

"IF YOU ARE SERIOUS about wanting to make a difference through social enterprise, you have to read Jerr's work."

LIAM BLACK, Author,
The Social Entrepreneur's A to Z

"READ IT: You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll ponder, but most of all you'll keep fighting on behalf of the common good."

KEVIN LYNCH, Immediate Past President,
Social Enterprise Alliance

Jerr's Journal

My Adventures in
Social Enterprise

JERR BOSCHEE

Founder & Executive Director,
The Institute for
Social Entrepreneurs



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Co-Founder, Wavelength Companies Ltd and Former CEO, Fifteen

Author, *The Social Entrepreneur's A to Z*

“*Jerr’s Journal* should be renamed *The Gospel of Social Enterprise According to Jerr!* The only thing that cheered me up after learning Jerr was discontinuing his blog was that he had combined them all in this free e-book. He does a masterful job of using real-world examples to illustrate social enterprise best practices. Sit down with a cup of coffee and enjoy!”

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MARC LANE

Author, *Social Enterprise: Empowering Mission-Drive Entrepreneurs*

Author, *The Mission-Driven Venture: Business Solutions to the World’s Most Vexing Social Problems*

“A few years ago at the Social Enterprise World Forum, I met a ‘giant’ of a man. Listening to him share his perceptions about the field of social enterprise was so enjoyable and such a great learning experience—hard to accomplish at the same time. Shortly thereafter, I invited Jerr to join us in the launch of a new “Social Entrepreneurship and Change” Master’s Degree program at Pepperdine University. Jerr gave the kick-off lecture for the program and today teaches the capstone course, the two-semester Social Enterprise Incubator. He is a true master and his long history of experiences are invaluable not only for budding graduates but also for those who have been in the field for years.”

MARGARET WEBER

Professor Emeritus and Retired Dean

Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Pepperdine University

JERR BOSCHEE has been an advisor to social entrepreneurs in the United States and elsewhere for 35 years. He has delivered keynote speeches or conducted master classes in 43 states and 21 countries and has long been recognized as one of the founders of the social enterprise movement worldwide. He has also been a senior marketing executive for a Fortune 100 company, managing editor for a chain of regional newspapers, a Peace Corps Volunteer in India, and a guest lecturer at numerous academic institutions, including Cambridge, Carnegie Mellon, Duke, Georgetown, Harvard, Northwestern, Oxford, Stanford, Ulster and others. He currently teaches the capstone course in the Master's Degree program in "Social Entrepreneurship and Change" at Pepperdine University.

Jerr is the former President and CEO of The National Center for Social Entrepreneurs, is one of the six co-founders of the Social Enterprise Alliance, and was named by *The NonProfit Times* to its nonprofit sector "Power & Influence Top 50" lists in 2004, 2005 and 2006. He served from 2001 to 2004 as an advisor to England's Department of Trade and Industry Social Enterprise Unit and is Executive Director of The Institute for Social Entrepreneurs, which he created in 1999.

He is the author or editor of six previous books, including *Boschee on Marketing*, *The Social Enterprise Sourcebook*, and the award-winning *Migrating from Innovation to Entrepreneurship: How Nonprofits are Moving toward Sustainability and Self-Sufficiency*. His work has appeared in numerous anthologies and been translated into seven languages.

Jerr is the former Board Chair for SAGEGlobal ("Students for the Advancement of Global Entrepreneurship"), which supports high school social entrepreneurs in more than 20 countries, and has served on numerous local, national and international Boards throughout his career.

Additional information about Jerr and The Institute for Social Entrepreneurs is available at www.socialent.org, or by sending Jerr an email at jerrsjournal@gmail.com.

Jerr's Journal

My Adventures in Social Enterprise

By Jerr Boschee

*Founder and Executive Director
The Institute for Social Entrepreneurs*

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For Linda

... for everything

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Why are you and I so passionate about social justice? Why are millions of people like us—all over the world—devoting their lives to helping others help themselves? I'm not sure when it all began for me. Was it waking to a drum roll on the radio and a voice telling me my President had been murdered? Was it staring into the ovens at Dachau? Was it the obscenity of Vietnam? Was it being pushed against a wall in Watts and screamed at by black activists trying to break through my privileged white fortress? Was it pouring out pages of agony when a bullet felled Robert Kennedy? Or was it...finally...when I chose peace, not war, and departed for a village in India?

Introduction

THE WOMAN IN THE BACK OF THE ROOM WAS ANGRY. SHE ROSE from her seat as I spoke, stomped to the front and slapped a legal pad onto the table next to me. Then she stalked out, shocking the other 50 nonprofit execs.

I picked up the pad and read out loud the note she had scribbled in huge black letters: “This,” she had written, “is the most evil thing I’ve ever heard!”

Her reaction didn’t surprise me. I spent the first 15 years of my career in social enterprise traveling anywhere and everywhere an audience would assemble—and I was lucky if my listeners were polite. Few wanted to hear about mixing “mission” with “money”... and the idea often met with derision or outrage. As one reporter wrote in the lead of his article about a keynote speech I delivered in central Illinois, “he’s either savior or Satan” for nonprofits.

It wasn’t until the mid-1990s that the people coming to my speeches and workshops stopped asking *whether* they should explore the world of social enterprise and started asking *how* they could do it. And in the early 2000s, the industry took off.

Working in the field for more than 35 years has been an unexpected privilege. My peers and I in the 1960s protested the greed and callousness of the private sector and I never imagined I would be speaking to the entering class at the Stanford Graduate School of Business in 1981 about the power of business to create positive social change.

Along the way, I've met some remarkable people whose courage, passion and refusal to quit enabled them to create extraordinary social enterprises. In this book, I've tried to share some of the lessons they've taught me. If I've succeeded, it's because they've been standing near me as I write, making sure I get it right; if I've failed, it's because I foolishly heard them speaking but didn't listen to what they were saying.

I hope you enjoy the stories...and pass them along to others.

JERR BOSCHEE

GENEVA, ILLINOIS

MARCH 1, 2016

CHAPTER I

Of Romeo, Juliet and social entrepreneurs

I DIDN'T KNOW...

I was 16 and woefully ignorant about world literature.

Well, there was *Julius Caesar*. We did that in tenth grade. Didn't every high schooler in the 1950s? But we never got to *King Lear* or *Hamlet* or, god help us, *Romeo and Juliet*. The Catholic Church didn't have much to say to us about teenage lust. Davy Crockett and Marshal Dillon were just fine, thank you.

So there I was, in a theatre in downtown Minneapolis in the fall of 1961, watching an amazing new movie called *West Side Story*.

The original 1957 Broadway production ran for 732 performances and received a Tony nomination for best musical. It lost to *The Music Man*—this was the 1950s, after all.

But, hey, now it was on the silver screen and I was snapping my fingers with the Sharks and Jets, loving all the music and dancing and color.

But then Tony and Maria both died!!!

I didn't see *that* coming!!!

I'd never *read* *Romeo and Juliet*. Nobody'd ever told me the story. In fact, I didn't realize until months later that the movie *was* adapted from Shakespeare's play.

So here I am tonight, nearly 50 years older, listening to Rita Moreno singing "A Boy Like That" from the original cast album and thinking about social entrepreneurs.

They don't know either.

They have no idea what twists and turns await them. Could be a lot of *sturm und drang* that winds up in a black hole. But it *could* be the next Delancey Street or Housing Works or Greyston Bakery!

All they have at the beginning—all any of us have—is a dream. Maybe some guts. And a compulsion to do some good in the world.

“This isn’t another one of those goody-goody things, is it?” somebody asked me the other night when I told him about some social enterprises being started by high school and college kids.

“Are you kidding?” I asked. “These kids are *ignited* by the idea they can use business strategies to carry out a social mission!”

So are you, or you wouldn’t be reading this.

And I know you’ll get discouraged. There’s a long, dark tunnel ahead of you and sometimes you’ll feel as if you’re the only torch-bearer.

But I pass along to the graduate students in my classes and the nonprofit folks in my audiences a six-word mantra, and I offer it to you as well: “*Don’t quit until the miracle happens!*”

None of us know what awaits, whether we’re a naïve 16-year-old discovering world literature in the oddest of ways...or a budding social entrepreneur who spots something wrong in the world and tries to fix it.

You can do it. I know you can.

It doesn’t matter what you don’t know. The only thing that matters is what you do with what you find out.

It doesn’t matter how many times you fail. The only thing that matters is what you do *next*.

It doesn’t matter how many people tell you to give up. The only thing that matters is that you never give *in*.

I’ll be cheering for you!

MARCH 15, 2011

CHAPTER 2

Channeling Prof. Brown

PROF. HUNTINGTON BROWN TAUGHT ME THIS LESSON DURING my sophomore year at the University of Minnesota in the spring of 1964...

He was an elderly English professor with abundant white hair and a bristling white mustache. Tall and stooped, he seemed to hover over the classroom.

I had sailed blithely through two introductory Shakespeare classes with a different professor who was unable to look at any of his students: He spent the entire 50 minutes of every lecture pacing feverishly around the front of the room wiping rivers of sweat from his brow with a rapidly disintegrating fistful of kleenex—and staring the entire time at the intersection of the ceiling and the rear wall of the classroom. I diverted myself from his embarrassment by occasionally inking messages into my wooden desktop that were answered by a girl who occupied the same desk at a different time of day. She and I never did meet...

Despite his nervous disposition, however, the wandering professor did know his stuff and left me hungering for more. I enjoyed reading the plays and listening to his rambling commentaries, survived his classes, then signed up for an advanced Shakespeare class with Prof. Huntington Brown. (How could I *not*? With a name like *that*? Teaching *Shakespeare*?)

As it happened, Prof. Brown was leagues beyond brilliant and the journeys he led through Shakespeare's most famous plays were mesmerizing. But he also felt it important to school us in the vagaries of the printer's trade in the early 17th century—a trade so slap-dash that key words, lines and entire scenes were often omitted from the published versions of Shakespeare's plays, to

the consternation of scholars for the next 400 years. Prof. Brown rattled on about the glories and the failings of the rudimentary printing presses in use at the time, the technological difficulties of printing *anything*, the glaring errors in the original collections of Shakespeare's plays, the panic it caused among his admirers, the frantic and often failed attempts to correct the errors in subsequent editions, the...

Am I losing you here?

Well, join the crowd. I not only didn't understand much of what he was saying about the printing presses, I didn't *care*! I just wanted to read and discuss the *plays*!

Then came the day of reckoning when one-third of our final exam focused on some of the arcane aspects of the physical printing presses and the technical reasons for the flawed publications.

I tried to write something intelligible in my blue book, but I was convinced my utter befuddlement would come shining through and I'd fail the entire exam.

Well, I was right, at least in part. The exam came back a few days later and I was astonished to see that I'd passed. When I opened the blue book to read Prof. Brown's comments, he taught me a lesson and gave me a gift I've tried to share ever since with my colleagues and students.

"It is apparent to me," he wrote in careful script next to my pitiful attempt to answer questions about printing errors in the *Third Quarto* (don't ask), "that you do not understand anything at all about this subject. But I will not hold it against you."

Wow.

He had somehow glimpsed my love of Shakespeare, which blossomed after a few years into a graduate degree in dramatic literature. And instead of crushing that infatuation by giving me a failing grade and sending me off to, oh, I don't know, an

accounting class?, he decided to nourish what was there to be nurtured and ignore the rest.

Fast forward 45 years to my classes at Carnegie Mellon University, where I taught a social enterprise incubator for three semesters. Each time, 16 students started the semester excited about their business ideas. Their energy and enthusiasm filled the room! Yet there I stood, knowing in my soul that most of their ideas were flawed and had no chance.

I never told them that. And I never tell anybody who asks for advice about their idea for a social enterprise that they should bag it.

Sure, I ask pointed questions, I make casual observations, I steer them in certain directions. But what I'm trying to do is create an atmosphere in which they can discover the glitches in their original idea without doubting their talents—or quenching their excitement.

After all, I might be wrong. Who am I to predict whether an idea for a social enterprise has legs? In the early stages, I'm as ignorant as my students and all the others who ask my advice. What I *do* know is that if you take the time to conduct a decent feasibility study your idea might morph into a genuine business opportunity. And if it doesn't, so what? Most entrepreneurs fail once, twice or many more times before they find a business idea that works.

So what right do I have to discourage people when they're at the very beginning of their adventures?

And what right did an English professor have to give me a failing grade at the beginning of mine?

Hey—it's not a matter of having the right...it's a matter of doing the right thing.

Prof. Huntington Brown did that for me, and I've been trying ever since to do it for others.

So keep those ideas coming!

MAY 9, 2011

CHAPTER 3

Of predators and prey...

OUR GUIDE WASN'T ABOUT TO BROOK ANY NONSENSE.

We were ready to depart from Thornhill Safari Lodge for a late afternoon/early evening plunge into South Africa's Kruger National Park two months ago. Nine of us were perched in a three-tiered Land Rover without a roof.

"Do NOT get out of the Land Rover at *any* time," he thundered. "And do NOT stand up."

The wild animals we were about to stalk with our cameras had long ago become comfortable sharing their turf with Land Rovers and their seated passengers. But Reckson wanted to be sure we understood the stakes. "If you get out of the vehicle or stand up," he grinned, "the animals will make a wonderful new discovery: FOOD!"

We obeyed (um, why wouldn't we?) and stayed seated, even when the bull elephant tried to run us down an hour later and our guide gunned the engine, hurling us all backwards. He was the only one who'd seen the elephant coming. Good guide. Liked him a lot.

Which brings us to the subject of predators and prey.

We photographed the Daddy lion as he walked within a foot of our Land Rover, the Mama lion and her three cubs who strolled up the road ahead of us, the leopard and the cheetah who stalked us from afar, the crocodile who stared at us through lidded eyes. But we also mingled with herds of impalas, African buffaloes and zebras, befriended dozens of giraffes, admired the stately kudus, laughed at the vervet monkeys...

And wondered how they survived with so many predators prowling among them.

We learned part of the answer a few days later when we went on a walking tour our final morning at the lodge. Within a few hundred yards we had entered a world teeming with prey. It was shortly after dawn and the predators had slunk away to sleep. The remaining animals watched us without alarm and our guide, Valley Masinga, began giving us information about each species. He also introduced us to the delicate art of capturing and eating termites, but we won't get into that here...

"Look how they stay close to each other," he said, pointing out the giraffes, the zebras, the wildebeests, the kudus and the impalas. "They take care of each other. They watch out for each other. They each have a different skill that helps *all* of them survive."

The giraffes can see for long distances, so they issue early warning cries if they spot a predator approaching. When impalas become frightened or startled, the entire herd begins leaping around to confuse their foes (they can jump as far as 33 feet and as high as nine). Zebras have superior vision and hearing and use sounds and body posture to signal others that something is wrong. Adult female kudus bark at the first sign of peril. And wildebeests use their sense of smell to suss out danger, then stamp the earth to warn the others.

Masinga's words sent me back nearly 35 years to one of my more spectacular entrepreneurial failures. Two friends and I sold our homes and moved from Minnesota to California to launch a publishing business. We made enough mistakes to fill a textbook, but here was the most damaging: We all had the same set of skills...and we innocently thought if we did more and more of what we knew how to do it would somehow make up for all the things we *didn't* know how to do.

Wrong!

I crept back to Minneapolis seven months later, my friends married each other and moved to northern California, and we all smiled bravely for a few months when people asked what happened.

The marketplace is harsh. Four of five small businesses in the United States fail within the first three to five years—unless they have a sound business concept, a massive amount of market pull, and a great management team.

You can see where this is going. The most important word in that last paragraph is “team.” Six of seven businesses started by graduates of the Harvard Business School succeed, but it’s not because they’re smarter than the rest of us—entrepreneurial success depends on street smarts, not school smarts. *It’s because they know how dumb they are.*

So they surround themselves with people who have complementary skills. They recruit giraffes, zebras, impalas, kudus and wildebeests who work seamlessly as teams, vastly increasing the ability of their companies to survive and thrive.

And, trust me, it’s all about survival, whether for prey in South Africa or for social enterprises in a cold-blooded marketplace. The National Federation of Independent Business in the United States estimates only one in 10 new businesses will survive, one in four won’t make it past the first year, and half will fail before the end of five. Of those that do hang on, only 39% will be profitable, 31% will hover around break-even and 30% will lose money.

Dozens of things must go right for a social enterprise to succeed. Competitors, customers and regulators need to behave, products and services have to be priced properly and constantly re-engineered, suppliers and distributors need to perform—the list is endless.

So, with the odds stacked against you, why start with a flawed management team?

In real estate, the mantra has always been “location, location, location” (or at least until it recently became “default, foreclose and run for the hills”). In business startups, it’s “management team, management team, management team.” Social investors rarely bet

on a Grade A social enterprise concept if it's being managed by a Grade B team—but will sometimes take a chance on a Grade B concept if it's led by a Grade A management team.

Or, as Valley Masinga would put it, if the team has the proper mix of giraffes, zebras, impalas, kudus and wildebeests.

Information about Thornhill Safari Lodge can be found at www.thornhillsafarilodge.com or by calling +27-11-471-7400.

JUNE 20, 2011

CHAPTER 4

The man with the double life

I SEE HIM EVERY FOUR OR FIVE WEEKS. TOOK A WHILE TO FIND him. I had the same barber for 35 years, then the headhunters came after my wife and we wound up in Dallas.

The first Texas barber I tried put me through an assembly line of hair washers, hair rinsers, hair cutters, hair trimmers and hair blowers, then turned me loose. Never went back. The next guy did fine, but retired after six months. The third one took the entire 35 minutes we spent together complaining about her boss.

So when I finally found Marv I latched onto him...

He's been cutting hair for more than 40 years and some of his clients have been with him from the beginning. Marv's full of stories and we carefully steer clear of politics. I've been seeing him now for about four years, but it wasn't until a few months ago that I discovered his double life.

We were trying to schedule my next appointment and I suggested a specific date.

"Nope, can't do that," he said, shaking his head.

"Vacation?"

"Nooooo...I've got a trial."

"A what?"

"A trial."

Turns out my barber is a jury consultant for one of the best-known defense attorneys in Dallas. Marv had been cutting his hair for about 35 years when the attorney suddenly asked him, "Marv, you're a pretty good judge of people, aren't you?"

"What do you mean?"

"Well, you spend all your time talking with one person after another and you've been doing it forever. I'll bet you size people

up pretty quickly, don't you? Bet a lot of your first impressions turn out to be pretty accurate, don't they?"

"Well, yeah, that's true," admitted Marv.

"So how'd you like to do some work for me?"

"What kind of work could I *possibly* do for you?"

The attorney explained, and Marv's been helping him select jury members for the past few years whenever one of the attorney's cases actually goes to court.

When I told my wife my barber was also a jury consultant she hooted. "That's *great!*" she laughed. "What a *perfect* fit."

And it is, when you think about it. Barbers—and barkeeps—listen to their customers for hours every day...and the customers pour out all kinds of confessions. Who better to help lawyers pick juries? They've heard it all before, again and again.

Well, people who run social enterprises usually aren't lawyers—but they *do* need professional advice. The trick is finding the right kind. I'm not talking about hiring consultants. Everybody knows it's easy to become a consultant: You just start telling people, "I'm a consultant." I know. I used to be one. Now I tell people "I'm a coach." Don't think it's working out, though...

No, if you're in the early stages of business planning, I suggest you create a kitchen cabinet as soon as possible. Find three or four people with the kinds of expertise you need. Advisors you can trust. People who will keep what you say confidential. Take them all to breakfast once a month...or if that isn't workable, buy lunch for one of them each week. Lay everything out for them, don't hold anything back. You may be surprised how many are willing to help—especially veteran entrepreneurs.

I give the same advice to people who've been running social enterprises for years, because there are so many decisions they have to make alone, the kinds of things CEOs are hired to deal

with—so many times when it's premature to consult their staff or Board members.

Being a CEO is a terribly lonely job. I've had dozens of them over the decades tell me they didn't have anybody they could use as a sounding board, nobody they could trust with their problems, fears and anxieties. That's why so many CEO clubs spring up—the members need a peer group.

But if you're a CEO and can't find or don't want to join a peer group, why not create a kitchen cabinet of your own? Find those three or four people you can trust and put all your cards on the table. Let them help you play the hands you've been dealt. Don't try to go it alone. It's tough enough out there without trying to be a one-man card shark. Sure, you ultimately have to be the one who decides whether to hold 'em or fold 'em—but before you do, get some help.

Marv's available...

JULY 20, 2011

CHAPTER 5

Teaching George to count

THE LEGENDARY JOHN DURAND (1934–2008) STARTED MINNESOTA Diversified Industries (MDI) in 1968 with \$100, a circular saw and a sewing machine. He had 14 employees between the ages of 18 and 24, all of them developmentally disabled.

When he retired in 1997, MDI had become a \$68.5 million non-profit business employing more than 1,000 people of all ages, 600 of them with developmental challenges.

John often claimed it was possible to break down any task to the point where even the most severely disabled individual could be productive.

I once asked him how he learned to do that—and he took me back to something that happened during the early years of MDI.

He told me about teaching George to count...

* * *

“He was one of the most severely disabled individuals I’ve ever worked with,” John remembered.

“He was about 35 years old and had very limited speech, a very personal type of speech. You had to be around him a long time to even understand what he was saying. But he was able to do tasks by mirroring or mimicking someone else.

“His mother brought him in and asked if there was anything I could do for him—and the first thing I thought of was a movie I’d just seen about (psychologist) B. F. Skinner, who’d taught a chicken to peck a dot three times to get corn.

“I knew George had a much more highly evolved brain than a chicken, even with his limitations. Hell, if a chicken could do

things, George could, too—he's 100 times brighter than any damn chicken put on this earth.

“So I went home that night and tried to figure out how to use him. We had a contract at the time to make specialty vending kits, and I tried to figure out where I could put George so I would be the least vulnerable.

“My budget was so tight. I couldn't risk damaging a product, because I'd have to eat the cost.

“I couldn't have him staple the kits because, if he screwed up, then I'd have to go back to the printer and have him reprint the inserts and it would cost me more money than I was getting for the job.

“I had to figure out where I could put George so it wouldn't cost me out-of-pocket money even if he did create excessive errors—somewhere I could just throw in more labor to correct the problem.

“Turned out the only possible place was in the last stage of the packaging process, where the kits had to be put in a box in groups of ten. If he screwed up, we'd just have to dump them out and re-package them.

“So I thought, ‘I've got to teach George how to do that. I've got to teach him to count. Ten's a big number—why don't I teach him to count to five?’

“I called the customer and asked, ‘Would it really make any difference if the kits are packaged in groups of five instead of ten?’

“The customer said, ‘Well, not really, if it's consistent, but it's much easier for people to do ten at a time.’

“I said, ‘That may be, but I think I've got another approach where five would serve me better with the employees I have.’

“And the customer said, ‘Go ahead, do it.’

“So that afternoon I worked about two-and-a-half hours with George teaching him how to count to five—and got absolutely nowhere.

“I thought, ‘What the heck, George’s just new here and it’s getting on in the day, he’s probably fatigued. We’ll take it up in the morning first thing.’

“Next morning we started up again and worked until break and there really wasn’t any progress.

“One of my other developmentally disabled employees was working nearby and in frustration I turned to her and said, ‘Jane, teach George how to count, I’m going for a cup of coffee.’

“She looked at me and said, ‘What?’

“I said, ‘Teach George how to count.’

“Jane said, ‘WHAT?’

“I said, ‘Teach him how to pack these things!’

“Jane said, ‘Oh,’ and turned to George, raised up her hand and said, ‘George, how many?’

“And George looked at her fingers and said, ‘Two, four, six, three, two.’

“Jane said, ‘Fine, give me that many.’

“She didn’t care what he called them or whether he counted them: Could he *identify* five, that was the real task.

“By the end of the day, he could match up one kit with each of his fingers and when he had that many he could put them together and put them in a box. George did it and George could pack.

“He didn’t have to know how to count or know how to deal with numbers. I was trying to teach him something unnecessary.

“It was quite a lesson. I realized all you have to do is break down the job until you’re smarter than the task.

“That way, *every* individual can be productive.”

AUGUST 20, 2011

CHAPTER 6

A cautionary tale...in five acts

ANTON CHEKHOV AND I WROTE A PLAY TOGETHER 15 YEARS AGO. I know, I know, he'd been dead by then for more than 90 years, but wait for it, okay?

This past summer my wife and I attended a performance of Chekhov's last and greatest play, *The Cherry Orchard*, starring Zoë Wanamaker and a stellar supporting cast at the National Theatre in London.

It was a live production—but we weren't in England. We were nearly 5,000 miles away, in a suburb of Dallas. Saved us a *lot* on airfare...

We were able to attend the play because two years ago the National Theatre boldly introduced a new way to bring drama to the masses worldwide. Each year, the National has filmed four of its plays and beamed them live across the globe to more than 100 countries, and the third season has just been announced.

It was an enormous artistic and financial risk. But it's paid off. As artistic director Sir Nicholas Hytner puts it, "We've been able to reach more than 100,000 people with each film, twice the number we can accommodate in the theatre itself" during the run of a typical play.

Not incidentally, of course, the films have created a significant source of new revenue for a nonprofit theatre challenged by the recession and its domino effects throughout the nonprofit world.

Unfortunately, most nonprofits spend too much time searching for a white knight (*read: donations from individuals and Foundations or subsidies from government*). Some Board members and executives fear that adopting or expanding earned revenue strategies will lead inexorably toward mission drift; for others it's just too scary.

Nonprofit arts organizations are no exception, but attitudes did begin to change a bit in the mid-1990s. As a result, Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the American theatre, invited me to introduce the concept of social enterprise at its annual conference in 1996. It was only a breakout session somewhere in the bowels of the conference hotel, but it was a way to start the conversation, and I needed to do something special to get the attention of my audience.

So Chekhov and I stayed up late the night before and created the social enterprise version of *The Cherry Orchard* (hey, come on, I *do* have a graduate degree in dramatic literature!).

The next day I read the new version to the audience, then talked a bit about the promise of social enterprise for nonprofit theatres. For example, I've long been an admirer of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, so I used it as an example that has only become more impressive with the passing years. According to the National Endowment for the Arts, the average nonprofit theatre in the United States during 2005 (the most recent numbers available) covered only 52 per cent of its annual operating budget with earned revenue, compared to 65 per cent in 1990, most of it from ticket sales. But the Oregon folks consistently outperform their colleagues (earned revenue covered 78% of their \$29.1 million budget in 2011) because they constantly re-invent themselves.

I have no idea if anybody in the breakout room enjoyed the social enterprise version of the play or afterwards heeded what I said. But I read the same version and made similar follow-up remarks five years later to a group of arts and business leaders in the U.K.—and Barbara Phillips *did* listen.

She had just been appointed head of the new Social Enterprise Unit in the U.K.'s Department of Trade and Industry—and for the next four years she had me deliver keynote speeches and master classes about social enterprise to thousands of voluntary and

community sector organizations in all nine regions of England, plus Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

So here, with apologies to my favorite playwright, is the social enterprise version of *The Cherry Orchard* (all the words are taken from the translation by Stark Young). It's my attempt to present the dilemma confronting nonprofits today as starkly as possible, in a context theatre people will immediately recognize. And it's my plea for arts organizations everywhere to take greater risks, even if it means abandoning some long-standing traditions.

ACT ONE: "DENIAL"

LOPAHIN: We must decide definitely, time doesn't wait. Why, the matter's quite simple. Are you willing to lease your land for summer cottages or are you not? Answer in one word, yes or no? Just one word!

LYUBOFF: Who is it smokes those disgusting cigars out here...?

ACT TWO: "FALSE HOPE"

LOPAHIN: The rich Deriganoff intends to buy your estate. They say he is coming personally to the auction.

LYOBOFF: And where did you hear that?

