

Touching Me Touching You

“Though it’s time to say good bye I hope that we touched your life in such a way, that you will be forever changed,” the program director said as we ended the week of a wonderful European river cruise through Germany.

What a nice comment, I thought while pondering my mixed feelings about leaving a group of people that came into our lives as strangers, became friends during the past seven days, but whom we probably will never see again. The symbolism of this experience became crystal as we hugged teary eyed and said our good-byes to the young men and women from different countries throughout Europe. These people came into our lives and changed it forever. We will be different because we had the opportunity to interact with them.

That should be the goal for every one of us—to touch the lives of those we meet in such a way so that their lives will be better as the result of that meeting. If we could only live by that principle, what a difference each of us could make in the world.

A couple days prior to the teary-eyed good byes, we laughed with 200 people watching a street entertainer. Then he made the beautiful comment, *“turn left and then right to see the strangers from all over the world, coming together to laugh and enjoy the moment created by a single street entertainer. If a single street entertainer can create such a powerful moment, then why can the world not live in peace to enjoy each other.”* The applause showed we agreed with the entertainer’s comments.

It is an understatement to say that *“it is in our differences that we are all the same.”* Eckart Tolle’s best selling book **A New Earth** is positive testimony of the fact that people all over the world are hungry for something that will have a “positive impact” in their lives. In case you haven’t heard, Oprah Winfrey teamed with Tolle to offer a series of seminars on “living your life” being attended by hundreds of thousands of

people throughout the world via the internet. No doubt, Tolle and Winfrey are making a positive impact upon the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

Think about the message being communicated by the popularity of Tolle’s book (and other popular self-improvement books)—in spite of our differences we’re searching to live a “satisfying” life. We want positive things in our lives including emotional peace and happiness.

Perhaps not everyone has the opportunity to positively touch multiple lives as Tolle and Winfrey, the young men and women on the river cruise, or even the street entertainer. But the opportunity to have a positive impact is as near as the next person you meet. A long-time friend, Fred Petrucelli writes for the **Log Cabin Democrat** and recently wrote an article about the power of a smile. If you think about it, sharing your smile with the lives you touch requires very little effort and absolutely no money. And, you never know when the next person you see “really needs” to see a friendly face.

Over the sixteen years that I’ve been writing this newsletter, there have been a countless number of people who sent emails to let me know *“I needed that article. It’s as if you were writing for me.”* And, I am so thankful for the people who have come into my life at just the moment when I needed what they offered me. Often times, that dear individual brought laughter at the time I was taking an issue too seriously.

We may never know the impact we have upon the lives we touch, but there is one thing for certain, we can decide to live life in a way to make a difference in those lives. And, there is another certainty. When you take the time to positively touch the life of another person, you always feel better in doing so. Thus, you are the first recipient of your own acts of kindness. How could we ask for a better deal?

CAN YOU DO MORE THAN YOU THINK YOU CAN?

I made it! 2008 is a year of celebrating my twentieth anniversary as a self-employed consultant. In January, 1989 I started on a most challenging journey upon deciding to begin a consulting career. I had no idea what I was getting myself into!

For several months during 1988 I wrote a personal mission statement that led me back to teaching. Fortunately there was a series of circumstances occurring in my career during this time that seemed to be pushing me out of my comfort zone.

Looking back, it is readily obvious that I was the most unlikely candidate to begin a consulting company. First, the only product I had to offer was the vague notion that I was going to provide first-line supervisor development. Second, my contacts in the corporate community were extremely limited. Third, I was clueless about selling. Fourth, I had no marketing plan or knowledge where I was going to find clients. Fifth, my self-confidence was not overflowing. And sixth, there was no financial cushion. Personally, I only had enough money to pay the next month's bills. The one bright star was that my wife was gainfully employed so we had a house to live in and food to eat.

I won't bore you with details, but thankfully through the grace of God the right person always appeared when I needed assistance. To borrow a phrase from a best selling book, I am so thankful I chose the road less traveled. These twenty years have provided an abundance of life-changing opportunities that I never dreamed were possible for this country boy from Metz, Mo.

As I ponder the obstacles that have been experienced over the years I ask the question first asked of me during my oral exams when receiving my doctorate—*“Is there a pre-determined order in our lives?”* I did not know the answer then, but I have a better understanding of the answer today.

If there was one lesson to be learned from my life it is that success and personal happiness can be achieved through persistently following a

dream. In doing so, the importance of self-confidence can not be over emphasized. It is the engine that drives success.

Self-confidence is a double-edged sword. My level of self-confidence and faith in a high power kept me going through the more difficult times. On the other hand, the lack of self-confidence has also sabotaged the success that could have been achieved. I am fully aware how the lack of self-confidence limited the growth of my business.

