology, when just as soon as we pull it out of the box the "techno gadget" is out of date, I feel we are losing sight to some really important concepts, values, and principles in making a company successful. **The latest "management fad" isn't going to make your company successful. Old words like service, trust, respect, loyalty, diligence, fairness, and integrity should never be overlooked in our quest for the latest and greatest technological business tool or management book.**

This meeting planner would probably have said of Plato, Socrates, Confucius, Franklin, Mandino, and Carnegie - "*Yeah they're good, but what have they written lately.*" In between the business transitions from Total Quality Management to Business Process Reengineering (BPR), to Six Sigma to Lean Sigma, don't lose sight of some good old out dated words. Service, trust, respect, loyalty, diligence, fairness, and integrity have served me well in my career even though I am still trying to break away from old paradigms which could be holding me back. Oops, I said it again.

#37 — Things We Take For Granted

When I am in town, I try to go to a local gym and work out as often as I can. It's a great way to start off the day and I find by going in the morning rather than putting it off until the afternoon, I seem to be able to go more often. **I like going at the same time everyday** when the gym has as few people in it as possible. That way I can get my workout in without having to make it a social hour.

I share **the “same time every day”** information with you because of what happens after I leave the gym. As I am driving home, I see the same man taking his dog out for a walk. His dog looks excited to be out, pulling hard on the leash with his tail wagging. We have all seen people countless times taking their dog out for a walk. There is nothing unusual or really special about that, unless you add that the man is in a motorized wheelchair.

We all take so many things for granted until we lose them. A simple walk around the park with your dog becomes an extremely difficult task when you have to do it in a motorized wheel chair. When my son Tyler tore his ACL (Anterior Cruciate Ligament) in his right knee last winter, a simple shower became a major ordeal. Every once in a while we need to step back and reassess our attitude, look at our lives in a different perspective and **start appreciating what we have**.

When I look at the man in the wheelchair, he becomes my inspiration for having a great day. I am certain he would give anything to be able to simply go to the gym as I had. I never gave it much thought until I saw him. Sometimes life sends us a little signal and we are just too busy to see it. Start appreciating what you have because you will never know when it can be gone in an instant. **Life just sent you a little signal; are you paying attention?**

#38 — Just How Badly Do You Want Success

Socrates was once asked by a young man how he could gain wisdom. Socrates asked the young man to accompany him while he took a stroll around a lake and he would discuss the matter with him. Socrates then asked the lad to follow him into the lake where they were standing in water that was chest deep. This seemed odd to the young man, but who was he to question Socrates. Then all of a sudden, Socrates grabbed the young man and pushed him down until his head was fully submerged under the water and held him there. At first, the young man thought this was just a joke, so he didn't fight back. Socrates held him longer and longer until the lad panicked and started struggling to free himself from Socrates grasp. He was running out of air, his lungs were aching for oxygen, his heart was pounding and his adrenalin was sky-high.

Socrates finally released his grasp so the young man could emerge. Grasping for air, panic-stricken from the ordeal, the young man screamed out in a barely audible voice, "What are you doing?" Socrates calmly replied,

"When you desire wisdom with the same intensity that you desired to breathe, then nothing will stop you from getting it."

I can share with you the wisdom I have learned from the many clients I work with. I can put the information in a format that is simple to understand. But, until you have the burning desire to learn, change, adapt, and internalize the information, so it will help to make you more successful, nothing I share will help. To paraphrase Socrates,

"When you have the desire to become successful with the same intensity that you have to breathe, then nothing will stop you from getting it."