LOPAHIN: In town they are saying it.

GAYEFF: Our Yaroslavl aunt promised to send us something, but when and how much she will send, nobody knows...

LOPAHIN: How much will she send? A hundred thousand? Two hundred?

LYOBOFF: Well...maybe ten, fifteen thousand...we'd be thankful for that.

LOPAHIN: Excuse me, but such light-minded people as you are, such odd, unbusinesslike people, I never saw. You are told in plain Russian that your estate is being sold up and you just don't seem to take it in.

LYUBOFF: But what are we to do? Tell us what?

LOPAHIN: I tell you every day. Every day I tell you the same thing. Both the cherry orchard and the land have got to be leased for summer cottages, it has to be done right now, quick...the auction is right under your noses. Do understand! Once you finally decide that there are to be summer cottages, you will get all the money you want, and then you'll be saved.

LYUBOFF: Summer cottages and summer residents...it is so common, excuse me, but that's what it is.

GAYEFF: I absolutely agree with you.

LOPAHIN: I'll either burst out crying, or scream, or faint. I can't bear it. You are torturing me!

ACT THREE: “REALITY”

LOPAHIN: I remind you ladies and gentlemen: August 22nd the cherry orchard will be auctioned off. Think about that!—Think! —

ACT FOUR: “RESIGNATION”

PISHTCHIK: What happened at the auction? Go on, tell us!

LYUBOFF: Is the cherry orchard sold?

LOPAHIN: It’s sold.

LYUBOFF: Who bought it?

LOPAHIN: I bought it.

ACT FIVE: “REQUIEM”

FIERS: *(Going to the door and trying the knob)* Locked. They’ve gone. I’ll lie down awhile...*(He lies still)*

(There is a far-off sound as if out of the sky, the sound of a snapped string, dying away, sad. A stillness falls, and there is only the thud of an ax on a tree, far away in the orchard)

CURTAIN

OCTOBER 5, 2011

CHAPTER 7

“Way to go, kid!”

SHORTLY BEFORE SHE DIED EARLIER THIS YEAR, RUSSIA’S LEGENDARY social activist Olga Alexeeva sadly observed that too many people are trying “to save the world in 45 minutes.”

She was talking about wealthy philanthropists, but her words apply to social entrepreneurs as well. People are suffering—and we want to help them YESTERDAY! But it takes time for social enterprises to put down roots and begin to thrive. And I know there are moments when each of you wonders whether you will EVER make a difference.

So let’s find a way to replenish ourselves. Let’s look away from the forest for a while and walk among the trees, stop obsessing about the big picture. Let’s concentrate instead on the impact we have on the people around us—our families, our friends, our employees, our casual acquaintances...

Here, for your consideration (yes, I’ve watched every episode of the Twilight Zone), are three stories. In each, the other person had no idea how much he changed my life—just as you and I rarely know which of our words or actions will alter the course of another person’s journey.

* * *

The Budding Ballplayer

I was a tiny 14-year-old in the spring of 1959, barely an inch over five feet, when University of Minnesota baseball coach and former major league all-star Dick Siebert came to my local baseball field for a Saturday morning clinic. His team had won the national collegiate championship in 1956 and would do so again in 1960.

Somewhere mid-morning, he had six of us lined up near second base. We would each have a single chance to field a grounder off

Siebert's bat and throw to first to beat another kid who'd raced from home plate at the crack of the bat.

When it came my turn, I crouched, leaned forward on the balls of my feet, pounded my glove and waited, incredibly nervous. But instead of spanking a hot grounder in my general direction, Siebert surprised me by hitting a dribbler near the pitcher's mound. I raced toward the ball as the runner hurried toward first, lunged for it, grabbed it—and then tripped headlong! I flew forward, sprawling as I threw the ball, then groaned as it bounced into the dugout.

I lay face-down on the infield grass, completely embarrassed. More than a hundred kids had seen me blow it and I dreaded getting up.

Then came Siebert's booming voice. "Way to go, kid! That's the kind of hustle we like to see around here! Did everybody see that?!? Way to go!"

I felt ten feet tall...and I've never forgotten. What a gift he gave to me that day.

The Budding Sportswriter

I *loved* being a sportswriter. I started doing it for nothing during the spring of 1961, kept working as an unpaid stringer for more than a year, then went full-time for *Suburban Newspapers* as soon as I graduated from high school in 1962. Sixty dollars a week, no benefits. Throughout my first two years of college I worked 30-35 hours a week during the academic year and full-time in the summers.

The managing editor, Roger Vessels, came from a storied journalism family. His mother had been a legend in the weekly newspaper business in northern Minnesota, and Roger had carried on the family tradition in suburban Minneapolis.

When the daily newspapers in Minneapolis went on strike for 116 days during the summer of 1962, we began to publish twice

a week instead of once, on Thursdays and Sundays, and never stopped. I was 17 that summer and for the next two years we filled about half the Sunday paper with sports. I covered games, took photos, wrote stories, developed and printed photos in the darkroom, laid out pages, wrote headlines and captions, pasted up galleys before they went to press—and every Sunday morning about 1 a.m. I dragged my friends from whatever party we were attending and drove to the office to grab the first copies off the press. The sight of my bylines and the pages I'd designed was the most exciting thing I could imagine.

But one slow Tuesday afternoon in the summer of 1964, Roger sat down beside me on a swivel stool at the lunch counter in a nearby diner. We chatted for a while and then he off-handedly asked what I planned to do with my life.

I didn't even hesitate. "I'm going to be a sportswriter!"

Roger paused, put down his fork, swiveled toward me and said "Look," then paused again. "Look," he finally repeated, "you're far too talented to just be a sportswriter."

Then he turned back to his lunch and I sat there, astonished. Believe me when I tell you he rocked my world and altered the course of my life. Five months later I became editor of one of our weekly papers, switched to night school and never looked back.

The Budding Radical

I turned 23 on Christmas Eve 1967 and during the next few months showed up almost every Friday night for a late dinner with a group of friends, most of them 15 to 20 years older.

One evening I found myself railing once again about our presence in Vietnam and asking why we always turned to war-mongering as a solution to the world's problems. This was a typical rant for me, and my friends had been patient for weeks, but this night

Paul Bengston, a high school teacher in his late 30s, suddenly put up his hands and barked, “Hold it a minute, Jerr!”

I stuttered to a halt and stared at him. What? He eyed me for a moment and then said, “If you really believe all this, if you really believe there’s a better way, then why don’t *you* do something about it?”

I was shaken. Nobody had ever challenged me that directly, and it changed everything. The next week I applied to join the Peace Corps.

* * *

You each have similar tales to tell. We all become who we are because of unexpected people who enter our lives, sometimes for just a moment or two. And every day our words and actions have an extraordinary impact on others.

It doesn’t take much, sometimes just a word or two, a pat on the back...

So when you find yourself wallowing in worries about your social enterprise, step into the forest to rejuvenate yourself. Look around. And know that you do make a difference, every day, every single day.

DECEMBER 5, 2011

CHAPTER 8

“How does it look now?”

ONE OF MY FAVORITE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS LIVED MORE THAN 500 years ago...and his career is filled with ingenious strategies for meeting customer demands...

* * *

When you enter the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence, you turn left and pass through a doorway, then glance down a large room to your right.

When I did that three years ago I began to cry...

I simply do not understand, and I will never understand, why one work of art will move me and another will not. Why do I always weep at the first movement of Mozart's *Prague Symphony*? Why am I entranced by Monet's *Terrace at the Seaside*, *Sainte Adresse* and Van Gogh's *Wheat Field with Crows*? And why did the sight of Michelangelo's *David* bring me to tears when I first glimpsed it from 50 yards away?

I was 22 when I discovered Florence and the *David*, but in 1967 I had only a wisp of artistic sensibility. I knew the statue was special, but I didn't know why, either intellectually or emotionally. The only thing I remembered, for years, was its height—17 feet from base to crown.

By the time my wife and I entered the Galleria in 2009, however, I had been to dozens of museums all over the world and had opened myself, in some mysterious way, to the emotional power of paintings and sculptures. I still cannot tell you why I came undone at that first glimpse of the statue three years ago. All I

recall is a wave of emotion that flooded my senses and left me physically unstable.

Last fall Linda and I returned to Florence and once again headed for the Galleria. This time we followed a tour guide who shared a dozen stories about Michelangelo and his life. But her tales about the *David* were my favorites.

When a group of political and religious patrons gave 26-year-old Michelangelo Buonarroti the commission to create the statue, he knew he would never get anything done if they were observing him while he worked. So he erected a giant wooden wall that completely surrounded his work space and for three years labored on the project without letting anybody else inside (probably one of the world's first skunkworks).

Eventually came the day of unveiling, September 8, 1504. It had taken four days to move the cloaked sculpture from the workshop to the *piazza* in front of the town hall. Michelangelo invited his patrons to attend, unsheathed the statue, then waited for their reactions.

One particularly officious politician stared at the figure looming above him, moved around to different vantage points, then turned to Michelangelo and announced, "I don't like the nose."

What?

"It's too long."

Now, this politician and his colleagues were Michelangelo's customers, the people who commissioned the sculpture. They needed to be satisfied with the finished product.

Which meant Michelangelo had to do something about the nose.

So he placed a ladder next to the statue and climbed up near the head, his chisel in hand.

Then, very carefully, he leaned forward, gripped the chisel in both hands and began to slide it along the nose.

Or so his patrons believed.

Unbeknownst to them, Michelangelo had secreted marble dust in one of his palms—and as he *pretended* to scrape away at the nose, he slowly released the dust and let it filter gently toward the ground.

After two or three moments of careful labor, he sighed, straightened up and stepped back down the ladder.

“How does it look now?” he asked the meddlesome politician, who gazed upward, looked at the nose from various angles and finally gave his verdict.

“Perfect,” he said. “That’s *much* better than it was before.”

* * *

Genuine entrepreneurs need the freedom to create. None of them want to have people looking over their shoulders, demanding weekly reports, insisting on changes. But they are also sleight of hand wizards, masters of mis-direction. They have a sixth sense that tells them when to zig and when to zag.

Peter Senge described the entrepreneurial spirit this way in The Fifth Discipline: “The committed person brings an energy, passion, and excitement that cannot be generated if you are...compliant.... The committed person doesn’t play by the ‘rules of the game.’ He is responsible for the game. If the rules of the game stand in the way of achieving the vision, he will find ways to change the rules.”

Sometimes all it takes is a handful of dust...

JANUARY 12, 2012

CHAPTER 9

It's always the little things...

MY GRANDFATHER LIVED TO BE NEARLY 103. OR IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN 102. We were never quite sure. All we knew was he crossed the "Little Water" (the Black Sea) and then the "Big Water" (the Atlantic Ocean) at the age of 11.

He was at various points in his life a farmer, an entrepreneur, a pinochle savant, a lay leader in his church...

And a bootlegger.

Which would have worked out fine except for the smudge of coal on his brother Joe's nose.

* * *

Peter and Margaret Wickenheiser married in 1916 on a freezing winter day in North Dakota. To reach the church in town they rode across miles of prairie in a horse-drawn sleigh, blankets bundled around their legs and heated stones warming their feet.

During the first years of their marriage they farmed near Strasburg, but in the early 1920s they moved their growing family into town and Grandpa started a pool hall with his brother Joe. Prohibition had arrived a few years earlier, but of course the customers expected something more than just a chance to rack 'em up and play a little eight-ball...

So Grandpa and brother Joe built a still in the basement and ran a tidy little business selling shots upstairs. Everybody in town probably knew about it, but nobody seemed to care.

Except the revenuers, the federal agents chasing moonshiners. These guys followed rumors from town to town like a mongrel

sniffing its way down an alley and one day appeared at the Wick-enheiser pool hall.

The brothers had been warned by half the town that the Feds were on the way, so they took precautions. They started hiding their still by covering it with some of the coal from the chute on the other side of the basement.

Trouble was...the revenuers arrived before they were finished moving the coal, so Grandpa had to stall them upstairs while Joe finished the job.

Trouble was...Joe failed to erase all the evidence. When he arrived upstairs to join the others, one of the revenuers noticed the smudge on the side of his nose.

Trouble was...it was summer. Nobody needed coal in the summer. It just sat there in the chute waiting for the weather to change.

“Hey, Joe, what’s that on your nose?”

Well, my goodness. Grandpa and his brother were among the leading citizens in Strasburg. They were lay leaders at St. Peter & Paul Catholic Parish, respected members of the business community, all-round good fellows.

Even the judge thought so.

But he had no choice. Sentenced them to a stretch in the big house in Bismarck, about 75 miles away.

The cops in Strasburg didn’t even bother sending an escort. Grandpa and brother Joe drove themselves up to the prison and checked in for their 60-day sentence. The warden promptly made them trustees and gave them the run of the place.

Thus ended my Grandfather’s criminal career. Made a great story for the grandkids, though...

* * *

Jeffrey Sudikoff founded IDB Communications Group in 1983 and built one of the world's largest telecommunications companies. Eleven years later he shared with *Inc.* columnist Norm Brodsky a lesson he'd learned immediately: "A start-up needs to focus on little things," he emphasized. "Not the global strategy. Not the Big Plan."

But his lesson isn't relevant only for startups. It's *always* the little things:

- Tony Wagner realized almost immediately his training as a nonprofit manager in Minneapolis didn't prepare him for the realities of operating a business. "I'd been running a nonprofit for more than 25 years," he once told me, "but I never had to watch the numbers *every day* until I started a social enterprise."
- Rich Gilmartin grew a tiny social enterprise into a \$60 million holding company based in Pensacola that spans nine states and the District of Columbia. Gulf Coast Enterprises operates 12 businesses and employs more than 1,600 people, most of them disabled or disadvantaged, and Rich believes one of the key ingredients for success has been concentrating on the little things that make customer service special. He explained what he meant a few years ago by telling me about his custodial services company. "If you just do what people expect, and that's it," he said, "they almost don't know you're there—and when it comes time for contract renewal or adding contracts there's no substantial advantage. On the other hand, it makes a difference if you do something a little out of the ordinary, like leaving behind your business card with a handwritten note, or leaving a Hershey's

candy kiss on someone's desk, or if you find a \$5 bill on the floor calling it to the attention of the ownership instead of shoving it in your pocket and walking away. It all sets a tone that's different from what customers typically expect.”

- And Dave McDonough's Los Angeles social enterprise had a bad accounts receivable problem as it went through a growth surge in the 1990s and “we discovered the primary reason was our inability to get our invoices out on time. Then when they *did* go out they were wrong! So the customer would say, ‘Well, this one's wrong, I'll just set it over here.’ It was amazing, really. So we hired a woman for our finance department who had a background in collections—and it turned out it wasn't really a collections issue at all as much as it was a follow-up issue. After that we made sure the invoices went out on time, called customers to follow up, and in just a few months went from having about 60 per cent of our accounts receivable unpaid after 90 days to having the bulk of them paid within 45 days.”

* * *

So you might want to ask yourself a simple question: What are you overlooking that could either endanger or enhance your business? And you probably shouldn't depend solely on your own checklist. Why not ask your employees? After all, they're closer to the little things than you are...

FEBRUARY 8, 2012

CHAPTER 10

Right out of a John Wayne movie...

WHEN I WAS ABOUT EIGHT OR NINE, I HOARDED COMIC BOOKS. DIDN'T we all? War stories, alien invasions, romantic adventures, superheroes, westerns...

Of the hundreds I devoured, two left lasting impressions.

One had such a horrific ending that any plot based on mistaken identity infuriates me even today and scarred me for years.

But the other absolutely inspired me, and still does...

* * *

The story begins with a plot right out of a John Wayne movie. A small town in the Old West dominated by a killer and his gang. The town council secretly sends a messenger to fetch the famed good-guy gunslinger Bart, and a few days later he rides into town with his sidekick Johnny.

Bart is so handsome the girls all swoon and the young'uns swarm around to ask him awed questions about his horse and his boots and his guns and his...well, you get the picture. He's a walking advertisement for the finest outfitters in the West, sports a silver gunbelt with silver holsters and silver pistols—and flashes a grin as wide as a country mile.

Johnny's another matter. He's fat, slovenly, hardly ever speaks and pretty much disappears into the background. He's basically there to take care of Bart's horse.

The killer isn't all that worried, even when he realizes Bart's in town. After all, he has five other cowpokes workin' for him, and they're all slick gunhands (sorry about this—the old language just kinda creeps onto my keyboard).

Nothin' much happens for a couple days. Bart checks into the town's only hotel, Johnny bunks with the horses in a nearby corral. The killer and his crew hang out at the saloon (where else?), drinkin' whiskey straight from the bottle, starin' ferociously at strangers who come through the doors, and tellin' lies to a dozen other layabouts.

But of course everybody knows a showdown's comin'. Shortly after noon on the third day, Bart sends a kid to fetch Johnny, who shows up a few minutes later wearin' a gunbelt of his own, with two holsters and guns.

Bart and Johnny start walkin' across the dusty street (has to be dusty, right?) and Bart pushes his way through the doors of the saloon. Johnny sidles in behind him and stands to the side. Everybody else clears out while the killer and his five gang members range themselves around the room and stare at Bart, who tells the killer he'd better get outa town before it's too late. The killer laughs and Bart says I really think you oughta git while the gittin's good and the killer laughs again and signals his gang and suddenly all six of them go for their guns at the same time.

Bart never moves.

But Johnny draws and shoots all six of 'em dead before any of the guns even clear their holsters!

WOW!

The eight-year-old Jerr never saw *that* one comin'! Each time I think about that story even today it makes me smile—and I'll bet every boy who read that comic book came away feeling better about himself.

* * *

So what's the point?

Well, three of them, actually:

- There's a dirty little secret about business that offends the sensibilities of many people in the nonprofit world, where nobody's supposed to "lose" and everybody's supposed to play the game fairly.

That doesn't work in the marketplace. You only win if you have an "unfair" competitive advantage—and it's only unfair in the eyes of the losers. The advantage can be just about anything. A patent. A distribution process. A sole-source contract. Deep pockets. A logo. A devilish technology.

Bart had Johnny. What's *your* unfair competitive advantage?

- Every social enterprise needs to display an appealing face to the world—and that job falls to the CEO, who represents the company at public forums, on Capitol Hill, in meetings with potential investors...but CEOs shouldn't get involved with operations. That's the COO's job. CEOs may wear the stylish clothing and the ready smiles—but somewhere back in the shop Johnny's making it happen. The public never really knows or cares. When Bart and Johnny left the saloon, they were the only ones who knew what had really occurred—so everybody hailed Bart as a hero and Johnny trudged away to get the horses.

What do you think? Is *your* CEO wasting too much time meddling in day-to-day operations instead of concentrating on marketing and strategic planning?

- When a disruptive new company appears on the scene and changes everything, almost nobody sees it coming. Did IBM, Control Data, NCR and the other elephants

in the computer industry see Steve Jobs, Bill Gates,
Andy Grove and Larry Ellison coming? Nope.

The killer and his gang never saw Johnny coming either.
He was right there in plain sight, but nobody noticed.

So what are *you* failing to notice?

MARCH 12, 2012

CHAPTER II

Blindsided...

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DO NOT PLAY DUPLICATE BRIDGE, LET ME SET the stage: If you place in the top three or four in a tournament at your local club, you usually win something called Master Points (MPs)—and the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) keeps track of points for everybody nationwide. There are also Unit, District, Regional and National tournaments, where you can win more points in a single tournament (but the competition is tougher).

For people who started 2011 with between zero and five MPs, I wound up winning the competition for the most earned in a single year at my local club and also for our Unit (which includes nine other clubs).

The next step up, the District level, covers most of Texas and all of Mexico. The winner at that level in both events was Zach Garrison, who recorded about 260 points during the year. I had just over 100. So you can see it wasn't even close.

I met Zach in Houston at a regional tournament three months ago. He's nine years old!!!!!!

* * *

Social entrepreneurs frequently have no idea where their toughest competition will come from—or what emerging forces will affect their competitive position.

I watched it happen to one of the most heralded social enterprises of the 1990s.

The Company of Women began as a simple way to help women avoid dangerous situations, especially during New York's sometimes brutal winters—an emergency repair kit for minor

automobile glitches such as a blown tire so women wouldn't have to depend for help on passing (and perhaps dangerous) motorists.

The kit sold well and the nonprofit battered women's shelter that came up with the idea expanded it into a for-profit subsidiary—a mail-order company initially consisting primarily of do-it-yourself and personal-security items for women, such as cordless screwdrivers and pocket sirens. The parent nonprofit received a total of \$65,000 in seed capital from two religious orders and a state agency and launched in 1988 by mailing 25,000 eight-page catalogs, which generated \$54,000 in gross revenue.

By 1991, gross revenue had climbed to \$398,000 and two years later reached \$1.6 million, with 24-page catalogs mailed to 1.5 million households across the country. By then, the catalog included a variety of functional and decorative goods such as suffragette T-shirts, wall hangings and posters, self-help books and children's items—and *The Wall Street Journal* gave the company significant positive coverage in April 1993.

By 1994, the parent nonprofit had invested \$1.1 million and owned 64% of the company, was seeking another \$750,000 from outside investors, and was projecting its first year of profitability. *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* devoted three full pages to the story in January 1994 and I visited the company myself in August.

Eighteen months later the business had collapsed:

- Paper costs for the catalogs escalated dramatically
- Fulfillment costs mounted rapidly as UPS charges increased
- Competitors swarmed into the print catalog industry
- And online catalogs proliferated almost overnight

To make things worse, although the company had a business-savvy CEO, the Board of Directors for the parent nonprofit had minimal expertise in business, let alone online marketing.

When the subsidiary crumbled, its demise also threatened the parent, which had confidently created a strategic plan that projected \$500,000 in annual “free cash” from catalog profits and had started building capacity to carry out the plan.

Eventually, Rockland Family Shelter survived the crisis and today remains one of New York’s finest resources for people suffering from domestic violence or sexual trauma; it also provides comprehensive assistance for victims of crime.

But the shelter’s business venture did not.

* * *

No social enterprise can compete successfully unless it masters the factors critical to success for its *specific* kind of business (paper and fulfillment costs) and retains a laser-like focus on emerging forces (online marketing) that could either damage the company or create significant opportunities for growth.

Some “critical success factors” are generic. Every business needs them: Profitability, a solid management team, brand recognition. But each company must also grapple with factors essential to its own, unique industry.

For example, one of my friends had long wanted to own a service station and finally had the chance to buy one. Unfortunately, he didn’t realize how important it was for a gas station to be located at an intersection—his was parked in the middle of a block (probably why the previous owner wanted to sell!). My friend bailed as soon as he could.

So what are the critical success factors for *your* type of business?

Is “price” one of them? Do you need to charge a lower price than any of your competitors? But wait—maybe you need to charge a *higher* price in order to attract the kind of customer you want. A successful social entrepreneur once told me, “Some customers have already been there and realize they shot themselves in the foot by going with the lower price. Now they’re looking for a higher level of service.” The point is, do you *know* the appropriate price for *your* product or service?

Perhaps “quality” is one of your critical success factors? But what does *that* mean? Some people want a Lexus, others are satisfied with a Hyundai. What does “quality” really mean to *your* customers?

Do the factors include such things as volume, convenience, dependability, referrals, speed, partnerships—or something else entirely?

Most importantly, do you *know* what they are?

And what about the large-scale emerging forces that will have either a positive or negative impact on your business? They could be demographic, sociological, economic, technological, political or regulatory. You can’t control them, but when they occur you’ll have to do something quickly to either mitigate the damage or capitalize on an opportunity.

If you can identify the critical success factors for your type of business and maintain an intimate understanding of whatever forces are gathering on the horizon, you’ll be able to deploy your resources in areas that will strengthen both your current and future competitive positions. The Company of Women disappeared because it didn’t have an effective backup plan when paper and fulfillment costs trended upward—and when catalogs started migrating to the Internet.

So, how strong are you in the areas essential to success in *your* type of business? And how much time do you spend scanning the horizon for potential threats and opportunities?

* * *

Sometimes, of course, you're simply blindsided. On February 1, 2012, nine-year-old Zach Garrison became the youngest Life Master in the history of the American Contract Bridge League.

Guess I should have seen those third-graders coming...

APRIL 16, 2012

CHAPTER 12

The fundamental difference...

HOW ABOUT A SIMPLE TEST TO START YOUR DAY? THERE WILL BE NO grades...

Here are the vision and mission statements handed to me when I began working with one of my clients a few years ago. After you read them, I'll ask you a question.

“OUR VISION: We are a nationally recognized, compassionate organization offering quality human services through disciplined growth and community partnerships.

“OUR MISSION: We enhance quality of life by providing comprehensive services that empower people to maintain their independence and dignity.”

Now for the quiz: What does the organization do and who are its clients?

* * *

More than one nonprofit or social enterprise Board member has approached me after a briefing session or retreat, perplexed by the same topic.

Their questions frequently come down to this: What is the difference between vision and mission—and why is the difference so important?

Some organizations have both a vision statement and a mission statement. Some have only one statement and try to cover the waterfront. But most make a fundamental mistake: They think their vision statement should be about themselves.

At first glance the vision and mission statements reprinted above contain lots of wonderful concepts. But let's look closer.

A vision statement should answer the question “How do we want the world to change?” and a mission statement should answer the question “What will *we* do to change it?”

Instead, my client’s vision statement was completely inner-directed. It expressed dreams for the organization—but it should have been about the world in which the organization exists and the people it serves, not the organization itself.

In fact, a vision statement will often be shared by many organizations. Think about it as the roof of a temple supported by multiple pillars, each pillar the mission statement for a different organization, all working toward the same vision.

But that still leaves open the question of *why* a vision statement should be outer-directed, and the answer, I believe, resides in the very definition of marketing itself.

If you start with your products, services or programs, then go looking for customers, you are trying to *push* your way into the market. It works, sometimes, but not for long.

But if you start with a group of customers, then develop products, services or programs to meet their needs, you are being *pulled* into the market. No nonprofit or social enterprise can succeed for long unless it understands what its customers and clients really want, and that means the mantra is simple: “Always start with *them!*”

Now translate that into what happens if your vision statement is inner-directed. You’re not starting with the people you serve—you’re starting with your own ambitions. Here there be dragons.

A vision should inspire an organization to change the world. It should be a call to action that mobilizes support and triggers quantum leaps. A simple, powerful statement that opens hearts and wallets.

But stakeholders won’t be inspired by a vision that’s inner-directed.

The Alliance for Children & Families, one of the country's leading nonprofit associations, clearly understands the difference between vision and mission. Under the leadership of former President and CEO Peter Goldberg and its Board of Directors, the Alliance a few years ago approved new wording for both. The vision? "A healthy society and strong communities for all children and families."

Here are some other examples of strong vision statements:

- "We envision the day when everyone in the world can take a safe drink of water." (*Water Partners International, now known as water.org*)
- "A global community of teenage entrepreneurs sharing a common purpose: To make the world a better place." (*SAGE: Students for the Advancement of Global Entrepreneurship*)
- "Ensure that one day all children in this nation will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education." (*Teach for America*)

Now *those* are visions we *all* can share.

* * *

My client's original mission statement actually did contain some hopes for the people it serves—"independence," "dignity," "quality of life." And, after a lengthy brainstorming and wordsmithing process, here's what we came up with as the organization's new vision statement:

"We envision a world in which people grow older with dignity, control their destinies and live independently as long as possible."

We also created a new mission statement that defined exactly what my client would be doing to help achieve that vision:

“Our mission is to be (name of state)’s premier provider of early onset Alzheimer’s care for individuals and their families.”

MAY 17, 2012

CHAPTER 13

The right leader at the right time...

IN 1975, TWO FRIENDS AND I DECIDED WE HAD A GREAT IDEA FOR A business. We sold our homes in Minnesota, stuffed everything we owned into a U-Haul truck and a couple of ancient cars, and headed for San Francisco.