Now back to the issue of life being pre-determined. We use our free-will to decide to make the decisions to define and live our life's purpose. The lesson I've learned is that as you live that purpose, keep your sight firmly locked onto your goals and expect to achieve these goals through believing (confidence) in yourself and a higher power. As you do, the right people and opportunities become available to help you on your journey.

There is no doubt about a pre-determined order in the universe. The regularity of the four seasons is evidence of that. (Of course, we humans seem to be working hard to mess up the universe). I believe that once we're aligned with the universe, there is also order in our lives. We continue to use our free will to facilitate the order in our lives. That is, during the challenging times I could have made a decision to terminate my consulting business and seek full-time employment. When you are fully locked onto living your purpose, there is an internal voice that continues to tell you to use your free will to keep you on track.

As I write this article, this following quote by Walter Elliott appeared in my inbox. *“Perseverance is not a long race: it is many short races, one after another.”* Was the precise timing of this quote a “coincidence?”

Life has taught me another lesson. *“I wish I had spent less time worry about ‘what is going to happen’ and spent more time ‘enjoying the journey of happenings’.”* That's my motto for the next twenty years.

Announcements...

Eddy's Story. You're going to want to read **Eddy's Story.** Byrd Baggett (www.byrdbaggett.com) and I are co-authoring **Eddy's Story.** You are going to learn about a young man's journey through the four seasons of life to reach the Season of Significance. While doing so, you will learn how to use the 7-step change process© to reach your Season of Significance. Publication date is scheduled for March 2009 in cooperation with CornerStone Leadership Institute.

Leadership Series on Interpersonal Performance. Byrd, Michael (my son) and I are also co-authoring a Leadership Series on improving interpersonal performance that supports the TeamMax® team building process. The bottom line is we're doing a lot of writing.

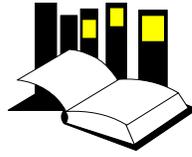
TeamMax® Measurement System. Kerry Brown and Matt Core are working diligently to bring the next version of the TeamMax® measurement system (measure behavior change) into reality. I'm sure both will agree, "*Perseverance is many races, one after another.*" This journey provides another example that "*success = 99% frustration and disappointment.*" The bottom line is that success is being achieved thanks to their efforts.

Progress Report. Believe it or not, it's time for our six month check. Are you on target to achieve the goals you established in January? If you are like me, probably not and a few additional ones have crept onto the scene.

What Do You Think? As I wrote the article about my 20th year, I had the recurring thought that *the person you become in the process of living your dream is more important than the results achieved through living your dream.*" If you should have a moment, I wish you would email (lcole@cei.net) and share if you agree or disagree.

"Today I am going to give you two examinations, one in trigonometry and one in honesty. I hope you will pass them both, but if you must fail one, let it be trigonometry".

-Madison Sarratt



RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Eckart Tolle's best selling book, **A New Earth**, was a challenging read for me. He made interesting points about "staying in the now" to enjoy the moment and connecting with the universe or the natural order in our universe. I found the writing style required studying to understand what he was saying. Then again, I've never been criticized for being the sharpest knife in the drawer.

The Carrot Principle by Adrian Gostick and Chester Elton is an interesting read. The authors report several studies on the impact of "positive recognition" that you will find interesting.

You will like John Kotter's **Our Iceberg Is Melting.** Kotter's story line includes the challenges of a penguin colony that is cute and makes useful points about change management.

Joel Osteen's **Become a Better You** is definitely worth reading. It seems like Osteen listened to the criticism of his first book, as this one offers a more religious theme.



How to contact us.

Larry Cole, Ph.D.
TeamMax®, Inc.
5 E. Towering Pines
Conway, AR 72032
800-880-1728
lcole@cei.net
www.teammax.net
www.people-systems.com

Thoughts To Think About...

*"The problem is not that there are problems.
The problem is expecting otherwise and thinking
that having problems is a problem."*

- Theodore Rubin

*"Leadership is practiced not so much in
words as in attitude...and in actions."*

- Harold S. Geneen

"Success is more attitude than aptitude."

- Unknown

*"We are what we consistently do. Excellence,
therefore, is not an act, but a habit."*

- Aristotle

*"Conviction is worthless unless it is converted
into conduct."*

- Thomas Carlyle

*"What makes leadership is the ability to get
people to do what they don't want to do, and
make them like it."*

- Harry Truman



"Half-heartedness never won a battle."

- William McKinley

*"Nothing is so potent as the silent influence of a
good example."*

- James Kent

*"If you don't back it up with performance and
hard work, talking doesn't mean a thing."*

- Michael Jordan