As our departure date loomed, we became increasingly jazzed, feeding off each other in an ever-soaring circle of excitement.

Meanwhile, a third friend watched as we disappeared into fantasy land. She'd already successfully launched two businesses herself, so she knew what lay ahead. While we were becoming more and more dazzled by our prospects, here's what she was doing:

Rolling her eyes.

She knew we didn't have the right management team, we didn't have the right business model, we didn't have the right financing, we didn't have...

As it turned out, all we really had was a desire to move to California.

Seven months later my two partners married each other, moved to Ukiah and started an organic hog farm (believe me, that was NOT our original business idea!). I wandered back to Minnesota and basically said "Hub?"

* * *

Social enterprises need different types of leaders at different stages in their evolution—and many times discover (too late) that their efforts have been crippled because they're being led by people with the wrong kinds of skills.

The mistake occurs because most people don't truly understand the differences between innovators, entrepreneurs and professional

managers. All three types of leaders are needed in the evolution of a healthy organization, but at different times, and rarely does an individual excel in more than one of the three areas.

Understanding the differences among the three has been one of the most important and painful lessons learned by people in the nonprofit sector. No other subject has caused such consternation among my audiences during the past 30 years, whether I've been in Nashville, Copenhagen, Johannesburg or Tokyo. People frequently approach me after one of my presentations and tell me “*That's* why it's not working at my organization—we have the wrong people in the wrong jobs!”...or, more emotionally, “That's why it's not working for *me!*”

So let's look closely at each of the three:

- My experience in California helped teach me I was *not* an entrepreneur—and it came as a great relief! It meant I no longer had to take responsibility for what happened to my ideas once they'd been shaped and proven to work. That wasn't my job! I was an innovator, not a business builder.

Innovators like me are *dreamers*. We always have a dozen projects going at once, because we know only one or two will ever bear fruit. It drives our Board and staff members crazy because whichever project we're talking about sounds as if it's the single most important thing in the world. And it *is!* Until we switch gears and start talking about a *different* project. (This is one of the reasons I haven't had a Board or staff for the past 13 years.)

- ***But understanding the work is NOT the same as understanding the business that DOES the work.*** As Jana Matthews, former senior program director at the Kauffman Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership, once put

it, “Getting a product to market is very different from building a company that will be sustaining over time.”

Innovators create prototypes, work out the kinks—and then we get bored, anxious to return to what we do best... designing more prototypes! We are rarely concerned, ultimately, with the long-term financial viability of what we do.

Of course, that attitude drives entrepreneurs nuts, because they are single-minded *business builders*: Their job is to turn prototypes into going concerns. For them, financial viability is the most important aspect of what they do: Hence the social enterprise mantra, “No money, no mission!” They don’t have time to think about two different projects at once, let alone a dozen.

- But entrepreneurs also get bored, usually after five to seven years. That’s when the *trustees* arrive, the professional managers. The future of the company is in their hands, and they secure it by doing what they do best—installing and supervising the systems, standards, infrastructure and human resource policies needed to make sure the going concern keeps going.

Unfortunately, often because resources are scarce, nonprofits and social enterprises try to shoehorn people into positions where they don’t fit, and problems occur because they have an innovator or a professional manager trying to do an entrepreneur’s job.

That’s what happened to my friends and me in California. *None* of us were entrepreneurs. I was an innovator, Anne was a professional manager and Leo was a technology wizard.

And that’s what can happen to *any* startup unless it’s being led by a genuine entrepreneur.

JUNE 19, 2012

CHAPTER 14

Aching to change the world...

SOMETIMES ANTICIPATION IS ALMOST UNBEARABLE. THE YOUNG people I see around me every time I teach a class or give a speech about social enterprise are palpably vibrating, aching to change the world...

I know that hunger. I felt it once, long ago, with all the passion of youth...and the other night I felt it again when the intoxicating music of The Doors erupted from my speakers shortly after midnight...

* * *

June, 1968: Pacific Palisades, California

A cluster of huts and small buildings colonize a campground in Temescal Canyon, nothing but craggy hillsides between them and the Pacific Ocean half a mile away.

The huts are gathered around a grass and dirt courtyard, temporary homes for a group of Peace Corps trainees, most in their early to mid-20s. A loudspeaker on the roof of one of the huts periodically blares announcements across the compound.

After nearly three months, we're all emotional wrecks. Martin Luther King has been murdered. Robert Kennedy has been murdered. We've been thrown against the walls in Watts and screamed at for hours by black activists. The Vietnam War consumes us. And India awaits, just a few days away...

More than 30 of us. And every night, as music blasts over the loudspeaker, we rage against the assassinations and the war and feverishly prepare for departure, wondering what we'll discover about ourselves when we're dropped into a village in the middle of nowhere, alone.

Then, at some point each evening, it's time for The Doors album *Strange Days*—and the music becomes something more than background noise. The title of one song, “People are Strange,” has been our mantra for weeks—but that isn't the song we're waiting for each night. We love it as Jim Morrison and the rest of The Doors take us through the first nine songs on the album...

... but when we hear the irresistible opening notes of the last song...and Morrison's invitation to “Yeah, come on”...there we go, all of us, our feet tapping and our bodies beginning to sway as we emerge from our huts into the courtyard...

When the music's over

When the music's over

When the music's over

Turn out the lights

Turn out the lights

Turn out the lights

For the music is your special friend

Dance on fire as it intends

Music is your only friend

Until the end

Until the end

Until the ennnnnnnndddd

The song lasts for nearly eleven minutes and little else matters to the people in the courtyard. The simple beat mesmerizes as we sing and sway and dance...*dahdah ditdit dee, dahdah ditdit deedeede*...over and over and over again...

*Before I sink
Into the big sleep
I want to hear
I want to hear
The scream of the butterfly*

And then, at about the six-minute mark, we fall silent and stop moving, every other sound in the campground erased, and two minutes pass as we wait for the magic one-word answer that electrifies us every night...

*We're gettin' tired
Of hangin' around*

*Waitin' around
With our heads to the ground*

*I hear a very gentle sound
Very near yet very far
Very soft, yeah, very clear
Come today, come today*

*What have they done to the earth?
What have they done to our fair sister?
Ravaged and plundered and ripped her and bit her
Stuck her with knives in the side of the dawn
And tied her with fences and dragged her down*

I hear a very gentle sound

With your ear down to the ground

*We want the world and we want it...
We want the world and we want it...*

(Now)

Now?

Then the pause. That miniscule but incredible pause.
We hold our breaths.

NOWWWWWW!!!!!!!!!!

And the scream blasting from the loudspeaker unleashes all
the pent-up frenzy in our lives...and we scream with The Doors...
night after night after night...

Until we leave for India...

*The recording we listened to can be heard at
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkKRU1ajKFA>*

JULY 19, 2012

CHAPTER 15

Finding the right partner

SEPTEMBER 1947: TWO COUPLES SIT DOWN FOR A FRIENDLY GAME OF bridge...and 40 years later they rise from the table after 790 sessions.

Playing cards came naturally to my parents, as it did to me years later (I “majored” in bridge during my first year in college—and hid my grades from my parents). Mom and Dad courted by playing three-handed pinochle with Mom’s father in a tiny North Dakota town during the mid-1930s. Dad helped manage the local bank and when my grandfather spotted him walking up Main Street every day after closing he immediately called for his cards and his daughter.

Mom and Dad’s courtship continued when they moved to Minneapolis in the late ‘30s and they married in 1942. Dad joined the Army and later that year met Minneapolis native Ed Eisenmenger during Officers Training School. They became fast friends and stayed in touch throughout the war, then returned to Minneapolis to re-join their wives.

When the two couples decided to play bridge together for the first time in 1947, they made an important decision. They may have done it casually or actually discussed it. I never knew. But they thought it was probably best for the couples to split up...so Dad and Ed’s wife Margaret played against Mom and Ed.

Dad and Margaret won handily that first evening and again in October and November, but Mom and Ed came back to win four of the next five. That’s the way it went, year after year. Dad kept a running score—and the two couples made the Minneapolis newspapers in 1959 when they totted things up after their 219th session and found themselves dead even, with 858,570 points each.

During the next 28 years, Dad and Margaret held the lead most of the time, but every once in a while Mom and Ed would surge ahead—and the final tally in October 1987 was razor thin: 3,963,030 for Dad and Margaret (50.8%), 3,835,800 for Mom and Ed (49.2%).

* * *

There's a cliché about bridge partnerships that says a husband and wife should never attempt to play as a team—the possibilities for disagreement and *ad hominem* remarks are just too great, with potential damage to the marriage.

On the other hand, there are at least a half-dozen husband/wife teams at my local bridge club and they seem to get along just fine.

I guess the point of all this is that when you choose a strategic partner to help you launch or grow your social enterprise, you'd better be careful—especially if you're considering an alliance with a private sector company.

When it works, a partnership with a corporation can provide significant leverage:

- You have deep knowledge of a specific sector and the corporation has marketplace savvy (it knows how to build and grow an organization to scale, how to compete, how to adapt to changing conditions)
- You're close to the customer and the corporation has a network of high-capacity contacts
- You can build a team internally and the corporation can build a support base externally

- And—if you’ve chosen the right partner—both of you have a passion for your mission

So here are some things to think about as you contemplate creating a strategic partnership with a corporation (or, for that matter, with a commercial enterprise of *any* size):

- ***Why are you doing this?*** To make money? To enhance your image? To further your mission? To increase employee morale? Any or all of the above? Having clarity of purpose will make your subsequent decisions simpler.
- ***Is this something you really want to do?*** Do you have the necessary passion, the full commitment you’ll need to make it work—or are you seeking a partnership because somebody told you it was the right thing to do?
- ***How will you measure success?*** What are your specific goals for the partnership in terms of social impact, financial gains, organizational capacity-building or other factors? You need to set realistic expectations—and that means recognizing all your direct *and* indirect costs, financial and otherwise.
- ***How far are you willing to go?*** How much time are you willing to devote to a partnership? What resources are you willing to provide? What responsibilities are you willing to assume? Are you looking for a short-term or long-term relationship?
- ***Is the timing right, for both you and your partner?*** For example, trying to create a major strategic partnership

at the same time you're mounting a capital campaign is probably not a good idea.

- ***Is there a genuine fit?*** Finding the *right* partner is critical. Do you and your partner share the same core values? What are your mutual needs and capabilities? Does the corporation have a logical relationship to your product or cause? Does it share your target market and geographic focus? Is it credible in its own field? Is it financially and operationally sound? Are there any potential controversies that could scuttle or damage the partnership? Of course, the corporation will be asking the same types of questions about you.
- ***Will partnering with this particular company jeopardize your other relationships?*** Will staff members, funders or the people you serve object? Will other stakeholders become restless?

Two final notes:

- If you're wary about partnerships with commercial enterprises, start small, and remember the concept of market pull: Listen first, then decide whether you have something to offer that would be of benefit to the prospective partner—don't go in trying to sell something the partner may not even need.
- And once the partnership is underway, *manage* it. The best way to build trust among partners is to concentrate on personal relationships, so work hard to cement them,

up and down the line, from the senior executives to the lowest level employees in both organizations. Always respond to your partner's needs before your own (that's how you create value), keep the lines of communication open—and always respond quickly (a good rule of thumb is to make sure you call back the same day).

AUGUST 16, 2012

CHAPTER 16

Glossophobia...

IF YOU'RE AFRAID TO SPEAK IN FRONT OF AN AUDIENCE, YOU aren't alone.

In an online interview with WebMD, assistant professor of communication studies Paul L. Witt of Texas Christian University says that for most people public speaking is “even scarier than rattlesnakes. The idea of making a presentation is the number one fear reported by people in the United States.”

But, hey, anybody who starts a social enterprise or winds up leading one has to give speeches. It's just part of the package. And here's even worse news: Witt and his research team found that anxiety strikes almost every time we present our ideas in front of other people. It doesn't have to be a formal speech. “Any time people make verbal remarks that need to be clear and persuasive,” he said, “we find widespread reports of stage fright and nervousness.” It's called *glossophobia*, from the Greek *glōssa*, meaning tongue, and *phobos*, meaning fear or dread.

When I was in high school, I never suspected I'd become a public speaker. But, for some reason, I decided to take an elective course during the second half of my senior year. We called it “Speech” in those days...and it helped me begin coping with some of the natural fears I probably have in common with 99% of the people reading this essay.

I'll be back with some suggestions in a few moments, but first I'd like to lighten the mood a bit and share one of my favorite stories about how to deal with a bored audience. I've taken it directly from the Federal News Service transcript of a speech given by the well-known broadcaster Larry King at the National Press Club December 15, 1993. He's talking about an invitation he received

to speak at a major convention when he was just starting his career as a local radio and TV host in Miami...

* * *

True story. Dick Gershstein called me up one day. ... He was district attorney for years in Miami. ...

He said to me, "Larry, I've got a big problem."

I said, "What?"

He said, "There's two conventions going on simultaneously in Miami—two: the National District Attorney Association and the International Chiefs of Police. Both conventions, same time. They're both supposed to wind up Sunday afternoon. They've decided since they're both here at the same time they're going to have a dinner Sunday night combining the two conventions at the Fountainbleu."

And I said, "Well, what's your problem?"

He said, "Well, we had to cancel our 3 p.m. closing meeting and switch our speaker to that. I'm the chairman of the dinner and the speaker is Frank Sullivan. He's chairman of the Florida Crime Commission and he's the world's most boring speaker. I can't change him, I can't cancel him. Now I've got all these chiefs of police, I've got all these district attorneys, and I've the world's most boring speaker."

I said, "Well, how can I help you?"

He said, "Would you follow him? I don't want both conventions to end on a low note, and I know this guy's going to put them to sleep. So you follow him and give them a big—you know."

I said, "But nobody knows me. I'm just a guy, I'm just doing a local radio show. I just started on television. Nobody in the audience knows me."

He said, "I'll give you a big buildup. I'll give you a big buildup."

So I go to this dinner. It may have been the first time I ever wore a tuxedo. I'm sitting on the dais. I'm staring out at this audience, like

2,000 people—district attorneys, chiefs of police, some of them in uniform. I'm really nervous. Frank Sullivan gets up to speak—chairman of the Florida Crime Commission—the world's most boring speaker. (Laughter.) He had graphs. (Laughter.) He had charts. And he spoke in a monotone. The first person to go to sleep was his wife. (Laughter.) She went into the baked Alaska. Boom. He's talking against crime, right? He speaks for a half hour, they give him a little tepid applause, and you could tell they're ready to get out of there. They were bored. Everyone was bored. They're all standing up.

Now here comes my introduction. Gershstein runs to the microphone and says, "Before you leave, my good friend Larry King." (Laughter.)

So I stand up. I'm faced with this enormous dilemma. Nobody knows me. They just heard the most boring speaker. They're all anxious to go home.

These are heavy hitters. It's the end of a big convention. I run to the microphone, and here's all I said: "Ladies and gentlemen, I'm in broadcasting, and in broadcasting we have a fairness doctrine, an equal time code. It's something I believe in from the bottom of my heart. We have just heard Frank Sullivan speak against crime. In accordance with fairness and equal time, I am here to speak on behalf of crime." (Laughter.)

It was unbelievable. You could have heard a pin drop. (Laughter.) They sat down. I had their immediate attention. Now I've got to think of something to say. So I said, "How many people in this room would like to live in Butte, Montana?" Not one hand went up. I said, "Butte, Montana, has the lowest crime rate per capita in the Western world. There were no crimes in Butte, Montana, last year. Nobody wants to go there." (Laughter.)

"What are the top five tourist cities in America? New York, Chicago, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Miami. Crime is a tourist attraction." (Laughter.) "People go where crime is." (Laughter.) Sullivan's wife wakes up. (Laughter.)

Then I said, "And another thing." This was the crowner. I said, "Another thing. If we listened to Mr. Sullivan, if we follow his graphs and charts, if we do everything he said, we will wipe out crime in America. And what's the result? Everyone in this room is out of work." (Laughter.)

The police chief of Louisville jumped up and said, "What can we do to help?" (Laughter.)

* * *

My old friend Chet Burger once gave me the best advice I've ever received about speaking to an audience: "They *want* you to succeed!"

In other words, the audience members are on your side. They want to be entertained and informed. They don't *want* you to be a bad speaker. They are *not* the enemy. And, because there are so many boring speakers out there (like Frank Sullivan!), there are some relatively simple ways to get the audience on your side and keep them there.

Chet began as a page boy with CBS News in 1941, worked his way up to National Manager of CBS Television News in 1955, and later became one of the founders of the modern public relations industry. He passed away in 2011 at the age of 90. I met him during my corporate years in the early '80s, when I started appearing in public more and more often. By then he'd been a public speaker himself for more than 30 years.

One of his mantras about speech-making was "have fun!" (I can hear many of you muttering, "Yeah, right...").

But he also emphasized something that became a touchstone for the rest of my public speaking career: "Be yourself!" he urged me. "Let the audience see the real you, let them make that connection."

Ever since, I've tried to reveal myself to my audiences and create partnerships with them, and I'd like to share with you a few of the ways I've attempted to do so:

- I make it a habit to take a few minutes before every speech to wander around the room, meet some of the attendees, chat with them a bit. If my audience is relatively small, about 50 or fewer, I try to shake hands with each person, ask where they're from, tell them I'm happy they've come, and, if they say something nice about me (such as, "I've been reading your stuff for a long time and I've really been looking forward to hearing you speak"), I'll often say something self-deprecating (such as, "Oh, boy, the pressure's on now"). The whole process creates a friendly atmosphere before I even begin the speech—and there's comfort finding a familiar face out there as my talk progresses.

If the audience is bigger, and I've spoken to groups as large as 2,000, I'll still introduce myself to 50 or 60 people sitting in different parts of the room so I'll always have "friendly" faces to focus on during my speech regardless of where I happen to look.

- I usually begin my talks by giving the audience members a deeper dive into my personal background—I've found they like to see a *person* at the front of the room, not an "expert." The individual introducing me has usually ticked off a list of my professional qualifications, but I still take a few moments to give the audience a sense of where I'm coming from, including a photo of me on a fishing trip in 1964 and a sardonic claim that I have a graduate degree that's proven invaluable for my career in social enterprise

(an M.A. in comparative literature, with an emphasis on ancient and modern drama).

- Many speakers are leery of showing the audience their vulnerability, but I've never had much choice in the matter. Some of the personal stories I tell, such as my life-altering visit to Dachau at the age of 22 in 1967, frequently leave me shaken and fighting back tears. But my audiences always stay with me and it brings us closer together.
- I rarely speak from a podium. There's something powerful about closing the distance between the audience and myself. I use a cordless, clip-on microphone and meander around the front of the room. During longer presentations I'll even walk into the audience.
- Because I'm not behind the podium, body language becomes an important part of my arsenal. It's not planned—I just let my natural instincts flow. I'll fling my arms around, point, throw back my head, lean forward, hunch down, turn my back, roll my eyes. Over the years, I've come to realize I'm doing more than making a speech—I'm actually giving a performance.

Of course, there's always a danger of moving around the room too often or using too much body language, both of which make it hard for people to focus, and I have to guard against those mistakes by constantly monitoring audience reactions.

The use of body language as a way of connecting with an audience became especially clear to me while I was speaking to groups of Chinese government officials at Oxford in 2006: We were using sequential translation, so I would talk for

two or three sentences and then wait while the translator did her work. I realized halfway through the first day I was using even more exaggerated body language than usual and wondered why—finally realizing what I'd been doing unconsciously was giving the audience members a series of visual hooks to hold onto while the translator was talking.

- I try never to use notes when I'm giving a speech—and I never use a script (lord, the hours I've wasted in audiences while speakers read their speeches!). Sometimes needing to have notes is unavoidable, though, such as the day I arrived at a venue to discover I'd been given the wrong information about the audience and the speech I'd prepared, with slides, was useless—I spent about 15 minutes outlining a new speech on a single sheet of paper, ash-canned the slides, and used the outline to keep me on track. I've also had some embarrassing experiences with my notes falling off the podium or fluttering out of my hands to the floor, so I try to minimize the occasions when that could happen.
- Pacing and timbre are skills I've had to work on a lot over the years. Using pauses, speaking more quickly or slowly, and raising or lowering my voice are all ways to stay on the same page with the audience. I never cease experimenting. For example, I usually deliver my speeches in an upbeat, rapid, resonant voice, but I also recall an afternoon when I spoke to more than 200 people in an after-lunch venue and delivered the entire speech in a quiet voice without much physical movement (and, on this occasion, from behind a podium). It was almost as if I'd bewitched the audience, because everybody stayed

riveted and silent throughout except for those moments when they reacted viscerally to something I was saying. It felt as if I were speaking in a church on a somber occasion—and it was one of the most effective speeches I've ever given.

* * *

Public speaking doesn't come easily. I cringe when I recall some of my early presentations. And none of the suggestions I've offered will give you a guaranteed way to overcome glossophobia. Every speaker is different. Every speech you give is different. Every audience is different.

So of course you're nervous! Who isn't? But don't waste that adrenaline: Use it! Face your fears. Challenge yourself.

And remember: The audience is NOT the enemy.

SEPTEMBER 20, 2012

CHAPTER 17

The heart and soul of a social enterprise...

HOW WILL YOU BE REMEMBERED?

That question is much on my mind these days. I've just returned from celebrating my 50th high school reunion in Minneapolis...and I spent nearly a week in August tramping around cemetery plots in southern Minnesota.

* * *

The atmosphere and conversation at reunions change as the years pass. At our fifth, it was still all about *us* (especially those of us still angling for dates with our classmates!). By the time of our 26th (don't ask), we were all staring at a roomful of near-strangers and braggi...um...chatting about our careers and kids. During the 40th, grandkids were sneaking into the conversation and retirement plans were in the air. By then, most of us seemed comfortable in our skins and weren't trying to "prove" anything anymore.

As I prepared to leave for the 50th, I received an e-mail from one of my classmates. She'd been attempting to track everybody down and invite them to the three events we'd planned over a long weekend. There were only 57 students in our class and as I read down the list she sent me, two words jumped off the page: "Deceased" (eight people). "Missing" (five others). And I wondered: How are those 13 people remembered? Is it the way they'd hoped?

Ten years ago I sent a questionnaire to all the members of the class and circulated the answers before we actually got together. One of the questions was this: "If heaven exists, what would you like God to say to you when you reach the pearly gates?" I loved some of the mischievous replies:

- “Come in. I wasn’t expecting you.”
- “All your loved ones are waiting for you at the library, it’s right by the boat docks, and there’s an open bar.”
- “Oops! My mistake! You’re here too early, your suite isn’t ready yet. I’ll have to send you back.”
- “Well, done.” (*Note the careful placement of the comma!*)
- “Your classmates have all been expecting you.”

But there were more serious responses as well:

- “You made a difference.”
- “You’ve done the best you can. Welcome.”
- “You fought the fight, enjoyed your journey and made a difference for those you left behind.”
- “Well done, my good and faithful servant.”

Now, ten years later, we’re all in our late 60s and I know each of us pauses now and then to wonder how we’ll be remembered. It’s not something we talk about beyond the usual bromides. But I know we all wonder...

Staring at gravestones in southern Minnesota brought me pause as well. “Loving Father.” “Beloved Son.” “Mom.” Except for an occasional quote from a poem or a religious text, the words almost always came back to family...and I was there as my wife traced through four generations of her own...

All of which leads me to a question I pose to my social enterprise friends: “How do you want *your* company to be remembered?” And, by extension, “How do *you* want to be remembered?”

The answer, I believe, lies in the three or four core values that will always guide your company’s daily activities and long-term plans—and give you a solid foundation when faced with difficult ethical and business decisions. As Jim Collins and Jerry Porras put it in their seminal book *Built to Last*, they are “your essential and enduring tenets, not to be compromised for financial gain or short-term expediency.”

My friend Ronnie Brooks taught me about core values 30 years ago. She’d spend days with nonprofits and private sector companies helping them sort through their value systems. Along the way, she devised six criteria to identify a *genuine* core value:

- You choose it freely, from *bona fide* alternatives—it’s not forced on you by others
- You act on it *all* the time
- It applies *everywhere* in your work
- You do it despite the consequences
- It lasts over time
- And it gives you pride

For example:

- ***From a center serving people with autism:*** “We believe the individual with autism is first and foremost a *person*.”

- ***From a community arts organization:*** “For many people, the liberating power of the arts is separated from daily life, and the potential of the arts to address social issues is unrealized: *We believe participation in the arts is fundamental to the life of every individual and community.*”
- ***From a social enterprise whose direct labor force consists primarily of people who are disabled or disadvantaged:*** “We believe individuals with mental, physical, economic or educational disadvantages *are* capable of holding real jobs, *should* receive competitive wages, and *deserve* opportunities for career advancement and profit-sharing.”
- ***From a social enterprise supplying American volunteers to assist NGOs throughout the developing world:*** “We believe in cross-cultural sensitivity. We will *always* honor local customs and celebrate individual differences.”

Core values can be the heart and soul of any social enterprise, but only if they become firmly embedded in the company’s daily operations. Here are five steps to make that happen:

- Define them *before* you do anything else
- Build core value benchmarks into *all* your operations and strategies (and make sure they can be quantified and measured—otherwise you’re just blowing hot air)
- Appoint a senior-level ombudsperson to make sure you remain true to your vision, mission and core values on a daily basis (if you don’t, everybody will assume everybody else is paying enough attention and they’ll all be surprised when something ugly crawls out from under the rug)

- Which employees are the first to know if a gap begins growing between what you say you stand for and what your company is actually doing? It's not the senior executives—it's your line employees, the people closest to your customers. Smart CEOs take a random batch of employees to lunch every month or so: It's a time for the CEOs to listen, not preach; a time for employees to tell them if the company is truly walking the walk or just talking the talk.
- Conduct an annual social audit at the same time you compile your financial reports. Measure your performance against the core value benchmarks you built into your operations and strategies—and then trumpet your story to the world.

* * *

So what do you stand for? What are the three or four values you will never violate—no matter what? How will your social enterprise be remembered?

Too often, social enterprises (and other small businesses) wait too long to focus on what they truly value—and by that time their actions in the marketplace, their treatment of employees, and their involvement with local communities have already defined them. If you want to be remembered in a certain way 30 years from now, you need to begin acting that way today...and a set of core values shared by everybody in your company is a good place to start.

OCTOBER 18, 2012

CHAPTER 18

Achievers, agitators, negotiators and navigators...

MY FATHER'S FATHER, ADOLPH VALENTINE BOSCHÉE, CAME TO THE United States in the fall of 1884 at the age of seven. He and his relatives wintered in South Dakota, then migrated north. Young Adolph spent summer days collecting buffalo chips from the prairie for the family to use as construction material and burn for heat when the seasons changed. Snow piled so high during one of their first winters in McIntosh County, North Dakota, the family had to dig a tunnel beneath the massive drifts to get from their home to the barn to make sure their animals survived.

Adolph married Christina Krein December 11, 1900. He was 23, she 17. They farmed for a time before moving into the village of Zeeland in 1904. Then, in 1906, Adolph became part of an extraordinary team.

The village had been created in 1902 but did not become officially incorporated until 1906, when my grandfather and two others became the members of the first town Board.

It wasn't unusual for towns to spring up on the Dakota prairies—but there was something special about this one.

The members of the founding Board were of three different faiths: A Catholic (Frank Kraft), a Lutheran (Adolph Boschee) and a Jew (Adolph Feinstein).

No other town in the Dakotas could make such a claim to diversity, and for nearly three decades Zeeland thrived. In 1926 it had one of the highest per capita incomes of any city in the nation, most of it tied up in wheat.

Six years later the government located the rail station six miles away and Zeeland began to wither. By then, though, Adolph and Christina had produced 13 children, ten of whom lived to adulthood. My father

Arthur Reinhold was number seven and I spent glorious summer vacations in Zeeland from the late '40s thru the mid-'50s.

* * *

Teamwork is essential to the success of any social enterprise, and the people who study organizational development have known for years healthy organizations must concentrate simultaneously on four interlocking tasks: Productivity, process, employee satisfaction, and shared goals.

But that also means each company must have four different types of employees on its team. For the sake of convenience, let's give them names and describe their roles:

- ***Achievers*** are responsible for results—for getting things *done*
- ***Agitators*** are responsible for getting things done *right*
- ***Negotiators*** are responsible for resolving interpersonal conflicts
- ***Navigators*** are responsible for making sure everybody is rowing in the same direction

These are four very different personality types, with operating styles that are frequently at odds—and it can be helpful for CEOs and their employees to better understand why their fellow staff members act the way they do, especially when things go awry.

I first came across this organizational development model in 1976 when a group of psychologists gathered 50 of us in a single room. Without telling us why we were there, they immediately

gave us a written, multiple choice test. Based on our scores, we were then sent to different corners of the room.

At that point, the psychologists described each of the four operating styles—and we realized all the people in one corner were Achievers, all the people in another were Agitators, and so on...not one of us was in the wrong place!

Researchers have spent decades trying to analyze the psychological roots of the four different personality types, the cues to which they respond and how they behave as a result. Here's a very short summary of what they've come up with (and perhaps a way for you to recognize yourself and some of your colleagues):

- *Achievers* are constantly trying to meet the *explicit* expectations of others, and it's a perilous existence, filled with constant performance anxiety. They believe they must be *perfect*, because their self-esteem is entirely wrapped up in the opinions of others. They can do 99 things correctly, but make one mistake and they feel like a failure.

Because they need to be perfect, Achievers will frequently “act out” when their decisions are challenged: They become rule-driven, dogmatic, won't admit mistakes, ignore data and may appear “cold” and unapproachable.

What Achievers need more than anything else is recognition for the things they do well—and constant reassurance that one mistake does not make them a bad person.

- The primary mandate for *Agitators* is to meet the unspoken expectations of others. I don't understand how they know what those expectations might be—I'm an Achiever, not an Agitator, and tapping into the *implicit* expectations of others is extraordinarily difficult for people like me.

For example, I once served as second-in-command to an Agitator. He and I would attend the same Board meeting. When it ended, I'd come out with a long list of things the Board members had specifically asked us to do. But my boss would then spend the next hour telling me what was *really* going on in the room. He'd been focused on the unspoken messages passing among the Board members—messages completely imperceptible to me.

Don't ask me how he did it, but I've seen other Agitators do the same thing.

Of course, that's the upside of being an Agitator. The downside is that any time they believe the underlying structure of the company is being threatened—that people are ignoring necessary steps in the process—they feel overwhelmed and, in psychological terms, begin making “noise”: They displays mood swings, appear aimless, move to one pole or the other, seem to have no boundaries, and generally act out in ways that force others to pay attention to *them* and (hopefully) provide a distraction until their colleagues eventually realize something's been overlooked.

It's often personally painful and unproductive behavior for the Agitators themselves, but they're just doing their “job”—and what they need most from others is a recognition that something's gone amiss and needs to be fixed. They need to feel that the process has been honored and people are doing things the right way.

- *Negotiators* are less focused on getting things done or getting them done right. They're more concerned with the current work environment—especially the one-to-one relationships among the various employees.

Negotiators are generally easy-going and fun to be with—and often the ones who make others feel at home. But Negotiators are deeply threatened by interpersonal conflict, whether they're directly involved or not. They may sense conflict escalating between two of their colleagues, but, more often, because they are so accessible, they become a magnet for people who voice complaints or frustrations. When that happens, they try to help by placing things in a larger context, searching for perspectives, connections or opportunities that can resolve the conflicts.

But if they don't find those links, they begin to shut down their emotions, withdraw, and appear either ambivalent, uncaring or stubborn.

What they need are options, alternatives that can help them restore the fraying relationships. Without them, they feel confined and trapped.

- ***Navigators*** leave productivity, process and employee satisfaction to others. They are focused instead on the big picture, the company's overall purposes and goals. They think in terms of outcomes, total systems, conclusions. That perspective makes them invaluable because they help others keep their eyes on the prize rather than blinkered by daily conflicts and crises.

Navigators are typically impulsive and highly demonstrative, with warmth and closeness expressed openly. But when things begin to unravel and they believe the company's sense of purpose is imperiled, their natural traits become counter-productive. They rush to make sure everybody stays headed in the same direction—but frequently act prematurely and ignore important pieces of the puzzle, glossing over what seem to them just temporary problems. Then, when

things don't get better, their behavior becomes increasingly dramatic and their desperation mounts.

Fundamentally, Navigators are constantly seeking reassurance that “we’re all in this together”: They need to feel part of a group that has clear purposes and goals, with everybody working in harmony.

* * *

This sort of analysis may seem too touchy-feely for some of you, but how can it hurt to better understand what drives your colleagues and why they act the way they do? The four personality types differ in so many ways: How they define their responsibilities, how they make sense of things, how they measure their self-esteem, what it means when they “act out,” what they need to restore their sense of self-worth...

It's almost as if they live in different worlds—but worlds worth exploring in the service of a healthy social enterprise.

NOVEMBER 14, 2012

CHAPTER 19

A social enterprise born in scandal

MANY AMERICANS ARE WONDERING WHETHER GEN. DAVID PETRAEUS can redeem himself. One of the most admired men in the United States—leader of the country's military efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan and, more recently, head of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), he pursued an extramarital affair and it ruined his career. The story broke in early November and he resigned from the CIA November 9.

Fifty years ago, in a different nation, another man's behavior created a scandal that convulsed his entire country—and brought down the government. Yet he went on to build one of the most successful social enterprises in the world and, in the words of British newspaper columnist Simon Heffer, carried out “the most spectacular act of atonement in the history of our public life since Henry II abased himself after the murder of Thomas à Becket—and about the most spectacular act of redemption, too.”

This is his story.

* * *

He was living a fairy-tale life...

Born to an aristocratic family, educated at Harrow and Oxford, Fifth Baron of the late kingdom of Sardinia.

In 1940, at the age of 25, he became the youngest Member of Parliament (MP) in the House of Commons—and one of 30 Conservative MPs who joined with the Labour Party to bring down the government of Neville Chamberlain and pave the way for Winston Churchill's wartime ascension.

He landed in Normandy on D-Day with an armored brigade and fought in the fierce battles that followed. He was present

when the Germans surrendered in Italy, later became Brigadier and Chief of Staff for the British forces serving under General Douglas MacArthur in post-war Japan. In his spare time he drew on an undergraduate flair for amateur theatricals by writing and producing a hit musical.

In 1950 he returned to Parliament as MP for Stratford-on-Avon, and in 1954 he married the famous British actress Valerie Hobson, whom he met while she was playing the lead in *The King and I* at Drury Lane Theatre. He and his wife quickly became one of the most glamorous couples in London society.

In 1957 he became Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and in 1960 Secretary of State for War—and was widely expected to eventually become Foreign Secretary or Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Then, in 1960, he went to a garden party...and launched a chain of events that led to Britain's greatest political scandal of the 20th century.

* * *

Jack Profumo and his wife had been invited by Lord Waldorf Astor to spend a weekend on his estate at Cliveden in Buckinghamshire. Lord Astor had rented a cottage on the estate to Stephen Ward, a 47-year-old osteopath, socialite and collector of influential friends. Ward's client list included Churchill, Sir Anthony Eden and Frank Sinatra.

But Ward also had a darker side. He specialized in supplying call girls—and one of them came with him that weekend. Her name was Christine Keeler.

Profumo first set eyes on Keeler when she stepped naked from Lord Astor's swimming pool after Ward snatched off her bathing suit. She left Cliveden that weekend with Yevgeny Ivanov, a Soviet

naval attaché and friend of Ward, but Profumo asked Ward for Keeler's telephone number and soon began an affair that lasted several months.

But Keeler was also sleeping with Ivanov. British Intelligence suspected he was a KGB agent and warned Profumo, who immediately ended his relationship with Keeler and tried to distance himself from the people at Cliveden.

It didn't work. Rumors about the affair refused to die and eventually became a political nightmare. Things came to a head during a House of Commons session on a March evening in 1963 when a Labour Party MP pointedly asked Prime Minister Harold Macmillan whether the Secretary of State for War had been involved with Christine Keeler.

His Conservative Party colleagues roused Profumo from bed in the middle of the night. He denied having the affair and, the next day, with the Prime Minister sitting beside him, he told the assembled MPs there had been "no impropriety whatsoever" in his relationship with Keeler.

He maintained his denials for three months, but Stephen Ward was facing trial for living off immoral earnings and sought to gain favor with the courts. He wrote to Macmillan and the opposition leader, Harold Wilson, giving his version of events. And it was rumored Christine Keeler had made a series of taped confessions revealing the affair.

In early June, during a vacation trip to Venice, Profumo blurted the truth to his wife over lunch. "Oh, darling," she said, "we must go home as soon as we can and face up to it." On June 5, in a stunning reversal, he resigned from the government and also from Parliament. In his letter of resignation to Macmillan he expressed "deep remorse" at the embarrassment he had caused his colleagues and constituents.

The Labour Party seized on the scandal as evidence of sleaze at the top, and the satirists loved every minute of it. One widely repeated limerick ran:

*“Oh what have you done?” said Christine.
“You’ve disrupted the Party machine.
To lie in the nude is not very rude,
But to lie in the House is obscene.”*

Lying for political purposes is almost *de rigueur* today in the United Kingdom and the United States, but in the Cold War world of 1963 Profumo’s liaison with a woman linked to a possible Russian spy rocked the nation. The affair triggered a crisis of confidence in Macmillan’s leadership and brought down the government. For years, many of his former colleagues shunned Profumo, blaming him for the decline of the Conservatives during the 1960s.

Stephen Ward committed suicide. Christine Keeler went to jail for nine months because of unrelated perjury charges.

And Jack Profumo disappeared from public view.

* * *

Fast forward 35 years to the Sheraton Hotel in downtown Chicago. I had been invited to conduct an afternoon workshop at an international conference of settlement houses sponsored by the Jane Addams Hull House Association of Chicago and Toynbee Hall of London. The workshop had gone well and I was decompressing in my hotel room when the telephone rang.

It was Tony Wagner, a long-time friend and the veteran head of Pillsbury United Communities, the second largest nonprofit in Min-

neapolis/St. Paul. A few years later, Tony would become President of the International Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers.

But, on this day, he was facing a mini-crisis. Illinois Gov. Jim Edgar had agreed to deliver the keynote address that would close the conference the next evening—but political stirrings in the state capital had caused him to cancel. Would I be willing to take his place?

I drew a deep breath and said I'd be happy to do so—then hurriedly began outlining the speech.

There were more than 300 people at the closing banquet the next evening, leaders of the settlement house movement from all over the world. I spent most of the dinner chatting with people at the head table and mentally rehearsing my speech.

But, as dessert was being served, I glanced at the program for the evening and realized something special would be taking place before my speech.

An awards ceremony.

For Jack Profumo...

* * *

"It isn't what happens to a man, it's what he does with it that matters." (Valerie Hobson)

A few days after he submitted his letter of resignation to Prime Minister Macmillan, Jack Profumo arrived at the door of Toynbee Hall and asked if there was anything he could do to help.

Toynbee Hall is not a posh person's charity. It's located in one of London's roughest and most deprived areas, backing onto the street where Jack the Ripper killed his last victim five years after an Anglican priest and his wife established Toynbee Hall as a settlement house in 1873. Over the past few decades, it has been a center for social reform, popularized legal aid throughout England, became the single biggest provider of adult education in

the country, and recruited the nation's largest group of volunteers. Today, in what is now primarily a Bangladeshi community, it helps the very young, the very old and anyone in between, including programs addressing community safety, prostitution, housing, domestic violence and education. The organization has spawned imitators from Finland to South Korea.

But in 1963, when Jack Profumo began his journey of redemption, the center had just five staff and 22 volunteers.

He cleaned toilets, washed dishes in the kitchen, danced with lonely elderly ladies at the Hall's social events. Made himself useful. And, as time went by, the organization's senior executive finally took him aside. "Look," he said, "we can always find somebody to clean the toilets. We need you to help us raise money."

Profumo tackled fundraising armed with a bulging address book of contacts, and over the years he persuaded many of the people in his book to lend their time and money to Toynbee Hall. He kept the settlement afloat—and more. He founded a low-income housing association, introduced an after-care unit for ex-offenders, built a family center for those with learning difficulties. He served as Chairman of the Board from 1982 to 1985, and the people at Toynbee Hall still marvel at "the twinkle in his eye" and his ability to talk to anyone without condescension.

In 1995, in a signal to the country of the esteem in which he was held, Profumo was seated next to the Queen at the head table during Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's 70th birthday celebration.

And by the time of the awards dinner in Chicago in 1998, he was the organization's longest-serving volunteer—and Toynbee Hall had become known as "the house that Jack built."

His friend Jim Thomson, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, once said about the scandal, "No one judges Jack Profumo more harshly

than he does himself. He says he has never known a day since it happened when he has not felt real shame.”

But he accepted responsibility for his mistake. In a 2006 editorial entitled “Profumo’s salvation,” the *Telegraph*, one of Britain’s leading newspapers, had this to say about his career:

“As a man of honour, John Profumo understood that his offence of lying to his wife (and) his Cabinet colleagues...was immense. And so he acted decisively when he admitted his deceit in June 1963. Unlike so many politicians today, he did not prevaricate, or seek sympathy, or claim he was protecting his family by denying a brief affair with Christine Keeler. He did not seek to strike a bargain to turn his disgrace into a ‘revolving door’ resignation, with a promise of a swift return to the front benches. Profumo resigned, as a member and an MP, withdrew from public life and concentrated on good works in the East End of London. He did this not because he wanted to look good, but because he knew he had behaved badly. And in so doing, he showed he understood the meaning of atonement, and did far more good for his fellow man than any politician of his time.”

Profumo never spoke publicly about the events of the early 1960s. He was devastated by the end of his political career, but he never moaned in public, never tried to excuse or defend himself.

But he did do something far more important—and when he passed away in early 2006, all England mourned.

* * *

The rest of the evening passed in a blur. My speech went well and my wife Linda and I celebrated with Tony and his wife Marie.

But all that night, and for many days afterward, I found myself thinking about a man who fell from the very heights—and only then began his life’s work.

If a man like Jack Profumo could face the facts, admit his mistakes, pick himself up and try again—then why should any of us fear to do the same?

We all make mistakes. None of us is immune. But it doesn't matter how flawed we are—there is still so much we can give. As novelist James Michener once wrote, "Character consists of what you do on the third and fourth tries."

Ultimately, what matters is what we do next. And Jack Profumo did "next" better than most.

DECEMBER 12, 2012

CHAPTER 20

The wrong perspective

YOU PROBABLY KNOW VERY LITTLE ABOUT BOB COUSY, ESPECIALLY IF you're under the age of 40 or so.

He was an NCAA All-American basketball player three times in the late 1940s and a member of the Boston Celtics from 1950 to 1963. Those of us who saw him play considered him a wizard with his behind-the-back and no-look passes. During his first 11 seasons, he led the league in assists eight straight times and introduced a new blend of ball-handling and passing skills that drew comparisons to Houdini—and he essentially invented the point guard position inherited by the likes of Magic Johnson and Steve Nash. In Boston, he is still introduced today as “Mr. Basketball.”

Cousy was an NBA All-Star 13 times, Most Valuable Player in 1957, and field general for six NBA champions. He was named to the league's 25th and 35th Anniversary teams and in 1996 to its 50th Anniversary All-Time Team, one of only four players selected for all three teams.

So you would think Bob Cousy had few regrets about his playing days...

* * *

As a teenager, I admired Cousy as a player, even though his Celtics always seemed to whip my beloved Lakers (first in my home town Minneapolis and then when they moved to Los Angeles). But I never really knew much about him as a person and never gave him much thought over the years.

Then, during the holidays, I found myself reading Frank Deford's memoir *Over Time: My Life as a Sportswriter*. Deford writes at length about the racism that abounded in professional

sports during the '50s and '60s, and then describes an interview in Cousy's home at the turn of the century:

“Now, Cousy had been an absolute prince among men to his African-American teammates. He was one player who didn't have to be taught anything about brotherhood. Indeed, in 1950, when Chuck Cooper, the first black player to be drafted by the NBA, joined the Celtics, Cousy immediately befriended him and looked after him. When the Celtics were playing an exhibition in North Carolina and Cooper wasn't permitted to stay in the team hotel, he decided to return to Boston. So Cousy, who was just a rookie himself, declared that he would skip the game, too, and, instead, he rode the train north with Cooper.

“And so we were talking about that time, when Bob suddenly stopped. Then he began to cry, softly at first, and then with really hard, deep sobs. ‘Bob?’ I said. ‘Bob, what is it?’

“He finally got hold of himself, but the tears were still coming some when he said, ‘It's just that I should have done so much more. I've never forgotten that. I should have done more.’ He who had done so much.”

But this isn't an essay about how you and I should do more with whatever time we have left. We all know that. That's why we've embraced the world of social enterprise.

No, this is just the opposite. This is a plea for you to remember what you *have* accomplished, not what you've failed to do. But time recedes, I know—and it's difficult to fully comprehend your impact on others, especially as you grow older and the years begin to slip away...

My friend John Williamson died December 31, 1990, at the age of 48.

He earned a doctorate in education and organizational development from Harvard, worked as a counselor in the Pacific Northwest, and quickly established a national reputation as a leader in the field of educational reform. He eventually became a policy analyst for the Rand Corporation, director of planning and policy development for the National Institute of Education, and in 1980 Senior Vice President of Wilson Learning Corporation in Minneapolis. For the next ten years he led the company's worldwide marketing, product direction and new business development (today's client list has grown to more than 2,000 organizations in 45 countries). He was an articulate spokesperson for lifelong learning, human potential and new educational technologies, and he mingled freely with the world's foremost thinkers about change and leadership.

I served with John for years on the Board of Directors for the Montessori School our daughters attended in Minneapolis. My youngest daughter Jessica and his daughter Erin were classmates and close friends. John rarely spoke about his life before Wilson Learning, and I had only a dim understanding of his national stature.

Then came the diagnosis. We all thought it was Bell's Palsy, a weakness or paralysis of the muscles on one side of the face. It can appear quite suddenly, sometimes overnight, as it did with John, but the effects typically resolve completely in a matter of months.

That didn't happen with John. It wasn't Bell's Palsy. It was cancer.

John faced his diagnosis with the same courage he had nurtured in others with his counseling and with his abiding interest in the world around him. He had once backpacked in Africa and befriended the Maasai—and the last time I saw him, in his bed at a hospice, all he wanted to talk about was my trip to Russia:

How was it over there? What were the people like? How were they adapting to *perestroika*?

What remains with me today, though, more than ever as I age, is the gift John received from a group of people he had touched during his life, people from all over the country, many he hadn't heard from in years.

It arrived at his bedside, a simple note and a large glass bowl about a foot wide and a foot deep. Inside the bowl were tiny slips of paper, each bearing the name of a person who wanted John to know he'd made a difference in his or her life. The note reminded him that all he needed to do if he ever thought he hadn't done enough was reach into the bowl...

I'm sure John wished he had done even more to help others. We all do. But sometimes it takes a very long time to see the fruits of our labors. Often we *never* see them. Yet the seeds we plant *do* sprout, even in our absence...

Do not forget that.

Please.

Do not forget.

You *have* made a difference. Don't fret about your mistakes or oversights. Accept them. Recognize them. Learn from them.

And remember that the people you once aided are now assisting others who in turn will be there with a helping hand years from now, long after you're gone.

John Williamson's friends made sure he knew that before he left us...

I want to make sure *you* remember it, every day.

JANUARY 17, 2013

CHAPTER 21

The incinerators at Dachau...

I WAS INTERVIEWED LAST MONTH BY A REPORTER FOR AN ARTICLE published online February 8 by my alma mater, the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Minnesota—and her questions caused me to re-trace my journey into the world of social enterprise. Here’s a partial transcript:

I read your “Aching to Change the World” piece (chapter 14 in this book), about getting ready to go to India as a Peace Corps Volunteer in 1968. What drew you to enter the Corps?

I was one of the first three men in my platoon to qualify on the rifle range. Me! An English major from the suburbs. How the hell did that happen? Yeah, I was book smart, all right, but I wasn’t life smart, and the war in Vietnam spooked me. So I joined the Army Reserves to escape from the draft. I went through basic training at Ft. Leonard Wood in the spring of ‘67—and by the time I’d finished I’d become a crack shot and a conscientious objector. But I had a cushy job as company clerk at Ft. Snelling two days a month, and I’d heard horror stories about “weekend warriors” refusing to bear arms, so I vacillated.

Then, three months later, everything changed as I stared into the blackened depths of the incinerators at Dachau. It was visceral, and I felt the presence of evil again at the Anne Frank house in Amsterdam two weeks later. I’ve never been the same. I returned from a five-week journey through Europe determined to do *something* to fight back non-violently. I pored through the shelves of Army Regulations during my down time as company clerk and discovered a loophole: Joining the Peace Corps could

get me an honorable discharge! I'd be eligible for the draft two years later—but I didn't care. I knew I'd refuse to go.

How did the Peace Corps idealist and humanities major/M.A. grad transition into the business world? You coordinated one of the first conferences in the field of social enterprise, the “Social Needs and Business Opportunities International Conference,” in 1982. How did you hear about and get involved in a movement that was just getting started? What attracted you to this nascent field?

Bill Norris founded Control Data Corporation in 1957 and within ten years led it to dominance in the computer industry. But the race riots of 1967 shocked him. Cities were burning, mobs rioting and looting, even in Minneapolis, the company's headquarters.

What he did next helped change the course of business history: He urged CEOs to “address the major unmet needs of society as profitable business opportunities” and launched an array of social enterprises fueled by computer technology and targeted at economic development, health care, education and dozens of other social needs.

I started working as a journalist at age 16, continued nearly full-time during my undergraduate years, and resumed when I returned from India. In the mid-1970s I began hearing about Norris—and by 1979 I was one of his personal aides. His business strategy was heresy to Wall Street, but the media loved it, and invitations to speak poured in from all over the world.

During the five years I traveled with him, I helped him prepare and deliver more than 300 speeches—to government leaders, corporate executives, international financiers—and arranged interviews with more than 100 major newspapers, magazines and

television programs. I worked 90-hour weeks just to keep pace, but he never slowed.

During those same years, management guru Peter Drucker began emphasizing the concept of “doing good by doing well” and became the keynoter at the 1982 international conference I organized for Norris. More than 250 CEOs attended. Two years later I worked with Control Data and a dozen other companies as they designed and funded a new organization to help individuals and nonprofits build sustainable, social purpose businesses. We launched what eventually became The National Center for Social Entrepreneurs. I became the first employee and stayed for 16 years, the last eight as CEO.

What do you like about being a consultant, versus sticking with a single organization and leading its growth over time?

In my experience, there are three different types of leaders: Innovators, entrepreneurs and professional managers (*see chapter 13*). All three are needed in the evolution of a healthy organization, but at different times, and rarely does an individual excel in more than one of the three areas.

Understanding that reality has been one of the most important and painful lessons learned by people in the nonprofit and business sectors. No other subject has caused such consternation among my audiences during the past 30 years, whether I’ve been in Nashville, Copenhagen, Johannesburg or Tokyo. People frequently approach me after one of my presentations and tell me “*That’s* why it’s not working at my organization—we have the wrong people in the wrong jobs!”...or, more emotionally, “*That’s* why it’s not working for *me!*”

I discovered long ago I was an innovator—and I’m not really a consultant. I’m more of a coach, and I do most of my work upstream. My job has been to educate and motivate individuals and

organizations about social enterprise. I give speeches about the promises and the perils, describe the global rise of the movement, conduct retreats for Boards and executive teams, do what my friends in the U.K. call “surgeries” (45-minute sessions with individual social enterprises discussing whatever issues are weighing them down) and work with an ever-growing number of young people entering the field.

You earned your English degree in 1966. How do the skills you learned in the study of literature support what you do? If you were an undergraduate today, with an interest in social entrepreneurship, would you choose Carlson Business School instead of the College of Liberal Arts?

I majored in English but specialized in ancient and modern drama, with a minor in humanities and half-minors in classics and philosophy. I frequently begin presentations by claiming I have two degrees that have been especially valuable during my business career. When I flash the words “English Literature” and “Comparative Literature” on the screen the audience bursts out laughing.

But...

Those years studying literature *have* been invaluable. When I ask people in the nonprofit and social enterprise sectors why they do what they do, it *always* comes down to values...the same subtext that ripples through *Death of a Salesman*, *An Essay on Man*, *Antigone* and *No Exit*. I once helped a community arts organization articulate its core values. Here’s what the Board and staff considered most important: “For many people, the liberating power of the arts is separated from daily life, and the potential of the arts to address social issues is unrealized: *We believe participation in the arts is fundamental to the life of every individual and community.*”

Using business strategies to address social needs—merging the profit motive with moral imperatives—has turned out to be my life’s work, and if I had to choose today I’d pursue a double major at CLA and Carlson.

You graduated the same year as English major Garrison Keillor, who in 2011 announced he would retire from *A Prairie Home Companion* and in 2012 decided he would not. Are you similarly ambivalent?

My goal for whatever time remains is to help nurture the next generation of social entrepreneurs.

Not long ago in Dallas I was asked to speak to roughly 200 7th and 8th grade students about the Peace Corps and social enterprise. These were mostly minority kids on scholarship at an international Montessori school—and they wouldn’t let me leave! They bombarded me with questions, started hooting and hollering and leaping on their chairs when the Principal tried to end the session—and finally the only thing I could do was head up the aisle, slapping hands as I went, and disappear into the parking lot.

Those kinds of young people, from junior high to graduate school, are the next wave of social enterprise, and I find them everywhere. I served four years as Board Chair for SAGE, which sponsors high school social entrepreneurs in 20 countries. During the past five years I’ve been teaching graduate courses in social enterprise, first as a visiting professor at Carnegie Mellon and now as an adjunct professor at Pepperdine. I’ve done guest lectures in graduate and undergraduate classes all over the world.

My generation may have helped jump-start the social enterprise movement and a younger generation that came of age in the ‘80s and ‘90s is helping it mature, but the next generation is waiting impatiently to join them, and they’re the ones I plan to spend

my time with whenever possible, for as long as I can. Because sometimes all it takes to galvanize young people is to give them a glimpse of something new—and then get out of their way!

FEBRUARY 21, 2013

CHAPTER 22

Lessons from a Hollywood movie...

ACTOR WILLIAM HURT STARRED IN A 1991 MOVIE CALLED THE DOCTOR, freely based on Dr. Edward Rosenbaum's 1988 book A Taste of My Own Medicine. He plays Jack McKee, an arrogant, prominent heart surgeon with a terrible bedside manner who seems to have it all—he's successful, he's rich, and he's supremely self-confident...until he's diagnosed with throat cancer. Suddenly his world is overturned: He becomes the patient, not the doctor.

He becomes the customer...

* * *

In her column in a British business magazine a few years ago, Jane Simms reported that CEOs rank customer service above product innovation, sales performance and regulatory compliance as their top priority.

But what struck me most was her recipe for success. "The best way to improve customer service," she wrote, "is not to invest in expensive research techniques or pointless CRM systems, but *to experience the company and its products and services as a customer would.*" Referring to the senior executives for one of England's largest rail companies, she wrote: "How many have recently tried to buy a standard-class train ticket? Because if they did, they would realize what a complex and expensive nightmare that particular exercise has become."

Yes, we all agree customer service is important. After all, without customers, where would we be? But how many of us genuinely grasp what type of service customers want? More importantly,

how many of us truly understand the obstacles customers face when they try to get it?

As we used to say back in my corporate days, customer service starts on the street, not in the tower. By that we meant too many senior executives haul up the drawbridge and retreat to their corner offices, rarely venturing beyond the moat. In the worst cases—and I’ve lived them—the senior execs refuse to listen to street-level employees who try to convince them their products and services simply aren’t meeting the needs of their customers.

Do *you* know which aspects of your social enterprise’s product or service delivery systems are the most comforting to your customers? The most discomfiting? Have you ever hired “mystery” customers to explore the positives and the pitfalls embedded in your product and service delivery process?

More to the point, have *you* ever decided to become a customer for a day? Or a week? Or to experience a customer relationship from beginning to end—from the brochure to the phone call to the initial visit to the actual purchase decision to the customer satisfaction follow-up and beyond?

Needless to say, *The Doctor* being a Hollywood movie, Jack McKee eventually realizes there’s more to being a doctor than surgery, prescriptions and a brisk bedside manner.

From the moment he discovers after a party that he’s coughing blood onto the shirt of his tuxedo, Dr. McKee is plunged into the underworld of his profession. The movie takes a cold-hearted, clinical view of the medical routines he encounters once he’s diagnosed with throat cancer and begins to collide with all the joys of a hospital stay.

At one point he rails at the procedures that force him to cool his heels waiting for further treatment. He finally complains to a hospital worker that he’s been a surgeon at the hospital for 11

years. The indifferent reply? “Then you should know all about filling out forms.”

At the end of the movie, he survives an operation and returns to work cancer-free—but with a changed appreciation for the environment in which he operates. He orders the five astonished young interns under his supervision to become patients themselves. Each is assigned an imaginary illness, and the first step they must take (over their indignant protests) is to strip off their clothes and don that ridiculous hospital gown that ties in the back in two places but still leaves us exposed.

He then forces the interns to undergo for a week all the mysterious tests we as patients know so well, all the hurried visits from busy and distracted doctors, all the wonderful food, all the middle of the night wake-up calls for seemingly inconsequential reasons, all the cheerful but distant smiles from harried nurses who’ve just come on shift and aren’t entirely sure why we’re taking up space (I’ve been there, believe me).

* * *

So, how many of you have done anything more than conduct rudimentary customer service surveys or talked formally or informally with a few customers? How many of you have actually become customers for your own social enterprises?

Try it. You might not like it.

MARCH 19, 2013

CHAPTER 23

Another one bites the dust...

THE HEADLINES AND ANALYSES FILLED THE BUSINESS PAGES LAST week: “A slow motion train wreck anyone should have seen coming” (The Wall Street Journal), “worries mounting about the company’s future” (CNN), “too much change too quickly” (Forbes), “visionary’s blind spot” (The Dallas Morning News)...

* * *

Retail giant J. C. Penney fired CEO Ron Johnson just 17 months after luring him away from Apple. Johnson tried to reinvent the concept of a department store by creating free-standing specialty shops inside the store and eliminating Penney’s historical reliance on constant discounts and coupons.

But he forgot a fundamental principle of Business 101: “Always start with *them!*”

He told *Harvard Business Review* shortly after he took over at Penney: “You’ve got to trust your intuition much more than you trust the data.... you can’t follow the customer. You’ve got to lead your customers...even before they know what they want.”

In other words, he was making critical changes without testing their potential, relying on “market push” instead of “market pull.” A former Penney’s CEO spotted the danger signs early and warned the Board of Directors last summer it should test the new concepts before rolling them out. Nobody listened. Johnson and his team badly misjudged the mass defection of bargain shoppers once Penney abandoned discounts and couponing in favor of low everyday prices. Revenue fell 25 per cent during 2012 and even more during the holidays. Losses for the year reached nearly \$1 billion.

* * *

The sad truth is that the men and women who run major corporations are no smarter (or dumber) than the people who run social enterprises. Here are a few legendary examples:

- **THE WRONG NAME:** In 1968, Pillsbury spent \$5 million to test a new instant breakfast (that's \$33 million in current dollars). The product failed because in those days kids ages five to seven did NOT like instant breakfast—yet Pillsbury gave the product a name that appealed only to them—Gorilla Milk—not the target market of people ages 15 to 30.
- **THE WRONG PRODUCT DESIGN:** In 1963, General Foods spent \$15 million (more than \$114 million today) on a national test market for Post cereals containing freeze-dried fruit—little black thingees that would re-constitute as raspberries, strawberries or bananas. *Everything* went wrong. The cereal became soggy by the time the fruit reconstituted, the milk changed color, and after two or three months on the shelf the fruit took on the consistency of jawbreakers.
- **THE WRONG TIMING:** In 1975, RCA invested \$250 million (nearly \$1.1 billion today) developing and testing a revolutionary new device called the Selecta-vision Videodisc Player. All you had to do to watch a movie was slide in a 300 mm disc that looked like an LP; each side of the disc held 60 minutes of video. Trouble was, there weren't many discs around to be played—and, when they were, they had to be played

straight through...no fast-forwarding. Nobody at the company saw the VCRs coming and the product imploded. Of course, today, DVDs and Blu-rays are everywhere, but the RCA product is only available as a collectible.

- **THE WRONG TEST MARKET:** Del Monte once tried to launch a new type of barbecue ketchup containing finely chopped onions. The company did a thorough test market, liked the results, and confidently began mass production. But the product still failed because it had been tested on adults. Who uses the most ketchup? Kids! And kids hate onions!

Apparently, graduate degrees in business and even success at another company are no guarantees CEOs are infallible. When the announcement came out last week that Johnson had been fired by J.C. Penney, *The Dallas Morning News* quickly assembled an “Ouster Hall of Fame” from various wire services that featured six other people who’d also been quickly axed from the top job at major corporations. The reasons differed...but their strategic mistakes offer cautionary tales for social enterprises large and small:

- *Carol Bartz, Yahoo*—who focused on cost-cutting and shaking up her management team rather than paying attention to the rapid expansion of the online ad market
- *Leo Apotheker, Hewlett-Packard*—who fumbled stakeholder relations, complained about his predecessor, and guided the company into a disastrous acquisition...he was gone in 11 months

- *Charles Conaway, Kmart*—who tried to compete with Wal-Mart on price and focused on cheap groceries rather than the company's exclusive Martha Stewart Brand...he was also accused of misleading investors about Kmart's financial problems before it sank into bankruptcy
- *Bob Nardelli, Chrysler*—the former CEO of Home Depot who had zero experience in the complex world of auto manufacturing...instead of investing to improve Chrysler's substandard lineup, he focused on cutting jobs and shutting down plants—and alienated suppliers and dealers when he announced plans to close dealerships and stopped financing leases...he, too, led his company into bankruptcy
- *Craig Herkert, Supervalu*—a former high-ranking Wal-Mart exec who tried to rescue one of the country's biggest grocery store operators as it struggled with growing competition from big-box retailers, drugstores and dollar stores...he tried to re-position Supervalu as a neighborhood store and emphasized low prices, but it didn't work and the company later sold five of its major chains and downsized dramatically...
- *Kevin Rollins, Dell*—who overpromised by predicting he could double the company's \$40 billion in sales and instead wound up leading a recall of more than four million potentially flammable notebook batteries and having the federal government scrutinize the company's accounting practices

* * *

It's not as if I'm flawless myself. Regular readers of these essays may recall the embarrassing tale of my failure as an entrepreneur in California in 1975 (see chapter 13). My partners and I made the same mistake as Ron Johnson at Penney's: We thought our new mousetrap was all we needed. But the mice weren't interested.

APRIL 18, 2013

CHAPTER 24

Keeping it simple...

IT WAS OCTOBER 1967 AND MY FIRST TRIP TO LONDON. I SPENT AN entire day rushing from one theatre to another buying tickets, then saw 16 plays in nine days.

Nothing astonished me more than a single moment at the Aldwych Theatre...

Twice that year, the Royal Shakespeare Company gave a benefit performance, once in Stratford-upon-Avon, Shakespeare's birthplace, and once at the Aldwych. Seven actors in formal dress, seated in a semi-circle facing the audience, performed 35 scenes from 23 Shakespeare plays.

Among the players were Paul Scofield (who had just won an Oscar as Best Actor for his role as Sir Thomas More in the movie A Man for All Seasons); Peggy Ashcroft (who won an Oscar in 1984 for Best Supporting Actress in A Passage to India); Ian Richardson (later the Machiavellian politician Francis Urquhart in the BBC's immensely popular international trilogy House of Cards); Dorothy Tutin (four-time winner of Britain's most prestigious theatrical awards); and John Gielgud, one of the few who has won Oscar, Emmy, Grammy and Tony Awards—and a man widely recognized as THE Hamlet of his generation for his performance in 1937.

It fell to Gielgud to play King Lear waking on the heath, a ruined man, his daughter Cordelia kneeling at his feet.

Gielgud rose from his chair, carried it downstage center and placed it at a right angle to the audience. He seated himself in the chair, leaned his head on his shoulder, and stared at the audience. Ashcroft knelt before him, her face buried in his lap.

Gielgud paused, then closed his eyes. A moment passed—and when he opened them again, Gielgud had disappeared...

It was breathtaking...

* * *

NPR reporter Scott Simon discovered in 2011 that actor Frank Langella pasted three quotes on the walls of every dressing room he occupied, including this one: “*The cathartic possibility of the theater needs nothing more than the actor and the stage.*”

Langella rose to movie prominence in 1970 in *The Twelve Chairs* and *Diary of a Mad Housewife* and has appeared in more than 30 movies since then, but he’s spent most of his life in the theatre. He’s acted in more than 75 plays, won four Tony Awards, and saw two of them transfer to film: *Dracula* in 1979 and *Frost/Nixon* in 2008.

Simon saw the quote and agreed. “Who needs the smoke, bells and whistles of modern theatrical productions?” he asked. “They can get in the way of an audience’s experience.” But Langella went further: “You can *have* theater with all those things,” he said, “but you can’t have the cathartic possibility of theater—that thing that lifts you beyond yourself as an audience member. You really just need the platform and the actor, another piece of humanity, sharing his humanity with the audience.”

You really just need John Gielgud and a chair...

* * *

The concept of catharsis has been with us since Aristotle. Each of us who’s seen a great play or a great movie has felt its power.

But as I listened to Simon’s interview and recalled my evening with Gielgud, it seemed to me Langella was also talking about something vitally important to social enterprises.

We need to tell our stories more effectively. Far too many of us surround our core services and products with bells and whistles that either distract or exhaust our stakeholders. We ramble and

embellish and tap-dance—and by the time we finish, everyone’s drifted away.

We need to strip away unnecessary words and images and find a way to tell powerful, emotional stories that open hearts and wallets. But before we can even decide what story to tell, we must answer four questions:

- *Who* are we trying to convince?
- What do we want them to *do*?
- What do they have to *believe* before they will do it?
- What do they believe *now*?

Our story must close the gap between what our stakeholders believe now and what we need them to believe before they will do what we want them to do. We are battling for a share of their minds—and reality doesn’t matter. We need to be first in their minds, even if we’re not first in the marketplace—and we don’t even have to be better. We just have to be first.

And to get there we need to keep it simple...

* * *

*I’ve seen hundreds of plays since that magical night in London nearly 50 years ago. Some were awful, most were enjoyable, and a few were memorable. The closest I’ve come to an experience similar to the one at the Aldwych occurred in New York in 1999 when my wife and I saw Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman*, perhaps the greatest American play of the 20th century.*

Linda didn't want to go. She'd already seen Brian Dennehy in two previous plays and hadn't been impressed. But I cajoled her and we found seats in the balcony, quite a distance from the stage.

The play is about an aging traveling salesman who recognizes the emptiness of his life and tries to fix it. He's about to lose his job, he can't pay his bills, and his sons don't respect him. He desperately wants to retain his dignity and his sense of self—and his desolation escalates until it's almost unbearable. When Dennehy finally moved to the side of the stage during the final moments and bellowed into the darkness "MY NAME IS WILLY LOMAN!!!" it was the most cathartic experience Linda and I have ever shared in a theatre. We were trembling in the silence that followed...

And all it took was an actor and a stage...

MAY 16, 2013

CHAPTER 25

The four faces of the future...

THIS ALL HAPPENED IN THE DAYS BEFORE BARRY BONDS BEGAN TRANSFORMING his body with steroids.

He was already a premiere major league baseball player, feared as a power hitter who could also hit for average, had a laser for a throwing arm and enough speed to steal 350 bases during his first ten years in the majors. He was a complete player and one of the best in the history of the game.

My daughter Liz and I arrived in San Francisco during one of our summer stadium tours in the mid-'90s. It was August 7, 1996, and the Giants were playing the Cincinnati Reds. We had already been to games in San Diego, Los Angeles and Anaheim and would finish our trip the next day in Oakland.

Bonds hit his 31st homer of the season the day before we saw him play. On the morning of the game we attended, The San Francisco Chronicle quoted Ray Knight, the manager of the Reds, who said he would no longer pitch to Bonds. He would order his pitchers to walk him every time—he wasn't going to take the chance of Bonds unleashing another home run.

Sure enough, before a packed house in Candlestick Park that afternoon, the Reds intentionally walked Bonds the first three times he came to the plate.

But then the Giants loaded the bases with two outs in the bottom of the sixth, with Bonds coming to bat. Liz and I looked at each other and wondered what would happen next. There was nowhere to put him. Reds pitcher Scott Service couldn't walk Bonds intentionally or it would force in a run. He had to pitch to him.

Bonds hit Service's fifth pitch over the centerfield fence for a grand-slam homer.

* * *

The Cycle of Change

Some things are inevitable, as Ray Knight learned, and change is one of them. No matter how large or small, old or young your social enterprise might be, change is a constant. Right now, something is dying and something else is emerging.

One way to keep track of the changes is to gaze in four directions at once, as Terry Deal, Allan Kennedy and Carol Pine recommended a few years ago during their pioneering work investigating corporate cultures and the “cycle of change”:

- *Look outward:* To explore your business environment, customer needs, opportunities and threats
- *Look backward:* To understand your history and traditions
- *Look inward:* To honor your values, identify your strengths and weaknesses, and perfect your key processes
- *Look forward:* Guided by your vision, mission, core values and long-term goals

Deal, Kennedy and Pine also suggested that the cycle of change had four phases—and therefore a series of questions every organization should be asking every day about its products, services and programs:

- What has ended (or died)?
- What is ending (or dying?)

- What is emerging?
- What is alive and well?

Unless those four questions are addressed—and in a timely fashion—they can strain and rupture the organization, especially the first two.

So: What parts of your social enterprise are about to become unnecessary, extinct, moot—or have already withered? You can choose not to look or to notice, but sooner or later you'll be forced to face the truth—and probably the consequences.

If the surrounding circumstances are closing in, you can avoid the repercussions for only so long. “Fate” may arrive in the guise of a competitor (as it did for the Cincinnati Reds) or simply be a flaw within your social enterprise that has been papered over successfully for months or years. But eventually...

So, what should you do with the products, services and programs in each of the four phases? Here is what Deal, Kennedy and Pine suggest:

- Practices and values that have outlived their usefulness and are now **DEAD** can be recognized as past and respectfully placed in the organization's evolving history
- Policies or patterns that are **DECLINING or DYING** need respect to make their transition comfortable
- New, **EMERGING** initiatives, philosophies and practices need nurturing, support and resources
- Elements of the organization that are **ALIVE AND WELL** need recognition, celebration and resources

“Tightrope Walkers”

But how can you tell whether something is dead, dying, emerging or thriving? How do you really know?

Fortunately, for social enterprises, there are two intersecting benchmarks: Social impact and financial viability. Maintaining an appropriate balance between them is the *sine qua non* of social enterprise. Dr. David Rendall calls social entrepreneurs “tightrope walkers” because they are constantly hovering in mid-air between their social purpose and marketplace realities.

The definition of “appropriate” varies from company to company, but the existence of a double bottom line that emphasizes both social and financial returns forces social enterprises to constantly make difficult decisions about which products and services to offer and which market segments to pursue.

The process is never more important than when a social enterprise is developing its strategic plan—and it can be agonizing because it demands Board members and senior managers practice triage.

Management guru Peter Drucker, who passed way in 2006, long advocated killing products and services if they were not number one or number two in the market. Rather than trying to be all things to all people, he wrote, we should concentrate on doing the best job possible in a few, carefully chosen areas. If we do not, he warned, we will not be able to give customers the attention they deserve because we will no longer have the necessary time or resources.

Drucker’s advice runs against the grain of the traditional nonprofit mentality, but most nonprofit managers eventually do admit they are trying to serve too many masters. And, as their organizations morph into social enterprises, they realize that the first rule of entrepreneurship is contraction.

Of course, triage requires a social enterprise to be honest with itself—exceedingly difficult for any organization. But the results have been worth it, and the ultimate winners have been clients and customers. Social enterprises have discovered that reducing their number of products, services and target markets has enabled them to serve more people and to serve them better, because they’ve had the time and resources to expand their most effective and needed lines of business and to carefully introduce new products and services.

Making strategic decisions, however, is more difficult for a social enterprise than it is for either a traditional nonprofit or a commercial business, both of which are primarily concerned with a single bottom line.

A traditional nonprofit will continue offering products and services that have a significant social impact even if they lose money; commercial enterprises will not.

Social enterprises, on the other hand, are equally concerned with both bottom lines and must simultaneously analyze the social impact and financial viability of each product and service—and only then make decisions about which to expand, nurture, harvest or kill.

Portfolio Analysis

The Strategic Marketing Matrix for Social Entrepreneurs[®] is a useful way for social enterprises to categorize each of their products, services and programs—and it dovetails nicely with the four phases in the cycle of change:

	POSITIVE FINANCIAL RETURNS	NEGATIVE FINANCIAL RETURNS
SIGNIFICANT SOCIAL IMPACT	EXPAND (alive and well)	NURTURE (emerging)
MINIMAL SOCIAL IMPACT	HARVEST (ending or dying)	KILL (ended or dead)

The implications for resource allocation are significant:

- **“Expand”**: These should receive 50 to 70 per cent of a social enterprise’s resources—they have significant social impact *and* make money
- **“Nurture”**: These should receive 20 to 40 per cent of a social enterprise’s resources because they have significant social impact...and, with proper nurturing, they may also have the potential to reach break-even or make a profit
- **“Harvest”**: These should receive whatever resources remain—they make money that can be used to nurture other products and services and have *some* social impact themselves
- **“Kill”**: These should be *eliminated*—they lose money *and* have minimal social impact

As responsible social enterprise managers, we have two challenges: Doing things right...and doing the right things. Too often, we fall prey to the “80/20 rule” and spend 80 per cent of our time working on the 20 per cent of our organization we should kill.

* * *

*So, you ask, what could the Cincinnati manager have done if he truly believed in the inevitability of Bonds hitting a home run?
He could have walked him again and saved three runs!*

AUGUST 19, 2013

CHAPTER 26

The four monkeys...

“BUSINESS PROFESSORS GARY HAMEL AND C. K. PRAHALAD WROTE about an experiment conducted with a group of monkeys. Four monkeys were placed in a room that had a tall pole in the center. Suspended from the top of that pole was a bunch of bananas.

“One of the hungry monkeys started climbing the pole to get something to eat, but just as he reached out to grab a banana, he was doused with a torrent of cold water. Squealing, he scampered down the pole and abandoned his attempt to feed himself. Each monkey made a similar attempt, and each one was drenched with cold water. After making several attempts, they finally gave up.

“Then researchers removed one of the monkeys from the room and replaced him with a new monkey. As the newcomer began to climb the pole, the other three grabbed him and pulled him down to the ground. After trying to climb the pole several times and being dragged down by the others, he finally gave up and never attempted to climb the pole again.

“The researchers replaced the original monkeys, one by one, with new ones, and each time a new monkey was brought in, he would be dragged down by the others before he could reach the bananas. In time, only monkeys who had never received a cold shower were in the room, but none of them would climb the pole. They prevented one another from climbing, but none of them knew why.”

(From Failing Forward, by John Maxwell, pp. 47-48)

* * *

Does any of that sound familiar? Is your nonprofit frozen by the past? Are you willing to take risks or are you content to coast with strategies and tactics that worked five and ten years ago?

The market for social enterprises began calling in the 1960s and 1970s. Entrepreneurs, small businesses, and big corporations listened—but nonprofits, with a few exceptions, did not. Why the hesitation? Just ask the monkeys.

The culture of a traditional nonprofit, no matter how innovative, is vastly different from the culture of an entrepreneurial nonprofit. Entrepreneurs have a higher tolerance for risk, a greater appreciation of margins, an eagerness to compete. Traditional nonprofits distrust the capital markets, prefer collaboration to competition, and underestimate the productive capabilities of their employees who are disadvantaged. They watch other nonprofits become increasingly sustainable or self-sufficient, but are unwilling to emulate their practices.

Instead, they criticize.

Tony Wagner, who later served as President of the International Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers, was astonished by the resistance he encountered during the 1990s from both the business community and the nonprofit sector. “I was blown away by the level of misunderstanding and mistrust,” he recalls. “For all the writing and talking about the subject, out there in the world people either didn’t get it or didn’t want to get it.”

Why does this happen? Why is the embedded culture of an organization so often the single greatest obstacle for Board members and senior executives trying to launch earned revenue strategies or social enterprises?

Because too many suffer from what Joel Barker calls “paradigm paralysis.” As Barker pointed out in his seminal 1992 book, *Paradigms: The Business of Discovering the Future*, paradigms can be extraordinarily useful. They help us make sense of the world by organizing incoming data and sorting them into categories, helping us decide what to think and do. But paradigms can be a double-edged sword. Blinders are slapped into place and we begin

to interpret new information according to our pre-conceptions. We become frozen. Change becomes our enemy. Individuals and organizations begin to believe the categories they are using are the only ones available, and they slowly become paralyzed.

Institutional paralysis can be overcome, with a sufficient dose of courage. But occasionally it takes something dramatic. When the Board of Directors of a nonprofit in Kentucky offered Bob Russell the job as CEO, he realized the existing make-up of the Board worked against entrepreneurship and agreed to accept the position only if every member of the Board resigned. They agreed.

Still another CEO, who ran a sheltered workshop for about 200 people who were developmentally disabled, decided to change the basic values of his organization. On a pleasant summer evening in 1973, John DuRand invited his 11 senior managers to a downtown hotel in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he wined and dined them, asked them to sit down—and then fired them all.

A moment later he passed out application forms.

“Starting tomorrow,” he said, “we are no longer a rehab agency, we’re a business. Starting tomorrow, we no longer have clients, we have employees. And, starting tomorrow, you are no longer social workers, you are business managers. If you can get your minds and hearts and souls around that concept, I want you back. If you can’t, I’ll help you find a job somewhere else.”

Nine of the 11 returned to their jobs. Two could not accept the philosophic shift. But, from that day, the culture of the organization changed and the primary goal became operating a viable business. By the time DuRand retired in 1997, Minnesota Diversified Industries was a \$68.5 million nonprofit social enterprise with all but one per cent of its budget covered by earned revenue—and the company had 1,000 employees, 600 of them either disabled or disadvantaged.

However, regardless of dramatics, cultural change must be systemic, and the first step usually has to be taken at the Board level.

When Charlie Graham arrived at his new post in Oregon in the early 1980s, he immediately began promoting the idea of a double bottom line. According to his second-in-command, Roy Soards, “he told the Board we were never going to be able to employ more people with psychiatric disabilities if we continued operating a sheltered workshop and depending primarily on social service subsidies and charitable giving. He convinced the Board that if we provided quality goods and services, people would buy them and we’d therefore be able to employ even *more* people with disabilities and help them become self-sufficient.”

Kevin McDonald, founder of a nonprofit social enterprise in North Carolina that employs former convicts, drug addicts and prostitutes, discovered customers appreciated that approach. He built his company primarily through personal selling and word of mouth. “We didn’t have a very big staff,” he says, “just me and two others, and we didn’t have much money for advertising. We were just trying to survive as a program. So, I decided to start hitting the pavement and gave a lot of speeches. Went out to the Junior League, the Kiwanis Club, that sort of thing...and I found out they were tired of people asking for a handout. So I told them, ‘I don’t want your money...I want your *business*...call us up, let me give you an estimate...*use* our services.’”

Once they begin paying for actual products or services, customers become increasingly demanding, which puts a further strain on an organization’s traditional culture. “When we started working with Ben & Jerry’s,” recalls Julius Walls, the former CEO of Greyston Bakery, which employs former convicts and others with barriers to employment, “they made it very clear our product (providing brownies and blondies for five Ben & Jerry ice cream flavors) had to always be up to snuff or they wouldn’t produce

their ice cream with us. They held us accountable as a business and not as their young child. They provided a lot of assistance, but they told us from the beginning we needed to stand up and be a business, not a sheltered workshop.”

When Walls first became CEO of the Yonkers, New York, company, he discovered the biggest obstacle he faced was helping his employees “understand what we needed to do to be a sustainable model. We had to understand we were a business with a dual bottom line. Most businesses have one bottom line—economic dividends. (At the time) Greyston also had a single bottom line, but it wasn’t the economic one. There was a mentality on the part of the employees who came here that if you’re really nice we’ll figure something out to keep you and it doesn’t matter if you’re producing or if the business is doing well. But there came a time when the employees and the business needed to understand that’s not a sustainable model.”

The cultural transformation can turn into a war. “By the time I got here,” remembers Soards, who eventually succeeded Graham as CEO in Oregon and is now a social enterprise coach in Portland, “there was a demilitarized zone between the production people who ran the factory and the rehab people who provided social services. We had two very strong-willed managers and each of them had their own lieutenants and armies.” The opposing forces fought over resources and, more fundamentally, they fought for the soul of the organization.

It took years for the culture wars to subside, and “it was pretty ugly at times,” says Soards. “The rehab people would sabotage the production people, who often had to rely on the rehab folks for employees. If the production people had a job that needed to get done, they were under a lot of pressure, because the rehab people were more concerned about, ‘Well, is this the proper training for this individual, they’re not ready for work that’s too demanding,

and why don't you guys find the types of jobs that fit their needs, and no, they can't work after three o'clock because they have to go see their case workers.' We finally had to part ways with the head of the rehab division."

Hiring people from the for-profit world can be another wake-up call. "Everything changed," remembers the former head of a social enterprise in Los Angeles that employs people who are homeless. "Right off the top, it was just the way the new people walked and talked and dressed and approached their day. It was a big shock to the rest of us."

* * *

Years ago, Pablo Eisenberg, Founder and Chairman Emeritus of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, spoke for the critics of social enterprise when he wrote that "far too many charities have... forgotten the distinction between for-profit and non-profit activities, between fulfilling a mission and survival at any cost.... The appeal of non-profit organizations is their commitment to public service... it is not as a shadow private sector."

But, according to Kenneth Mason, the former Chairman of Quaker Oats, "making a profit is no more the purpose of a corporation than getting enough to eat is the purpose of life. Getting enough to eat is a requirement of life. Life's purpose, one would hope, is something broader and more challenging. Likewise with business and profit."

And nonprofit executive Robert Harrington may have put it most succinctly, and in terms social entrepreneurs would resoundingly endorse: "If you want to help the poor people of the world," he said, "step one is to make sure you're not one of them!"

SEPTEMBER 16, 2013

CHAPTER 27

Social enterprise lessons from the pope...

I WAS RAISED A CATHOLIC IN THE 1950s, BUT HAVE NOT BEEN A MEMBER of the church since the mid-1960s. I rejoiced at the arrival of the socially conscious Pope John XXIII in 1958 and mourned his passing in 1963. For the past 50 years I've been what many of my friends call "a recovering Catholic."

And now, seemingly from nowhere, comes Jorge Mario Bergoglio, better known to the world as Pope Francis. It's as if the past half-century has evaporated, as if the promise of the Second Vatican Council has been renewed. Francis has joined my pantheon of heroes who aren't chained to the past.

Listen to Francis in his interview with Father Antonio Spadaro, editor of the Jesuit publication La Civiltà Cattolica, along with commentary by William Saletan of Slate—and reflect on the implications for social enterprise...

* * *

PINING FOR THE PAST: "If the Christian is a restorationist, a legalist, if he wants everything clear and safe, then he will find nothing...those who stubbornly try to recover a past that no longer exists have a static and inward-directed view of things.... there are ecclesiastical rules and precepts that were once effective, but now they have lost value or meaning."

How many of us are clinging to the past, fearful of risk? How many are able to discard treasured ways of doing things—let alone eliminate programs, products and services that no longer meet the needs of our clients and customers? How many suffer

from the malaise Fitzgerald described in the final lines of The Great Gatsby: “So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.”

EMBRACING SHIBBOLETHS: “The complaints of today about how ‘barbaric’ the world is... sometimes end up giving birth within the church to desires to establish order... as a defense. No: God is to be encountered in the world of today. God manifests himself in historical revelation, in history.” As Saletan points out, Francis is “saying God will be found not in the past but in the future, in the unfolding of history... He doesn’t assume today’s Catholic teachings are eternally true.”

How many nonprofits, private sector companies and even social enterprises cling to outmoded ways of doing things, parroting “truths” that no longer apply? How many continue sifting through the past for solutions rather than fully engaging in the evolution taking place around them? There are dozens of shibboleths in the social enterprise sector, philosophies and procedures we trumpet as “eternally true.” I’ve committed that sin. So have you.

REFUSING TO DOUBT: Spadaro asks the pope a logical follow-up question: “If the encounter with God is not an ‘empirical eureka,’ and if it is a journey that sees with the eyes of history, then we can also make mistakes?” Francis agrees: “If one has the answers to all the questions, that is the proof that God is not with him... The great leaders of the people of God, like Moses, have always left room for doubt. You must leave room for the Lord, not for our certainties. We must be humble.” Francis assures Spadaro this kind of humility “is not relativism if it is understood in the Biblical sense that God is always a surprise so you never know where and how you will find him.”

How many social enterprise founders have been “surprised” to discover their original idea has morphed into something they never expected? The Massachusetts Institute of Technology once did a ten-year study of 814,000 small businesses and discovered that, by the sixth year, most of the companies weren’t even selling the same products or services.

FAILING TO LISTEN: Yes, Francis is the pope, the head of the church. But he emphasized to Spadaro that “All the faithful, considered as a whole, are infallible in matters of belief. When the dialogue among the people and the bishops and the pope goes down this road and is genuine, then it is assisted by the Holy Spirit... We should not even think, therefore, that ‘thinking with the church’ means only thinking with the hierarchy of the church.” Francis cautions that he’s not endorsing pure “populism.” But Saletan points out he’s rejecting the conventional understanding of infallibility: “He interprets infallibility not as a present attribute—the rightness of what a pope or a college of cardinals decrees—but as a collective process. Together, through dialogue with the people, we get the right answer down the road. This notion of dynamic, collective infallibility presumes the fallibility of today’s popes and cardinals.”

The CEO and the senior managers of a social enterprise are not omniscient either. Top-down management has its virtues, but can also be a vice (that’s NOT a misspelled word!). Pope Francis is altering what has long been a fundamental Catholic belief: God speaks to the pope and the pope speaks to the people—and when the pope speaks ex cathedra the pope is infallible. Francis is a charismatic leader, as are many social enterprise CEOs and senior managers. But too many of us who’ve led social enterprises

have stumbled when we've failed to fully involve the people on our team—or, even more damaging, the people we serve.

RAISING EXPECTATIONS: “Many think changes and reforms can take place in a short time. I believe we always need time to lay the foundations for real, effective change.”

I cringe at all the bells and whistles surrounding the field of social enterprise today. The problem with raising the profile of the movement is exactly that—the profile gets raised. People begin making unrealistic claims, especially when it's so difficult to measure social return on investment. Then somebody does some digging and discovers the claims are based on fairy dust. People launching or expanding a social enterprise—or a new type of legal structure or an innovative financing program—need to keep expectations at a modest level and not get ahead of themselves. I know, I know: We have to “scale” our successful enterprises in order to create genuine social change...but let's make sure we don't promise more than we can deliver, okay? “Social enterprise” has such a sexy tone to it these days and people are expecting far too much. They are going to be disappointed, and then they are going to be critical. And when the critical voices rise to a clamor...

WASTING RESOURCES: “The church sometimes has locked itself up in small things, in small-minded rules.” Francis is speaking here of the enormous amounts of time, energy and treasure expended to condemn such practices as gay marriage, homosexuality and abortion—and the people who practice them. Doing so wastes financial and moral resources he believes could be better employed to help the world's poor. As Saletan points out, the pope is “not renouncing the teachings” on those practices, “but he's demoting them to a level at which they could later be modified

or quietly abandoned.” Francis emphasizes: “The most important thing is the first proclamation: Jesus Christ has saved you.”

*The most important thing for social enterprises? Our social mission. And to achieve it we may have to de-emphasize or jettison some of our most cherished beliefs **about** the people we serve **and** the way we serve them.*

* * *

Men and women of every religious denomination have been fighting for social justice all their lives, including an impressive roll call of Catholics. Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone renounced his personal wealth and is known today as St. Francis of Assisi. Peter Maurin and Catholic convert Dorothy Day co-founded the Catholic Worker movement. Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli triggered seismic changes as Pope John XXIII. Rebel priests Daniel and Philip Berrigan went to jail for protesting the Vietnam war. Sister Joan Chittister is co-chair of a worldwide network of women peacemakers sponsored by the United Nations. And the list goes on.

Today they’ve been joined by a modest, remarkable man from Argentina. Imagine! A pope who believes the teachings of Jesus Christ are calling us to battle unjust economic, political and social conditions.

I no longer pray in any Catholic sense of the word...but I hope Jorge Mario Bergoglio remains with us for a long, long time.

OCTOBER 14, 2013

CHAPTER 28

If you try sometimes, you just might find...

I'M A PERFECTIONIST. IT MEANS I ALWAYS KNOW WHAT I WANT.

But, so many times down the years, it hasn't been what I've needed...

* * *

It was 1965 and time for Paul Simon to end his partnership with Art Garfunkel.

Again.

They'd been together off and on since 1955. When they released their first single in 1957 they were known as Tom & Jerry. "Hey, Schoolgirl" sold 100,000 copies and hit No. 49 on the *Billboard* charts. They performed the song on Dick Clark's *American Bandstand* right after Jerry Lee Lewis belted out "Great Balls of Fire."

They were juniors in high school.

That was about it for Tom & Jerry. Their recordings in 1958 tanked and the duo headed off to separate colleges.

Five years later they found themselves in Greenwich Village, immersed in the burgeoning folk scene, and started performing together again. Columbia Records re-named them Simon & Garfunkel and in October 1964 released their first album, *Wednesday Morning, 3 A.M.*

Another flop.

In fact, one track, the original version of "The Sound of Silence," actually became a topic of ridicule within the pop rock community.

So Simon pulled the plug on the partnership again and left for England. He wanted to be a soloist, and in 1965 he released *The Paul Simon Songbook*.

But fate had something else in store.

* * *

I recently finished Marc Eliot's biography of Simon (*Paul Simon: A Life*) and he describes what happened next.

Tom Wilson of Columbia Records was looking for a follow-up to Bob Dylan's hugely successful single "Like a Rolling Stone" and he found it, writes Eliot, "in, of all places, Simon & Garfunkel's *Wednesday Morning, 3 A.M.*, an album that had been presumed dead and buried in Columbia Records' potter's field of also-rans and never-was's."

According to Eliot, Wilson first heard about "The Sound of Silence" when a late-night FM deejay catering to college students in Boston discovered a copy of *Wednesday Morning, 3 A.M.* and at precisely that day and time played "The Sound of Silence."

Other FM stations along the East Coast immediately picked it up and the song aired all the way down to Cocoa Beach, Florida, where it collided with thousands of college students on spring break. "When a local promotions man for Columbia went...to the beach to give away free albums of new artists," writes Eliot, "all anybody wanted was Simon & Garfunkel. The rep had to call Wilson to find out who the hell THAT was."

Wilson asked which specific song they were asking for and immediately dug out a copy of the track and listened to it. Repeatedly. He wasn't convinced. He thought "it had a certain something, but it was really too soft, he thought, to be a hit." Then he listened to a copy of the Byrds performing Pete Seeger's "Turn Turn Turn," their second number-one hit after covering Dylan's "Mr. Tambourine Man."

And that, says Eliot, "is when he got it. 'The Sound of Silence' needed to be remixed, rocked up, put to a beat with a (Roger)

McGuinn-type guitar.” Wilson recruited some of the same studio musicians Dylan had used, overlaid a strong bass, an electric guitar, and a drum part with the snare mixed way up. “And when he thought he had what he wanted,” writes Eliot, “Paul Simon’s lyrics, Artie Garfunkel’s harmonies, the Byrds’ clang, and a taste of Dylan’s electric sound—he released the single to every college FM rock station in the country, and a week later to everybody else.”

And he never told Simon or Garfunkel what he was doing until after he’d finished the remix and released the record!

Simon got what he needed. He “was horrified when he first heard” the remix. It sounded nothing like the folk music he loved. But, as Eliot wryly remarks, he “loved the success.” The dubbing orchestrated by Wilson transformed folk music into “folk rock,” an entirely new genre, and by January 1966 the song had reached number one on the charts. By then Simon had hurried back to the U.S. and in that same month Simon & Garfunkel released their second, hugely successful album, *Sounds of Silence*.

All of this *after* he’d decided to break up the act.

Now, he couldn’t.

As Eliot puts it: “He thought he and Artie had broken up this time for good, and now this...a partnership he hadn’t wanted...rekindled as a result of a remix he had not made...whose enhanced performance he did not like.”

* * *

So, are you a perfectionist? On balance, that’s not a bad thing...it’s served me well...

But it took me many years—and a lot of disappointments—to realize how dangerous that mentality can be at times. It’s a double-edged sword...and it worries me when social enterprise CEOs and senior managers fail to guard against the downside.

Maybe you're one of them. Maybe you honestly believe you always know what's best for your enterprise. Maybe you spend a lot of time staring over the shoulders of your employees and "fixing" things you decide aren't working.

Well...maybe you should get out of their way. Who knows, the people on your staff might be playing with slide guitars, snare drums or tambourines that don't produce what you want—but could give you, and your social enterprise, exactly what it needs.

Just a thought...

* * *

*"Oh, you can't always get what you want
But if you try sometimes, you just might find
You get what you need"*

*Mick Jagger and Keith Richards,
"You Can't Always Get What You Want"*

NOVEMBER 18, 2013

CHAPTER 29

We can all use a prod now and then...

“YOU WALK OUT OF THE CLASSROOM AND YOU SEE PEOPLE DYING AROUND you...”

He was seven when the British retreated from his homeland, received his doctorate at Vanderbilt in 1971, and eventually became head of the economics department at Chittigong University in Bangladesh. But as he moved through the city and the surrounding countryside, he began to suspect there was something terribly wrong with the theories he was teaching.

A devastating famine in 1974 nearly destroyed his three-year-old country, so he led his students on a field trip to a poor village. They interviewed a woman who made bamboo stools and learned she had to borrow at predatory rates to buy raw bamboo for each stool she made. After repaying the middleman, sometimes at rates as high as 10% per week, her profit margin disappeared. If she'd been able to borrow at a reasonable rate, she could have built an economic safety net and improved her family's standard of living. But traditional banks shied away from tiny loans because they feared an avalanche of defaults. Loan sharks were the only option.

The rest is history. Dr. Muhammad Yunus challenged traditional wisdom by lending a total of \$27 to 42 women—and 30 years later received the Nobel Peace Prize. Grameen Bank, with its heretical business model, now operates in more than 60 countries.

But even the most innovative pioneer can be prodded...

* * *

... as Dr. Yunus reminded us during his keynote speech at the first Skoll World Forum on Social Entrepreneurship in Oxford nine years ago.

Dr. Yunus and his co-workers were besieged from every side when they first began loaning money to female entrepreneurs—threatened with violence by the radical left and hounded on the right by conservative clergy who told women they’d be denied a proper Muslim burial if they borrowed money.

But a more benign type of critic also began troubling Dr. Yunus as time went by and the Grameen Bank became world-renowned. He told his audience in Oxford, “there are always people out there who *still* tell me, ‘Yes, but you’re not working with the *poorest* of the poor.’”

So, starting in 2002, he decided to prove them wrong by launching a “Struggling Members Program” exclusively for beggars.

In Bangladesh villages, and throughout the Hindu world, beggars traipse daily from door to door collecting handfuls of rice. By the end of the day, they’ve usually collected enough for a meal.

Dr. Yunus went to a few beggars and said, “I don’t want to interfere with your lives. You can make whatever choices you wish. But it seems to me that since you’re going door-to-door every day anyway, maybe you’d like to try selling these beads...these bolts of cloth...these kitchen utensils?”

His new recruits weren’t required to give up begging, but simply to add an entrepreneurial element to their lives. The Grameen Bank gave the beggars interest-free loans, with very long terms, plus free life insurance policies and badges with their photos. As a result, their self-image began to change, as did the perceptions of the householders. No longer were they seen as beggars, but as itinerant entrepreneurs.

But the critics came back to Dr. Yunus and said, “You’re *still* not dealing with those who are the *worst* off. What about the beggars who’ve lost limbs or are just too infirm to go from house to house? They just sit by the roadside all day long.”

So Dr. Yunus approached some of those individuals and said, “Look, I don’t want to interfere with your life. You can make whatever choices you wish. But as long as you’re sitting here anyway, wouldn’t you like to sell some Coca-Cola to the people passing by? Or some tea? We’ll give you a loan to buy whatever you need and...”

As of October 2013:

- There were more than 80,000 beggars in the “struggling members” program
- More than 20,000 others had ceased begging and were making a living as door-to-door salespersons
- And more than 10,000 had also joined Grameen as mainstream borrowers

* * *

Back in 1976, when Dr. Yunus decided to subvert tradition, he chose to focus on the poorest of the poor rather than adopting a more inclusive rural development approach. He believed individual entrepreneurs living in poverty would repay the loans they needed to start their businesses and he set out to prove it.

He began testing his new business model by giving each of the 42 women in the village of Jobra 30 Taka to help them start very small businesses: Selling rice from the back of a donkey door-to-door, weaving baskets or charpoi mats, cooking vegetables. He didn’t ask for collateral and he did it in a male-dominated Muslim society. The women used the money to buy the raw materials they needed, sold their products...

Repaid the loans...

And made a profit...

Inspired by their example, Dr. Yunus came to believe making such loans available to a larger population could help reduce the widespread rural poverty plaguing Bangladesh. Later that year, buoyed by the success of the Jobra project, he convinced the country's national bank to lend him money for indigent women entrepreneurs in Jobra and other, nearby villages. Additional banks joined the consortium and within six years 28,000 villagers were in the program.

Finally, on October 1, 1983, the project morphed into a full-fledged bank for poor Bangladeshis and took the name Grameen Bank ("Village Bank"). Today the bank is owned by its borrowers, most of whom are poor women. Of the total equity, the borrowers own 94% and the Government of Bangladesh owns the rest. Dr. Yunus also encourages all borrowers to become savers so their local capital can be converted into new loans for others. Since 1995, Grameen has funded 90 percent of its loans with interest income and deposits.

During October 2013, the bank lent more than nearly \$4 million per day worldwide and served 8.48 million borrowers, 96.2% of them women, in 81,388 villages. The bank had 2,567 branches and a staff of more than 22,000. The total amount of loan disbursements since inception had reached \$14.35 billion, with a default rate of only 2.74%. The Bank has been profitable in all but three years during its 30-year history and has not accepted any donor funds since 1995.

Sadly, Dr. Yunus is no longer associated with Grameen. The current government of Bangladesh considers him a political threat and has taken a number of dubious measures to force his resignation from the Board. But that's a story for another day... and it hasn't stilled his voice. In the minds and hearts of millions, he remains the world's "banker to the poor"...

* * *

In April of this year, House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH), House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV), and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) presented Dr. Yunus with a Congressional Gold Medal in recognition of his efforts to alleviate poverty. More than 100 other Senators and Representatives from both parties attended the ceremony.

A few days later, Bob Harris (author of The International Bank of Bob: Connecting Our Worlds One \$25 Kiva Loan at a Time), suggested politicians could better honor him by actually “paying attention to him” and supporting what Dr. Yunus calls the “social business” concept. Harris’s Huffington Post blog can be found here: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/bob-harris/yunus-congress_b_3114171.html

DECEMBER 16, 2013

CHAPTER 30

You can't control them, but...

WE WERE IN OUR MID-20s, WANDERING HOMEWARD DURING THE summer of 1970 after two years with the Peace Corps in India. We'd already spent two months exploring Israel, Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia, Austria, Germany and France...and now we were in London, our last stop before heading back to the U.S. and the rest of our lives.

It was a pleasant early evening. Gerry and I and a woman friend were wandering down Piccadilly when one of the ubiquitous pub signs caught our eye.

"You know," said Gerry, "I've been hearing about Guinness all my life, but I've never tasted one."

"Me, either! You wanna try one?"

As I said, we were in our mid-20s.

Gerry grinned enthusiastically and we turned to our woman friend. She was game, so the three of us headed into a tiny pub, swam through layers of smoke, and seated ourselves at a high-top in the middle of the room. Late-afternoon and early-evening drinkers were crowded around the other tables, so it took a few moments until a waiter arrived.

We told him we were Americans and he rolled his eyes. Apparently we were wearing neon signs.

Then I told him we'd been hearing about Guinness all our lives (Gerry's line, but I stole it) and thought it was about time we tried some.

He agreed far too many years had been wasted and offered to bring us each a foaming mug.

We told him that was a capital idea and while he was gone we beamed at each other and decided we would make this a formal ceremony.

A few moments later, the waiter returned. Had we been less impressed with ourselves, we might have noticed that the noise level in the pub had lessened considerably...

Instead, we raised our mugs, tapped them against each other, tipped them to our lips and swallowed...

At which point all three of us did spit-takes and the entire room went up for grabs.

Nobody'd ever told us Guinness was a warm beer!

And apparently everybody in the room had been watching the show (tipped off by the waiter, no doubt) because they were all waiting for the spit-takes.

Some kindly punters came over to our table and apologized. "But we just couldn't help it!" one of them laughed as he clapped me on the back. "It happens every time a Yank comes in to try Guinness for the first time!"

We recovered our dignity as best we could. I was the first to push my mug to the center of the table, but the other two quickly followed. We stared at them for awhile and then decided to order something more fit for a human.

We had Heinekens. But only after the waiter assured us they kept a few on ice.

* * *

Entrepreneurs are always urged to have a business plan. I'm putting my graduate students at Pepperdine through that torture this winter. But plans are plans. What happens next is usually unexpected.

That's just part of being an entrepreneur. Me? I'm not an entrepreneur. When my plans go awry I get discouraged. Entrepreneurs never do. They may be disappointed, but that is *not* the same thing.

Trouble is, entrepreneurs are *always* trying something new—but too often they do so in a vacuum...and there aren't any Heinekens in the cooler...

One of the concepts I lean on heavily with my students and others starting social enterprises is the importance of constantly doing a 360-degree scan. Yes, you are looking to discover what your competitors are up to in terms of pricing, product development, marketing communications and other tools of the trade. But entrepreneurs also need to be aware of the forces swirling about the entire industry, enveloping both themselves and their competitors.

What I'm talking about are large-scale, fundamental forces that pose threats and shape opportunities. Most of the time, you can't control them, but you need to identify them, decide whether they're positive or negative, determine when they're likely to occur, estimate their impact—and, most importantly, decide what to do about them.

There are at least five types of external forces that have an effect on businesses:

- **DEMOGRAPHIC**

Numbers, categories and labels are always changing:

- The percentage of Americans who do not identify with any religion rose from 7% in 1972 to 18% in 2010 (University of Chicago) and by 2012 represented nearly one-fifth of the population, including one-third of adults under 30 (Pew Foundation)
- Alzheimer's programs began appearing in the 1970s. By the time I consulted with one of its leading providers 30 years later, the demographics had changed and it was working exclusively with "early onset" Alzheimer patients

- Many children once viewed as developmentally disabled were eventually re-labeled as “autistic”—and then, beginning in the early 1980s, were sub-categorized into smaller groups when Asperger’s syndrome became standardized as a diagnosis

So, just who are the people in *your* target market(s), *today*? How old are they? Male? Female? Other? Who will they be tomorrow?

What are their income levels? Their religious affiliations? Their education levels?

And what are the trends in each area? Is the gender balance shifting? Is the age range changing? Are the people you serve better educated? Is their income level rising or sinking? Are they decamping or flooding into your geographic area?

- **ECONOMIC**

In 1977, Independent Sector conducted a study revealing that the average nonprofit in the United States had three months of operating capital in reserve. Not great, but not a disaster.

Twelve years later, Independent Sector repeated the study. This time, the average nonprofit had less than four *days* in reserve—not even enough to pay next week’s expenses.

How many nonprofits saw that happening?

And how many saw the recession coming? It’s had a devastating impact on nonprofits, social enterprises and other businesses during the past five years.

And now: Will inflation begin stifling the purchasing power of the people you serve? Will interest rates soar? Will

wage levels climb—or descend? Will the unemployment rate continue to creep downward or suddenly switch directions? Just a few of the economic forces that will soon have an impact. Are you paying sufficient attention?

- **TECHNOLOGICAL**

People used to be astonished when I mentioned that my Psych 101 course at the University of Minnesota in the fall of 1962 took place in Northrop Auditorium rather than a classroom—nearly 2,500 students came to lectures three mornings each week. But three years ago, 160,000 people attended a free, online course about artificial intelligence delivered by a professor at Stanford. Online schools and degrees are proliferating, and the educational landscape has been transformed.

During the past half-decade, the impact of rapid technological change on social enterprises has been second only to economic earthquakes. We are perched on an inflexion point unseen since the Industrial Revolution. Technology will alter the way you package, price, deliver and promote your products and services—and might completely erase the need for them.

- **SOCIOLOGICAL**

How well do you understand the people you are serving?

What do they hold as core values? How do they feel about the most divisive issues of our time (“freedom of choice” vs. “right to life”)? Are their lifestyles and expectations morphing into something that would have been unrecognizable even a decade ago (the attitudes of Americans toward gay

marriage)? What traditions do they honor (the right to bear arms)? What customs do they practice (end-of-life care in the home or in a hospital)?

Do they hold any collective power? Is it increasing or decreasing? What does that *mean*?

And what do they expect from a company like yours? Is *that* changing?

- **POLITICAL AND REGULATORY**

Three words: “Affordable Care Act.” The ripple effect will cause unimagined changes in the way health care is viewed, priced and delivered. What will be the implications for your social enterprise (even if you’re not working in the healthcare arena)?

Federal legislation always has a massive impact, often with unexpected side effects. The Community Mental Health Act of 1963 ushered in an era of homelessness that is still a plague, especially in our urban centers. But state legislation and local regulations can be equally challenging. Is there new or pending federal or state legislation that could affect your business (*e.g.*, would stricter licensing of the care-givers in your field be a positive or a negative?). Are the people you serve gaining political clout—and is that a good or bad thing for your company? Are activists promoting damaging or helpful legislation?

* * *

It's not easy. You need to simultaneously keep your eyes on the landscape beneath you and the world around you. And, at the very least, you need to have best and worst case scenarios in mind. What

*will change? How great a change will it be? When will it happen?
How will you react?*

Many external forces will have no impact on your future. But there will always be a few that could make all the difference if you don't understand and prepare for them, whether they be happy surprises or seismic shocks to the system.

It's all about reactions: This gigantic alien is landing in your living room. What do you do next?

Well, if you're less impressed with yourselves than Gerry and I were in that pub, you might at least have seen them coming...

JANUARY 14, 2014

CHAPTER 31

No small dreams...

DURING THE SPRING OF 1965, I BECAME EDITOR OF A SUBURBAN MINNEAPOLIS newspaper and began writing a weekly column. A few months later I decided to feature my three youngest siblings. I asked them what they would do if I gave them \$100 and told them they had to spend it.

Here's what they said:

- *Laya, a third grader, decided to “get a color TV (and) a radio... rent a hotel...buy a tiny, tiny house...get to be a fancy lady... buy a shop...get a husband...get a speedboat...get to be a teacher or a nurse...get a trailer house...get a convertible.”*
- *Her twin sister Marg displayed a more economical bent with plans to “buy some wood to make a house, buy some land, buy some food, get some clothes,” but she shared Laya's wish for a color TV and a radio, then admitted she'd also “get a trailer house for me and my dog” and “get a wedding doll.”*
- *Bob, a second grader, needed a few suggestions to get him started, but he finally settled on “a trip around the world, a speedboat, a trailer house, a new car, a dog, a bike,” and then finished with, “I'd put it in the bank.”*

* * *

I think about that column every time I talk with somebody planning to launch a social enterprise, and it happened again this morning. I spent 45 minutes on the phone with a woman who

wants to simultaneously start four different social enterprises employing recovering substance abusers: An incentives business, a coffee shop, a sales rep company, and a sustainability project.

“Don’t do it!” I implored her, at least a dozen times, in a dozen different ways, and I finally asked her: “What gets you up in the morning? What *excites* you? What do you *really* want to do?”

Her answer came quickly and her passion for one of the four businesses leaped across the miles.

“Then just do *that* one,” I begged, “and make it world class!”

Oh...she was also working 30 hours a week to support herself while trying to start the four businesses.

Don’t laugh. I hear the same soaring ambitions from almost everybody who calls me or stops me at a conference for advice...

* * *

And I hear them at the beginning of each semester when the graduate students in my incubator course start planning their own social enterprises. I ask them to send me the answers to three questions before our first class: “What social need will you be addressing? What product or service will you provide? Who will buy your product or service?”

Here are three of the 15 responses I received at the beginning of the current semester at Pepperdine University:

- Young people (ages 18-24) transitioning out of the foster care system are struggling with independence. They are at tremendous risk of becoming homeless. They lack jobs, skills, career direction, relationships, and a quality support network. For foster youth, we will provide housing, job training, life skills, mentoring, a referral center, college access, and job placement; for companies in the

hospitality and pet care industries, we will provide qualified, trained employees who can be put to work immediately. The companies hiring our people will pay a rebate based on wages; temporary staffing companies who place our people will pay us a fee; and our people will pay us a portion of their earnings.

- Lighting the Ethiopian Path (LEP) is a nonprofit that assists Ethiopians living in extreme poverty, especially at-risk women and out-of-school teens, through remedial education leading to college enrollment and/or skills training that fosters enterprise development and sustainable livelihoods. We are opening community centers in low-income housing neighborhoods of Addis Ababa and we are also creating a subsidiary to help fund the work of the centers: EduTour includes a bed-and-breakfast and trip coordination service targeting university students, mission groups, adopting families, and other social tourists seeking an educational and cultural immersion that has an impact.
- My goal is to develop a microbrewery with a triple-bottom line. The brewery will offer creative, quality beer and become a vehicle encouraging community development. Using appreciative inquiry and a sustainable community development framework, we hope to help opinion and action leaders make positive changes in their communities. The brewery will offer community stakeholders cultural, financial, and social capital needed to create effective change. Our products and services are generally targeted at craft beer drinkers, change-makers, and individuals willing to engage in community action.

No small dreams, eh?

I *love* the ambition!

But author Om Malik reminded us of something important a few years ago during his blog for *Inc.* about the sad downfall of Joost, a much-ballyhooed online video startup: “Remember what your mom used to say when you took too big a bite? If you’re not careful, you’re going to choke. Startups are just like that. Unless you focus, you’re going to choke.”

* * *

Each of the three students I’ve quoted had a different type of “focusing” issue. One was trying to do too much, one was letting the tail wag the dog, and one needed to merge two conflicting forces into a coherent financing strategy.

However, completing feasibility studies during the next few weeks gave them a better grip on what might be possible. There’s a long way to go before they present their business plans to a group of judges this April, but they’ve already met some difficult challenges:

- Amy Bawden realized she was trying to start seven different businesses at the same time. Now she’s narrowed her focus to “job training and placement” for current and former foster children—and she’s also limited her target market to a single industry.
- Mindi Aleme, who lives in Addis Ababa, is moving ahead with her subsidiary, but she’s turned its management over to another staff member and is focusing more of her own energies on developing one of LEP’s core programs which has greater revenue potential and ad-

dresses a more pressing social need: Remedial tutoring in English, math and science for sixth- and seventh- grade students (using approaches and technologies already field-tested by others in Kenya and India).

- Juan Carrillo had a stomach-churning problem deciding how to pitch his business idea to both traditional and social investors. His ultimate goal is to turn his microbrewery and tasting room into a hub for community development. But if traditional investors believed his “corporate social responsibility” (CSR) efforts would bleed the bottom line, they’d back away. And if he emphasized profitability at the expense of community development, he’d lose the social investors. After finishing his feasibility study, he realized his core business and his CSR ambitions could actually be combined—and he’s now created a business model in which the brewery’s community development work drops revenue directly to the company’s bottom line, thus satisfying both traditional and social investors.

* * *

I eventually reminded the woman on the phone this morning that building a successful social enterprise is a seven- to ten-year, full-time job, with no guarantee of success, and requires an enormous amount of bootstrapping. Anything that distracts from doing what the enterprise needs done will slow or kill the process.

But I also told her what I tell my students: If you stay focused on one business at a time, get a few breaks, pour in a ton of sweat

equity—and if the wood don't warp and the creek don't rise—you just might create something great...

* * *

My siblings? Well, Laya got more than “a tiny, tiny house”—she has two daughters and a son and is vice president of a real estate development company. Marg spent 16 years managing medical clinics, then got the “land” she wanted, is a home-based medical transcriptionist, and raised three sons (plus a few chickens on the side). And Bob, now the father of two sons? The kid who wanted to put his \$100 in the bank? He grew up to be a financial advisor.

FEBRUARY 17, 2014

CHAPTER 32

The Fog Index

TRY READING THE FOLLOWING SENTENCE OUT LOUD, SEVEN TIMES. Each time you speak it, emphasize just one of the words, a different one each time:

“I never said she stole my money.”

Seven different meanings, right?

But at least you were able to use vocal inflections to make sure people knew what you meant.

*In a written document, it's not always that easy. Most writers would solve the problem by italicizing one of the seven words. But that's kid stuff. How do you make sure **your** writing is easy to understand, on a **consistent** basis?*

* * *

Two men tackled that problem in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Rudolf Flesch wrote *The Art of Readable Writing* in 1948 and Robert Gunning wrote *The Technique of Clear Writing* in 1952. Flesch concentrated on making sure your writing was easy to read; Gunning wanted to make sure it was easy to understand.

One result of their work is “The Fog Index,” which measures whether your readers can clearly understand what you’ve written. I’ve been teaching it for years and I’m indebted to my friend Tom Callinan for reminding me recently that Flesch and Gunning had different purposes. (Tom was ranting online about the need to banish jargon and start writing grant proposals in plain English.)

Extensive research over the past six decades has repeatedly demonstrated the practicality of the index. It's widely used by newspapers, textbook publishers and others—but rarely in law, government, medicine...or, sadly, in business.

* * *

How easy is it for *your* stakeholders to understand your business plans, grant proposals, brochures and other documents?

You can use The Fox Index to find out. For example, *Time* magazine is written at the level of a high school junior, comic books at the level of a sixth grader.

Here's the formula:

- **STEP ONE:** Choose a sample of at least 100 words and then divide the number of words in your sample by the number of sentences (for example, 123 words divided by six sentences equals 20.5)
- **STEP TWO:** Count the number of words in your sample that have three or more syllables...but don't count any words that are capitalized, any combinations of short easy words such as "bookkeeper," or any verbs made into three syllables by adding "ed" or "es" (such as "expanded" or "expresses")
- **STEP THREE:** Divide the number of words with three or more syllables by the total number of words in the sample (for example, 11 such words divided by 123 is a percentage of 8.94)

- **STEP FOUR:** Add the results of steps one and three
($20.5 + 8.94 = 29.44$)
- **STEP FIVE:** Multiply the result of step four by .4
($29.44 \times .4 = 11.78$)

According to The Fog Index, a score of 11.78 means your writing is not easily understood by anybody whose reading skills are below the level of a high school senior:

GRADE LEVEL	SCORE	EXAMPLES
College graduate	17	
College senior	16	
College junior	15	
College sophomore	14	
College freshman	13	
High school senior	12	
High school junior	11	<i>The Wall Street Journal, Time</i>
High school sophomore	10	<i>Reader's Digest</i>
High school freshman	9	
Eighth grade	8	Most best-selling books
Seventh grade	7	Most best-selling books, <i>The Bible</i>
Sixth grade	6	<i>The Bible</i> , comic books, Mark Twain

Applying The Fog Index to your written communications could explain why some stakeholders aren't getting your message. The ideal score is 7 or 8 ("most best-selling books")...and anything above 12 will probably be misunderstood or ignored.

* * *

The first time I brought The Fog Index into the classroom for my graduate students, I randomly selected two samples from my own writing and tested them against the formula.

Here's the first, the opening paragraphs from one of my books:

"Social innovators around the world have begun to reach a disquieting conclusion: Inspired vision, impassioned leadership, enthusiastic volunteers, government subsidies and a phalanx of donors are not always enough.

"They serve admirably while innovators transform their dreams into fledgling programs and steer their organizations through early growing pains. But there comes a time, albeit reluctantly, when most founders and their followers begin to understand that living from year to year does not ensure the future, and that is the moment when they begin migrating from innovation to entrepreneurship. It is one thing to design, develop and carry out a new program, quite another to sustain it. So they begin turning toward commercial markets, gradually exploring the possibilities of earned income, many for the first time, and often with reluctance given their uneasiness about the profit motive."

Turns out I was writing at the level of a college freshman.

Here's the second, an excerpt from an essay I wrote about returning 25 years later to the village in India where I spent two years as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the late 1960s:

“The village remains, but its boundaries have exploded. Dozens of shops bustle down the road toward the school. A model town grows to the north. Motorcycles shoulder through the streets, and television antennas leap from every other rooftop.

“But...

“In the older part of town, the lanes still wander quietly, then disappear. Women sit comfortably outdoors on charpois, surrounded by their children. Solitary pigs snort past them toward unseen destinations. Cows pick their way across broken cobblestones. Occasional students race homeward.

“As the day wanes, the sky reaches down, all reds and golds and orange, inches above my head. Chants from the temple drift across the rooftops, and spices scent the air from hundreds of kitchens. Families gather...and a warm glow slips over my memories.”

This time I was writing for eighth graders.

And, given my intentions and the audiences I hoped to reach, I was in the right neighborhood both times.

* * *

So why not give it a try?

Pick one of your brochures, one of your grant proposals and one of your tech manuals. Choose a sample from each and run the numbers.

The results might please or disturb you, but, either way, you'll have a better handle on how well you're communicating with your key stakeholders.

(FYI: According to The Fog Index, you need to have 11th-grade reading skills to easily understand the first ten paragraphs of this essay.)

MARCH 17, 2014

CHAPTER 33

The Prince was bored...

THE U.S. GOVERNMENT SENT MICHAEL DOWLING AND FOUR OTHERS on a goodwill tour of India shortly after WWI. They were welcomed by most, but not by everybody. On this particular day, the ruler of one of India's more than 500 princely states had reluctantly given them an audience in a mammoth room that had a dirt floor and half a dozen wide cement steps leading up to the Prince's throne.

Dowling and his friends were seated on the floor in wooden folding chairs, staring up at the Prince, who wasn't really listening to anything they were trying to say. He was conversing with his advisers and only occasionally glanced down at the Americans.

Michael Dowling knew he had to do something or the entire visit would be pointless.

So he shifted noisily in his chair. The Prince heard him and looked down to see what was happening. When he did, Michael Dowling calmly removed the bottom half of his left leg and threw it on the floor.

The Prince leaned forward.

Michael Dowling removed the bottom half of his right leg and threw it on the floor.

The Prince waved off his advisors.

Michael Dowling reached over with his right hand, removed the bottom half of his left arm and threw it on the floor.

The Prince stood.

And when Michael Dowling reached his hand slowly toward his head...

* * *

Michael Dowling was 14 years old when the blizzards of 1880 swept through Minnesota. A freak accident sent him tumbling off the back of a lumber wagon into snowdrifts and he stumbled through the storm for hours, finally burrowing into a pile of straw. When morning came he scrambled out and spotted a farmhouse half a mile away. He tried to stand, and fell. His legs were frozen. When he clapped his hands together to restore circulation, "it was as if I had struck two blocks of wood together," he recalled years later. "They were as white and rigid as marble."

Somehow, Dowling crawled to the farmhouse, but 16 days later doctors amputated both legs six inches below the knee, removed his left arm below the elbow, and took away the fingers and part of the thumb on his right hand. He was a few weeks short of his 15th birthday.

"I won't deny it seemed pretty hard," he remembered. "There were days when I felt as if the whole foundation of things had dropped out, when the future looked utterly black, without a ray of hope or comfort, when I rebelled with my whole soul against the raw deal life had given me. At such times I cursed my own strength of will that brought me through the storm and the strength of body that made me survive the operation.

"The thing that was hardest to bear," he admitted, "was the pity I received from people. The night of my birthday my friends gave me a party and everybody turned out. I was sitting up by that time and used to push my chair around the house somehow or other using my arms the best I could. That night I overheard people talking among themselves. They would say: 'Poor boy! Isn't it dreadful! He'll be helpless all his life. He'll have to be dressed and even fed by other folks. Too bad he didn't die!' When I heard them say things like that it roused every ounce of fighting spirit in me. I didn't want to be pitied. I hated being an object of commiseration. And I said to myself: 'I won't be like that! I'll take

care of myself! I won't be an object of charity. I won't be laid on the shelf for the rest of my life. I won't! I *won't!*”

Dowling had been supporting himself since the age of ten as a water carrier, a cowboy, and a cookee on the Mississippi steamboats. The blizzard of December 4, 1880, dropped temperatures to 50 below zero, and Dowling was outside from seven in the evening until sunrise the next morning. By Christmas he was little more than a stump of a man, physically. Within a year his savings were gone and the Yellow Medicine County Commissioners didn't know what to do with him. They arranged to pay a local farmer \$2 per week to care for him the rest of his life, but when they told Dowling about their plans “it was all I could do to contain myself from jumping into the air and landing on top of them!” Instead, he startled the commissioners with a bold proposition: “If you will pay for one year at Carleton College,” he said, “it will never cost this county another cent to keep me going as long as I live.”

That was the beginning. Outfitted with artificial limbs, Dowling attended Carleton, became an elementary school teacher, painted fences, ran a roller-skating rink, sold books and maps, published a weekly newspaper, became superintendent of the first high school in Renville County, married, had four children, became president of the Olivia State Bank and president of the Minnesota Bankers Association. He traveled extensively as an insurance agent, served two years as secretary to the National Republican League, visited the Philippine Islands as a United States Commissioner shortly after the Spanish-American War, and became a state representative in 1901, later Speaker of the House. He drove his own automobile all over the country, danced, went hunting for big game, and in later years was mentioned often as a candidate for governor.

“Don't spend your time thinking about the things that are gone and can't be brought back,” he told soldiers who had been

disabled during WWI. “Think of what you have. Keep your mind working and you can accomplish wonders. Don’t think you are a cripple because you’ve lost a limb or two.” He traveled from hospital to hospital all over the country after the war as a living example of what a wounded and crippled man could accomplish with only a body, a head, and a part of one arm. He spoke to huge throngs in New York and visited English hospitals for eight months at the invitation of the British government, astonishing his listeners by inviting them to rap on his wooden legs or squeeze his wooden arms.

When Michael Dowling died in 1921 at the age of 55, the people of Minnesota did not forget him. A \$100,000 fundraising campaign generated contributions from all over the world and resulted in both the Minneapolis School for Crippled Children and the State Hospital for Crippled Children in St. Paul. His wife Jenny became one of the prime movers who established the Society for Crippled Children and Adults in 1928 (later known as Courage Center, it eventually became one of the largest and most respected rehab centers in the nation).

“Affliction,” said Michael Dowling, “turns some people into a sponge that soaks up pity. But a sponge never gets anywhere. There is no such thing as a cripple, if the mind is right. When anybody tells you that because a man loses a leg or an arm he’s a cripple, just refer him to me.”

* * *

I wrote the middle part of this essay during Courage Center’s 50th anniversary in 1978 and have used the story about Michael Dowling and the Prince in numerous speeches around the world. When I first began thinking about re-telling the story in one of these journal entries, I’d intended to focus on the importance of getting people’s attention

before they can begin to understand or give credence to what you're saying. I'll save that for a later time.

What struck me as I re-read my original manuscript and thought about Dowling's accomplishments is something my old friend John DuRand constantly hammered home: "Don't call them disabled people," he'd bark. "Call them people who have disabilities. They're not an illness, a disease or an infirmity. They're people!"

And I thought about all the men and women working for social justice today who are doing as John asked. You're one of them or you probably wouldn't be reading this essay. I especially think about entrepreneurs like John who start social enterprises specifically to provide employment and career opportunities for people who are mentally, physically, economically or educationally disadvantaged. In John's case, he began with \$100, a circular saw, a sewing machine, and 14 young adults who were developmentally disabled. By the time he retired 25 years later, he was running a \$68.5 million business employing nearly 1,000 people, more than 600 of them developmentally or otherwise disadvantaged.

When Michael Dowling jolted the Prince out of his boredom by deliberately removing parts of his body and tossing them on the ground, then reached for his head, the Prince begged him to stop and share the secret of his magic.

There wasn't any secret. Michael Dowling had simply made it possible for the Prince to see the man behind the disability.

The quotations from Michael Dowling in this essay are taken from Mary B. Mullett's 1919 article in The American Magazine entitled "Dowling Just Wouldn't Give Up: A Wonder Story of Pure Grit."

MAY 19, 2014

CHAPTER 34

Decades ahead of his time...

HE WAS A MAVERICK...AND WHEN HE BEGAN HECTORING FELLOW CEOs about the marriage of social needs and business opportunities, most of them snorted and turned away.

I worked and traveled with Bill Norris for five years, from December 1979 through December 1984.

Founded in 1957, Control Data Corporation became the most successful computer company of the 1960s and 1970s, the darling of Wall Street. By 1984 the company was worth \$5 billion and employed 60,000 people. According to an article in *The Washington Post* two years later, Norris “not only marched to a different drum, he created the company that built the drum—and pounded out the beat for nearly three decades.... (he was) one of the most successful, inventive and iconoclastic business leaders” in the country.

But the race riots of 1967 shocked Norris. Cities were burning, mobs rioting and looting. Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia. Even Minneapolis, Control Data’s home!

Norris sent one of his senior executives into the midst of the Minneapolis riots to find out what the company could do to turn things around. His aide returned a few days later. “These people need jobs,” he said. “They need *real* jobs.”

Norris responded instantly. He took it as a personal challenge. “Build ‘em a plant,” he said. “Build a Control Data plant right there in the heart of the city.”

Business leaders scoffed. Control Data employees cringed. But the personal awakening Bill Norris experienced changed his life—and the course of business history. Within the next ten years the company opened plants in four inner cities (Minneapolis, San

Antonio, Washington, D.C., and St. Paul)—and in two of the most god-forsaken rural communities in the country.

By the time I arrived at corporate headquarters as his chief communications lieutenant in 1979, Norris had gone even further by fashioning a business philosophy that left no room for argument: “Our mission,” he wrote, “is to address the major unmet needs of society as profitable business opportunities.”

It was the first articulation of social enterprise as we know it today.

It was heresy to Wall Street, but the media loved it. So did Peter Drucker, the centerpiece of an international conference we sponsored in 1982 that attracted more than 250 CEOs. Jesse Jackson wrote to Norris, “I had given up on corporate America until I visited your operations and met you.” Ralph Nader praised him in *The Big Boys*, his 1986 best-seller about corporate CEOs.

Invitations for Norris to tell others about Control Data’s new strategy flooded into his 14th floor office from all over the world. During the five years I traveled with him he delivered more than 300 speeches—to government leaders, corporate titans, international financiers. He gave interviews to more than 100 major newspapers, magazines and television programs. I worked 90-hour weeks just to keep pace, but he never slowed. He lugged around a briefcase crammed with notes and vitamins. Every day he went to work at corporate headquarters, he rode the elevator seven floors, then climbed the stairs seven more to his office. He was indefatigable.

And Control Data’s social enterprises mushroomed.

By the early 1980s, Control Data was operating mobile medical vans on a Native American reservation in South Dakota, using computer technology to herd caribou beyond the Arctic Circle, revitalizing entire urban neighborhoods and rural communities, working with Chief Justice Warren Burger to create training

and employment opportunities for prisoners, launching the first small business incubators in the country, developing the nation's first wind farms, creating a vast array of computer-based learning programs for colleges and universities and self-paced learners. The innovations just kept coming, and publicity flowed like a river.

But few remember—because Control Data failed as a company. It began to falter in the mid-1980s. Competition from Japan for computer peripherals and assaults from below by mini- and micro-computers made Control Data mainframes an endangered species. Wall Street and media critics blamed Norris for being distracted, too focused on his “social programs,” and leftists harped at the way Control Data carried them out.

They were all right. Norris took his eye off the company's core, and the people running the social enterprises made a lot of mistakes.

And yet they were all wrong.

Bill Norris was simply decades ahead of his time. He was a trailblazer. Mistakes are part of the game, and others learned from Control Data's miscues. Social enterprise today is a major strategy for nonprofits, small businesses, government policy-makers and—yes—major corporations. By the time Norris died at age 95 in 2006 after a long battle with Parkinson's disease, almost everything he'd attempted to do was being done successfully by others—although few recalled or even knew about the ground he'd broken.

I remember.

Working for Bill Norris changed my life, and I've spent the past 30 years scattering the gospel of social enterprise. Hundreds of others came out of Control Data imbued with the Norris philosophy, and we've been scattering the seeds all over the world. Whenever I see another nonprofit starting a business to address a social need, I think of Bill Norris. Whenever I speak to a group of fledgling social entrepreneurs and see the excitement in their

eyes, I think of Bill Norris. And every time I read about another corporate CEO preaching the importance of a double or triple bottom line, I remember Bill Norris thundering from his bully pulpit.

JUNE 19, 2014

CHAPTER 35

The first question any social enterprise should be asking

I ONCE SPENT THREE DAYS WORKING WITH THE SHREVEPORT-BOSSIER Rescue Mission, a safe haven for indigent men who needed a place to stay and nourishing food for up to seven days. The CEO asked me to meet with his entire Board and staff, help them understand social enterprise, and then facilitate a closing discussion about the shelter's strategic direction.

*The first question I asked during the discussion came right from Peter Drucker's playbook. In his seminal work *The Practice of Management*, he wrote that because the question "is so rarely asked—at least in a clear and sharp form—and (is) so rarely given adequate study and thought, (it) is perhaps the most important single cause of business failure."*

The question?

"What business are you in?"

Shouldn't be that hard to answer, should it?

Well...

* * *

Does anybody here remember Jack McKinney?

During the summer of 1979, the Los Angeles Lakers hired an obscure, 44-year-old assistant coach from Portland to coach a team that featured Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, the five-time NBA MVP, and a rookie point guard named Magic Johnson.

Now, I grew up worshipping the (then) Minneapolis Lakers, even played in an abbreviated grade school game against one of our hated enemies during halftime of a Lakers game at the Minneapolis Auditorium. Those were the George Mikan, Jim Pollard,

Vern Mikkelsen Lakers—the original Big Three—who won five NBA titles in six seasons from 1949 through 1954.

But as I grew older (and the Lakers migrated to Los Angeles, where rumor has it there are one or two lakes), professional basketball never really caught on with the average sports fan. Playoff games, when they were televised at all, were shown on tape-delay. The game consisted primarily of a bunch of giants lumbering up and down the floor, banging into each other and swearing (my childhood sensibilities were shocked when I heard Dolph Schayes of the Syracuse Nationals cursing Jesus and others as he drove through the lane toward the basket). During the 1970s, professional basketball was less popular than baseball, professional football, college football, college basketball, dirt-track racing—you name it.

Today? Professional basketball is the fastest growing sport in the world.

So what happened?

Jack McKinney happened.

But few remember him...because he took an early morning bike ride...

“He created Showtime,” All-Star Laker guard Norm Nixon told Jeff Pearlman for Pearlman’s book *Showtime*. “That should never be forgotten. You can talk about me and Kareem and (Magic) and Pat Riley all you want. But Jack McKinney created Showtime.”

And, when he did, when he turned Magic Johnson and the rest of them loose, the Lakers quickly discovered they were NOT in the “basketball” business. They were in the “entertainment” business.

Suddenly every game at the Los Angeles Forum was a four-hour “event” and a courtside filled with Jack Nicholson and so many other celebrities it became a badge of honor for Hollywood types to score tickets. Paula Abdul created the short-skirted Laker Girls, a ten-piece band replaced the stodgy organist, Dancing Barry cavorted in the aisles during timeouts (wearing sunglasses

and a tuxedo)...and the team itself created a completely new brand of greyhound basketball: Fast, sleek, ever-moving, with Magic at the helm.

Other teams followed their example and over the next 30 years the game morphed into a global phenomenon. Only soccer is more popular worldwide. Kids all over the planet love the idea of running the court, dazzling with behind-the-back dribbles and no-look passes, fast-breaks that feel like a howling wind descending on defenders.

Jack McKinney?

The Lakers started the season 10-4. On a rare off-day in early November, McKinney climbed on his bicycle and headed toward a nearby tennis court for a match with assistant coach Paul Westhead.

He never made it. His brakes clutched as he traveled downhill and his bike stopped abruptly, tossing him over the handlebars and smashing him face-first into the concrete street.

He nearly died. He was bed-ridden for weeks.

Westhead took over as coach, hired Pat Riley as his assistant and led the team to the NBA championship. The Lakers gave him a multi-year contract and regretfully released McKinney. The Indiana Pacers hired him that summer and he was named NBA Coach of the Year in his first season, leading the Pacers to the playoffs, but three years later he was fired. He coached nine games for the Kansas City Kings in 1984 before resigning in frustration, and that was it. His chance to be the long-term coach for one of the greatest dynasties in the game had passed him by.

And "Showtime"? Magic Johnson and Pat Riley got the credit. Johnson won five NBA titles during his 13 years with the Lakers. Riley succeeded Westhead in the fall of 1981 and so far has won seven NBA championships, four with the Lakers and three with the Miami Heat (the last two as the team's President).

* * *

So what happened at the Rescue Mission?

The 25 Board and staff members spent almost two hours debating what business they were *really* in. They had about 40 possibilities on the whiteboard when the head cook finally came up with the answer.

“We’re not in the shelter business,” he said. “We’re in the *hotel* business.”

That changed everything. Operating a hotel means you spruce up the reception area, re-paint the rooms, lay new carpeting in the hallways, serve better food in a more dignified setting, address your “customers” with greater respect, extend the length of stay, and make strategic decisions from an entirely different perspective.

Over the past couple decades, other nonprofits and social enterprises have come to similar forks in the road:

- Dozens of well-meaning government agencies, nonprofits and corporations across the country doubled down on the low-income housing business in the 1980s and 1990s. But a few, such as Housing Works in New York City, realized they weren’t in the business of providing low income (or even “affordable”) housing—they were in the business of giving individuals or families a *home*.
- Volunteers with Meals on Wheels do great work, but their impact expands when they realize they aren’t in the business of delivering food—they’re in the business of *independent living*.
- Hundreds of social enterprises around the world hire large numbers of people with physical, mental, economic

and educational disadvantages—but the best of them understand they are NOT in the business of providing jobs for people from target populations. They're in *specific businesses* such as light assembly, document shredding, temporary staffing, hospitality services, or any other business driven by market demand and their ability to beat the competition.

* * *

Drucker's fundamental question is the first one any social enterprise should be asking itself. The answer will frequently give birth to new vision and mission statements, a new set of core values, different long-term goals, revised strategies and tactics.

So how would you answer the question? And would your Board and staff members answer it the same way?

Jeff Pearlman's Showtime: Magic, Kareem, Riley, and the Los Angeles Lakers Dynasty of the 1980s was published March 4, 2014, by Gotham Books.

JULY 17, 2014

CHAPTER 36

Here comes the next wave!

As I WRITE THIS (AUGUST 7), ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS ARE AT war in Gaza, ISIS is sweeping across Iraq, Boko Haram is terrifying Nigerians, Syrians are tearing their nation apart, and Vladimir Putin is raising fears of a war in Ukraine and another cold war with the West.

Yet, this weekend (August 8-11), high school students from 16 countries are gathering in Moscow for the 12th annual SAGE World Cup. Nelson Mandela's grandson, Ndaba Mandela, is scheduled to be the keynote speaker.

* * *

I celebrated my 60th birthday Christmas Eve 2004.

Seven months later the doctors told me I had prostate cancer.

I've been lucky. We caught it early, surgery removed all traces, and I've been cancer-free since.

But during the emotional months before surgery, I promised myself to make the best possible use of whatever time I'd have left...

I'd already spent more than 25 years in the field of social enterprise, most of them working upstream, trying to give non-profits a sense of what might be possible. I left it to others to guide them through the challenges of organizational change and business planning.

By 2005 I'd delivered keynote speeches or conducted master classes in more than 40 states and nearly two dozen countries. I knew I could go on doing that sort of thing. I still had the energy—and the phone kept ringing.

But I also knew the field was changing...

We'd already seen three waves of social entrepreneurs. The isolated visionaries of the 1960s and 1970s (*Jim Boyle and Lori Sweeney, Earl Copus, Jr., Margaret Cossette, John DuRand, Bill Kling, Rev. William Lindner, Jim McClurg, Paul Nicholson, Mimi Silbert and John Maher, Richard Steckel, Bill Strickland, Hugh Westbrook and Esther Colliflower, and a few others*) were followed by a larger wave of pioneers during the 1980s and 1990s (*Rick Aubrey, Fr. Greg Boyle, Kathleen Buescher, Peter Cove and Dr. Lee Bowes, Jed Emerson, Rich Gilmartin, Charlie Graham, Carla Javits, Charles King and Keith Cylar, Bobbie Lenz, Kevin Lynch, Kevin McDonald, Dave McDonough, Barbara Massey, Gary Mulhair, Dale Novotny, Richard Oulahan, Bob Russell, Jim Schorr, Billy Shore, Rick Surpin, Tony Wagner, Julius Walls, Jim Westall, Michael Ziegler, and dozens of others*).

As we entered the new century, a third wave arrived and an “industry” began to emerge as a trade association (The Social Enterprise Alliance) took shape and hundreds of nonprofits and others launched social enterprise strategies.

. . . and when I looked around during the summer of 2005, I realized a fourth wave was already heading toward shore. These entrepreneurs ranged in age from 13 to 30—junior and senior high students, undergrads and graduate students. Their passion for social change was exciting—and I thought I might be able to help, that my years of experience might give them some perspective as they started on their journeys. . . so, for the past nine years, I've spent most of my time with them.

Among other things, I taught graduate students at Carnegie Mellon for three years and I'm just beginning my third year at Pepperdine. But the most rewarding adventure began in 2006 when I found myself staring from a podium in Brooklyn at about 150 of the most impassioned young people I'd ever seen. . .

* * *

They were all high school students, from across the United States, competing in the national SAGE tournament for the right to represent their country at the SAGE World Cup in Shanghai. The electricity in the room was palpable and continues to energize thousands of volunteers every year—business mentors and college student advisors who work closely with SAGE teams... and business, civic and educational leaders who serve as judges for national and international tournaments.

Prof. Curt DeBerg and a corps of volunteers from California State University, Chico founded the organization in 2002 (even today, everybody involved in SAGE, including DeBerg, is a volunteer).

“Students for the Advancement of Global Entrepreneurship” now has programs in 21 countries, each with a national coordinator, and expects to have more than 30 within the next year (*a list of current and potential SAGE countries appears at the end of this chapter*). According to the SAGE website, the participating students are “a global community of teenagers sharing a common purpose: To make the world a better place.”

How? By helping “create the next generation of entrepreneurial leaders whose innovations and social enterprises address the major unmet needs” of society.

The SAGE model is similar to interscholastic sports. There are two tracks: “Social Enterprise Businesses (SEB),” which *directly* address social needs through their products and services; and “Socially Responsible Businesses (SRB),” which *indirectly* address social needs through their charitable and voluntary endeavors. A group of at least three teenagers forms an independent team or recruits an ally such as a teacher, business leader, or local nonprofit. If the team is affiliated with a high school, it can be part of an

existing class or an extra-curricular program. The team launches either an SEB or an SRB in September or October and in late spring or early summer of the following year travels to a regional tournament to submit a written report and an oral presentation documenting the success of its efforts for a panel of judges. The winners move on to a national tournament, where the top finisher in each track qualifies for the World Cup.

The first World Cup took place in Kansas City in May 2003 with teams from just four countries. The next two were in Kansas City and San Francisco, but beginning in 2006 the World Cup began traveling the globe: China (2006), Ukraine (2007), Nigeria (2008 and 2013), Brazil (2009), South Africa (2010), the United States (2011 and 2012), and now Russia. There are more than 11,000 students in SAGE programs today, about 200 of them at the competition in Moscow. Next year's World Cup will be in South Korea.

SAGE is built on a sturdy set of assumptions:

- People are increasingly aware that the social problems we face are worldwide and interconnected
- At the same time, entrepreneurship has become broadly accepted as a productive way to address them
- And, best of all, we are blessed with a global community of teenagers ready and willing to help

The young people participating in SAGE have a growing understanding of the challenges that threaten our planet and are increasingly knowledgeable about conditions in other countries. Modern communications technology enables them to collaborate across borders, and because they are no longer isolated from

each other, they have a heightened sensitivity and respect for cross-cultural differences—and a genuine desire to work together to address social needs.

I served as SAGE Board Chair for three years and also worked with Curt, Chief Operating Officer Rob Best and a dedicated group of volunteer Board and staff members to migrate from a single competition that focused primarily on socially responsible businesses to the new, two-track model.

During the transition, we presented special cash awards called “The Arthur Boschee and Evelyn Ball International Awards for Social Enterprise,” named after my father and my wife’s mother, both of whom were successful entrepreneurs.

During the five years the awards were presented, Gold, Silver or Bronze medal winners came from Canada, China, Nigeria (*twice*), Northern Ireland, the Philippines (*twice*), Russia, Singapore (*three times*), South Africa, and the United States (*three times*).

* * *

BREAKING NEWS (AUGUST 12, 2014):

The winners in the Moscow tournament were announced last evening at a gala celebration covered by multiple media outlets. Ireland captured the World Cup in the social enterprise category, with City High School of Pittsburgh finishing second (Mona Abdul-Halim, one of my graduate students at Carnegie Mellon, helped start the City High program four years ago). Nigeria placed third and South Africa fourth. In the socially responsible business category, China took the Cup, with Nigeria second, Canada third and Russia fourth.

Ireland’s winning social enterprise, Greener Globe, developed and sold two products to encourage water conservation. The combined net income during the 2013-2014 academic year

came to nearly €11,000 (approximately \$15,000). **Aquacica** is a timed showerhead with LED lights integrated to encourage consumers to take shorter showers and prevent unnecessary water waste. It's powered by the kinetic energy of the water passing through the showerhead, reducing CO2 emissions and saving electricity. The company's **Water Leak Detection System** is intended to monitor and prevent water leakage (and thereby prevent any resulting damage) in the domestic, industrial and agricultural sectors. Greener Globe intends to expand both products into the U.K. and European markets in the near future.

Eight special awards were also presented, each corresponding to one of the eight Millenium Development Goals:

- To promote gender equality and empower women (Pakistan)
- To reduce child mortality (Singapore)
- To improve maternal health (Singapore)
- To combat HIV and other diseases (Ukraine)
- To ensure environmental sustainability (Russia)
- To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger (Philippines)
- To achieve universal primary education (Ukraine)
- To develop a global partnership for development (Nigeria)

The first five listed above were social enterprises, the other three socially responsible businesses.

* * *

The government of Nigeria has pledged to install SAGE in every one of its more than 500 secondary schools, an ambition that gives weight to a comment by Rich Shields, former Financial Management Officer at the United States Embassy in Nigeria, after last year's World Cup in Abuja: "In my humble opinion, the U.S. Mission accomplished more with a few hours of our time and a couple hundred bucks than we accomplished with the entire foreign aid budget for Africa in a year!"

* * *

Current SAGE Countries: Burkina Faso, Canada, China, Ghana, India, Ireland, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Tanzania, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United States and Zambia. Eleven others are expected to join the global network soon: Armenia, Cameroon, Dominican Republic, Macedonia, Nepal, New Zealand, Georgia, Taiwan, Thailand, Trinidad/Tobago and Vietnam.

Institutional Funders to Date (Selected List): Allstate, Bank of the West, California Society of CPAs, Deloitte, Elkes Family Foundation, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Genentech, Intel, Macy's, Mitsubishi Electric America, Sierra Health Foundation, Staples Foundation, Target, Umpqua Bank, Wells Fargo Bank, the Arata Brothers Trust, the Harold and Louis Price Foundation, the Ken Grossman/Katie Gonser Family, the Kobe Bryant Family Foundation, and the Pasternak Family Foundation.

AUGUST 21, 2014

CHAPTER 37

We keep our distance, too often...

I HAVE WITNESSED THE AFTERMATH OF HORROR AT DACHAU and I've read about the evils of Pol Pot, Idi Amin, Boko Haram and others. I've seen scarifying poverty in India, Africa and America's inner cities.

But nothing has horrified me more in recent years than the book *Escape from Camp 14: One Man's Remarkable Odyssey from North Korea to Freedom in the West*. It tells the story of the only known prisoner born in a North Korean labor camp who's ever managed to escape—but, more than that, it describes an environment in the camps (and in North Korea as a whole) that is truly almost beyond my comprehension. A world of isolation, brainwashing and dehumanized men, women and children.

Shin Dong-hyuk was raised in a slave labor camp where almost all prisoners remain for their entire lives without possibility of release. His parents were prisoners allowed to sleep together a few nights a year as a reward for good work. He lived with his mother until he was 12, rarely saw his father. North Korean officials and camp guards told him his parents had committed crimes against the state and if he failed to work hard or disobeyed the guards he'd be punished or killed.

He witnessed dozens of executions every year. His supervisor chopped off part of his middle finger to punish him for accidentally breaking a sewing machine. He watched adult prisoners and children beaten every day and saw many prisoners die of starvation, illness, torture and work accidents. He survived by eating rats, frogs and insects—and reporting on fellow inmates for rewards.

When he was 13 he overheard his mother and older brother planning an escape attempt, then told the custodian of his school, since “informing” was something he’d been taught to do from an early age.

But instead of being praised and rewarded, he was arrested and tortured for four days by guards who believed he was part of the plot. The guards lit a charcoal fire under his back and forced a hook into his skin so he couldn’t struggle (large scars are still visible today). After seven months in a tiny concrete prison cell, he was forced to watch the public executions of his mother and brother.

At the time he was so brainwashed he felt they “deserved” their fates.

The story of Shin’s escape ten years later is a harrowing one and he is now a human rights activist and international spokesperson for a nonprofit that provides aid to North Korean refugees. He’s been featured on *60 Minutes* in an interview with Anderson Cooper, testified before the United Nations, and moved to South Korea to continue his work. But all that came later.

I have not been shaken this way by a book in decades. I read Elie Wiesel’s *Night*, about his experiences in the Nazi concentration camps, more than 40 years ago. It was heart-breaking. *Escape from Camp 14* has bludgeoned me...

* * *

Sometimes the reality of the plight escapes us. We work on our business plans, talk earnestly with investors, forge partnerships with like-minded entrepreneurs, re-fuel our Kiva accounts and attend countless conferences where we struggle with our friends and colleagues to do good in the world.

And still...

We keep our distance, too often. We *know* (or think we know) the burdens being borne by the people we're trying to help. But how easy is it, really, to get inside their skin?

The story of Shin Dong-hyuk has ripped away any emotional distance I had from what is happening in North Korea—and I suspect there are people everywhere whose stories would give even the most hardened or compassionate among us pause.

So how do we do it? How do we truly understand what life is like for the people we serve in our social enterprises?

Well, my friends, most of us can't.

We're the lucky ones, the privileged ones. We can live with them, get down on the ground with them, weep with them—but we cannot *be* them. Only those who have clawed their way out of their prisons can truly empathize with those who are still trapped. We may have helped them get out, and for that we can be grateful. But even more important is the role they play today as they speak for the ones they left behind, the ones who still need our help. Are we listening?

When the European immigrants flooded into America between 1850 and 1950, many came alone. A family scraped together enough cash for one person to book passage to the tenements of New York or the prairies of North Dakota. Then, when the first arrival had saved enough, he paid for another member of the family to join him. It continued that way for decades as families gradually re-assembled. Nobody who has ever seen Elia Kazan's film *America, America!* can ever forget the closing scene as "Joe" hustles his shoe-shine business on the streets of New York: "Hurry! Hurry! Get your shoes shined! Hurry! People are waiting!"

* * *

Those of us who discover the power of social enterprise are constantly inspired by entrepreneurs who start programs or businesses that ease the pain and open the doors of opportunity for hundreds, thousands and sometimes millions of people. But do we spend enough time trying to genuinely understand those multitudes? Is it even possible? People in the social enterprise and nonprofit sectors, good people, still slip into a “we know what’s best for you” attitude. How many of us truly *listen* to what the people we serve are saying?

Sometimes we need to be thrown up against a wall before we hear anything at all. I was a white-bread suburban boy from Minneapolis when I joined the Peace Corps in the spring of 1968. We were bound for India but did three months of training in Southern California. During our stay we were driven into Watts for “sensitivity training” at Operation Bootstrap.

Watts had nearly burned to the ground during the race riots that hit dozens of American cities in 1965 and Operation Bootstrap rose from the debris, a self-help social enterprise that rejected grants and government subsidies. Equipped with stores, factories, night schools, and a fine arts theater, the organization was pursuing what we now call sustainability.

A few weeks prior to our visit, Watts conducted its annual Summer Festival, a Bootstrap innovation to show other communities the fruits of its work, inviting others to come and take a look. “You know,” one of the leaders told us, “we’ve been doing this for three years and not one of the white communities has turned around and done the same for us.” And in ’68 it was even worse: Violence simmered again and blacks were slain. All of which provided added fuel for the violent wing of the Black Power movement, whose leaders wanted to ignite a bloodbath between blacks and whites.

Operation Bootstrap practiced a different kind of “Black Power”; it didn’t embrace the violence of the Black Panthers

and other radical movements. Instead, co-founder Lou Smith and his colleagues held out hope that there *was* a way for blacks and whites to communicate and live together. Smith himself spent a lot of his time trying to get those of us with paler skins to listen. But he didn't feel many of us did, and to him that was the greatest tragedy in our system. We'd lost the *ability* to listen.

It was a *looong* evening that night in Watts. There were about 200 people in the room. Smith and half a dozen other Operation Bootstrap staff members went nose to nose with us and screamed at us about the racism they knew lived inside us, despite our denials. Screamed at us, then mocked us. Challenged every assumption we'd been holding about ourselves for all our young lives, revealing the prejudice we'd been denying, *forcing* us to *listen*.

I wrote a five-part series about Smith and Operation Bootstrap and sent it to the newspaper I'd been working for back home in Minnesota. The editors refused to run it.

* * *

During a visit to Japan in the early '90s, I met Aichy Tamori, Vice President of the country's International Cooperation Agency, and asked him why Japan would want to be involved in overseas development work. "I am a Buddhist," he said, "and being an 'enlightened' Buddhist means you strive to feel the pains of other people as your own..."

Few of us in the United States are Buddhists. But if we listen, really listen, to the people we serve, perhaps we can momentarily hear what they're saying. And then, despite the arrogance ingrained in our nature and our inability to fully empathize, maybe we can help them and others like them. Maybe.

"Hurry! Hurry! People are waiting!"

* * *

Escape from Camp 14: One Man's Remarkable Odyssey from North Korea to Freedom in the West, *by former Washington Post journalist Blaine Harden, was published by Penguin Books in 2012.*

SEPTEMBER 18, 2014

CHAPTER 38

Finding new routes to old destinations...

THREE STORIES...ABOUT A VIOLIN, A DIAMOND, AND A BOX OF GLOVES...

* * *

In November 1995 Jack Riemer attended a concert given by violinist Itzhak Perlman at Lincoln Center in New York City. Six years later he described the evening in a column for King Features Syndicate.

“If you have ever been to a Perlman concert,” he wrote, “you know that getting on stage is no small achievement for him. He was stricken with polio as a child, and so he has braces on both legs and walks with the aid of two crutches. To see him walk across the stage one step at a time, painfully and slowly, is an awesome sight. He walks painfully, yet majestically, until he reaches his chair. Then he sits down, slowly, puts his crutches on the floor, undoes the clasps on his legs, tucks one foot back and extends the other foot forward. Then he bends down and picks up the violin, puts it under his chin, nods to the conductor and proceeds to play.”

On this evening, however, something went wrong shortly after Perlman began to perform.

“Just as he finished the first few bars,” wrote Riemer, “one of the strings on his violin broke. You could hear it snap—it went off like gunfire across the room. There was no mistaking what that sound meant...People who were there that night...figured he would have to get up, put on the clasps again, pick up the crutches and limp his way off stage—to either find another violin or else find another string.”

But he didn't. Instead, as Riemer recalled, "he waited a moment, closed his eyes and then signaled the conductor to begin again. The orchestra began, and he played from where he had left off. Of course, anyone knows that it is impossible to play a symphonic work with just three strings. I know that, and you know that, but that night, Itzhak Perlman refused to know that. You could see him modulating, changing, re-composing the piece in his head. At one point, it sounded like he was de-tuning the strings to get new sounds from them they had never made before."

The hall exploded with cheers and applause when Perlman finished. Everyone rose to their feet screaming and cheering, "doing everything we could to show how much we appreciated what he had done."

Perlman "smiled, wiped the sweat from his brow, raised his bow to quiet us, and then he said—not boastfully, but in a quiet, pensive, reverent tone—"You know, sometimes it is the artist's task to find out how much music you can still make with what you have left'."

* * *

As Mark Miodownik points out in his 2013 book *Stuff Matters: Exploring the Marvelous Materials That Shape Our Man-Made World*, the biggest diamond yet discovered is an entire planet five times the size of Earth. It's located in the Milky Way, orbiting pulsar star PSR J1719-1438.

Down here on earth, the "biggest yet found is the size of a football. Extracted from the Cullinan mine in South Africa, it was eventually presented to King Edward VII in 1907 on his birthday and is now part of the crown jewels of the British monarchy."

The Cullinan diamond was formed about three hundred kilometers beneath the surface of the earth; over billions of years,

high temperatures and pressures converted carbon rock into a diamond, which probably rose to the surface during a volcanic explosion—where it lay for millions of years until miners discovered it a mile underground.

But the owners of the diamond had a problem. Shipping it back to Britain “posed an enormous security challenge...since the discovery of the largest ever rough diamond had been widely reported in the newspapers.” According to Miodownik, “Notorious criminals like Adam Worth, the inspiration for Sherlock Holmes’s nemesis, Moriarty, who had already managed to steal a whole shipment of diamonds, were perceived to be a real threat.”

But the owners tricked the swarm of criminals. As Miodownik tells it, “a decoy stone was dispatched on a steamboat under high security while the real one was sent by post in a plain brown paper box. The ruse worked precisely because of another remarkable attribute of diamond: Being composed solely of carbon, it is extremely light. The entire Cullinan diamond would have weighed little more than half a kilogram (about 18 ounces).”

* * *

Back in 1913, Sam Goldfish (formerly a Polish immigrant named Shmuel Gelbfisz) had a lucrative job as sales manager for the Elite Glove Company on New York’s lower Fifth Avenue. But President Woodrow Wilson had just signed a new tariff bill: From now on, American glove companies would not be allowed to import foreign gloves without paying an import tax.

According to his biographer, A. Scott Berg, Goldfish “ordered crates of the finest ladies’ dress gloves from France, but instead of having them shipped in pairs, he requested that they be separated into boxes of right-hand gloves and left-hand gloves, each shipment sent to a different addressee at a different American port. Gold-

fish planned to let the parcels go unclaimed, leaving them to be auctioned after a few months by the two different port authorities. At each auction he would be the only bidder, for clearly hundreds of gloves for one hand were completely useless without their mates. Goldfish bought them for a song, matched them, and was able to sell highest-quality gloves far below market price.”

But Goldfish didn't stay in the glove business, despite his sleight of hand. He joined Cecil B. DeMille and others as partners in the Jesse L. Lasky Feature Play Company. To make movies.

And he changed his name.

Samuel Goldwyn became one of the most successful producers in Hollywood. His career lasted more than 45 years. He won two Oscars, received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and produced such beloved films as *Wuthering Heights*, *The Best Years of Our Lives*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Porgy and Bess*, *The Bishop's Wife*, *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*, and *The Pride of the Yankees*.

* * *

All these stories share a common trait: The ingenuity of the people involved.

We spend a lot of time celebrating social entrepreneurs and marveling at the impact they make on social needs. But we rarely see the foot soldiers.

Every day, every member of your staff can either salvage or derail your social enterprise—because every day they collide with new challenges. The best among them don't even pause—they just find new routes to old destinations. They get it done. They don't even talk about it—and their supervisors rarely see it. Even if they do notice, supervisors don't pay much attention to how they did it. They're focused on results, not process.

Deeply embedded beneath all the heroes and haloes of the social enterprise world are the anonymous, ingenious operations people, the

ones who make things go. The everyday miracle workers. Because there is no right way to do things when the situation changes—there is only the way that works.

As Jack Riemer put it at the end of his column about Perlman’s astonishing concert, “perhaps our task in this shaky, fast-changing, bewildering world...is to make music, at first with all that we have, and then, when that is no longer possible, to make music with what we have left.”

* * *

SOURCES:

Goldwyn: A Biography, by A. Scott Berg, published in 1998 by Riverhead Books, a division of Penguin Group USA.

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OCTOBER 23, 2014

CHAPTER 39

Holding back the future...

I'VE BEEN THINKING A LOT ABOUT WALLS THESE DAYS...

About Ying Sheng, Allen Octavian Hume and Nikita Khrushchev...

Thousands of years apart in time and space, but all with the same, impossible desire...

* * *

The Great Wall of China began to take shape in 221 B.C. after Ying Sheng ended more than 500 years of conflict by unifying the country, established the Qin Dynasty, and proclaimed himself “Qin Shi Huang” (the First Emperor of Qin).

Several ducal states had started building walls along their boundaries as early as the 7th century B.C. Ying Sheng began incorporating them into his own defense network, linking the ramparts, erecting watchtowers, and constructing beacons to alert the capital in case of attack.

But that was just the beginning. The size and scope of the wall grew dramatically during the next 2,000 years. Natural features such as mountain ridges, river gorges and narrow passes were threaded into the design. Watch towers, signal towers and moats were regularly spaced and three overlapping layers protected key strategic areas. Troop barracks and garrison stations were added and the wall reached an average height of 32 feet and an average width of 16 feet, enough for ten soldiers or five horses to stand abreast. The emperors were confident the wall would protect them.

Much of what we see today was completed during the Ming Dynasty, which ended in 1644. At one point it extended 5,500 miles, 71% actual wall, 25% natural defensive barriers such as

hills and rivers, and the rest trenches. The entire wall, including all its branches, meandered across roughly 13,000 miles.

* * *

The British thought they had found a way to outwit salt smugglers during the 1800s.

According to a contemporary account by Sir John Strachey quoted in Roy Moxham's fascinating book *The Great Hedge of India: The Search for the Living Barrier that Divided A People*:

“To secure the levy of a duty on salt...there grew up gradually a monstrous system, to which it would be almost impossible to find a parallel in any tolerably civilized country. A Customs line was established which stretched across the whole of India, which in 1869 extended from the Indus to the Mahanadi in Madras, a distance of 2,300 miles, and it was guarded by nearly 12,000 men...It would have stretched from London to Constantinople...It consisted principally of an immense impenetrable hedge...”

The British were so enamored of the hedge that Allan Octavian Hume, the Commissioner of Inland Customs, reported proudly to his superiors that

“... in populated parts of the country, where smuggling is rife, (our) men are active in preventing the passage of contraband goods by a barrier which, in its most perfect form, is utterly impassable to man or beast... the hedge is a live one, from ten to fourteen feet in height, and six to twelve feet thick, composed of closely clipped thorny trees and shrubs...(with) a thorny creeper...constantly intermingled.”

* * *

The Allies carved up Germany's capital city after the Second World War and the Soviets occupied East Berlin. But the endless flow of people defecting from the Soviet bloc by traveling through West Berlin gnawed at Soviet leaders for years. By 1961, more than three million people had escaped, many of them young, skilled workers such as doctors, teachers and engineers. In June 1961 alone, some 19,000 people crossed into West Berlin. In July, 30,000. During the first 11 days of August, 16,000 East Germans crossed into West Berlin, and on August 12 some 2,400 followed—the largest number of defectors ever to leave East Germany in a single day.

On August 13, Soviet leader Nikita Krushchev gave the East German government permission to stop the flow of emigrants by closing its borders for good. In just two weeks, the East German army, police force and volunteer construction workers completed a makeshift barbed wire and concrete block wall between East and West Berlin.

Over time, East German officials replaced the temporary wall with reinforced concrete 12 feet high and four feet wide, with massive pipes above it that made climbing over the top nearly impossible. Behind the wall on the East German side was the infamous "Death Strip," a no-man's-land of soft sand (to reveal footprints), floodlights, ferocious dogs, trip-wire machine guns and patrolling soldiers with orders to shoot escapees on sight. At least 138 people were killed trying to get over, under or around the wall between 1961 and 1989.

* * *

A 5,500 mile wall? A 2,300 mile hedge? A barrier down the heart of a city?

None of them forestalled the future:

- The Great Wall was supposed to prevent hostile nomadic groups from invading, but it failed again and again. Alien hordes swept in, supplanting one dynasty after another. The Jurchens arrived in the 12th century and ruled for nine generations before they fell to Genghis Khan and the Mongols. A hundred years later, rebels from the south established the Ming Dynasty. But the cost of improving the wall drained the Ming dynasty's resources and, in the end, failed to preserve their hold on the country. The Manchu leaders who easily breached the wall and overcame the Ming understandably doubted the need for such expensive border defenses—and eventually became pre-occupied with other forces arriving from the sea, including Catholic missionaries from Europe. The Manchus spent neither time nor treasure maintaining the wall and today it's a broken network of remnants, nothing more than a tourist attraction.
- The Great Hedge became irrelevant within half a century as Hume's successors began to see it as a major obstacle damaging other British interests, especially free trade and travel. By the early 1880s, the Viceroy of India had standardized the salt tax across most of the country, which made smuggling unprofitable and eliminated the need for the Customs line. When Moxham began searching for the hedge that gave Commissioner Hume such great pride, he couldn't find it. Almost nothing remained...just some scattered and withered remnants.

- And of course the Berlin Wall lasted only 28 years, until international pressures helped it fall. And it wasn't completely effective as a barrier even while it stood: More than 5,000 East Germans (including some 600 border guards) managed to cross the border by jumping out of windows adjacent to the wall, climbing over the barbed wire, flying in hot air balloons, crawling through sewers, and driving through unfortified parts of the wall at high speeds. When the end came in November 1989, more than two million people celebrated what one journalist called "the greatest street party in the history of the world." People used hammers and picks to knock away chunks of the wall while cranes and bulldozers pulled down section after section. Soon the wall was gone and Berlin was united for the first time since 1945. "Only today," one Berliner spray-painted on a piece of the wall, "is the war really over."

* * *

But physical walls aren't the only barriers we throw up to guard against the future.

How many social enterprise Board members, executives and staff members suffer from the paralytic hold of the past? We earnestly cling to solutions that worked yesterday but are woefully inadequate as the world changes. We stay hunkered behind our mental walls, trusting them to protect us. They seem sturdy. They've sheltered us in the past.

But they aren't as helpful as they appear. I've seen too many social enterprises succeed, for a while, then falter because the Board or the management team or the staff begin to fear the future and encase themselves in mental prisons.

A friend once told a group of us about a scenario psychologists were using to identify personality traits. "Suppose you're walking down a country road," she said, "and suddenly come upon an enormous brick wall that stretches entirely across the road and miles away on either side. It's too high to climb and too deep to crawl underneath. What are you going to do?"

We came up with plenty of possible solutions: Borrow a cannon and blast the wall down; hire a helicopter and fly over the top; rent a set of carabiners and climb the rock face. Or we could just give up and go home.

Finally, one of my friends simply said: "You know, I think I'd just walk up to the wall, poke my finger against one of the bricks and watch it fall out on the other side, then poke away a few others and climb on through."

Wouldn't it be something if we each had the courage to poke a bit at those invisible walls holding us back from the future? They might all turn out to be as flimsy as the barrier demolished by my friend...

NOVEMBER 20, 2014

CHAPTER 40

Silent night

MY COLLEGE ROOMMATE STEVE PROKASKY STAYED IN THE CLOSET until his late 20s.

We met in 1962. He was a year older, but we wound up rooming together from 1964 until I joined the Peace Corps in 1968. During his college years, Steve chaired the University of Minnesota Homecoming Committee, served as an officer for the Minnesota Student Association, and dove into every possible campus organization. We traveled together for three weeks during the summer of 1964, sleeping one night under a tree in Valley Forge and surviving Hurricane Cleo in Miami Beach. Over the years, we frequently double-dated—and we stayed in touch during my Peace Corps tour.

But by the time I returned to the Twin Cities in 1970 he was gone.

For more than a decade he'd led a double life. I had no clue what was going on—and I *lived* with him! He told me years later he once ran into one of our mutual college friends at a leather bar in downtown Minneapolis: They saw each other, but immediately shied away and never mentioned it to each other again—it was too risky to bring their hidden lives into the open.

Steve moved to the Castro District in San Francisco while I taught English to village boys in India. He came out and found a home, found people who loved him for the man he was, and became a leading gay rights activist. But even that wasn't an easy thing to do in the early 1970s. The 1969 riot by gay men at The Stonewall Inn in Manhattan's West Village had jump-started the modern gay rights movement only a few years before. Steve, being Steve, threw himself into community affairs in San Francisco and eventually wrote a recurring column for the still-thriving *Bay Area Reporter*, "serving

the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities since 1971.” In 1978 he was one of the initial members of The San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus, the world’s first openly gay chorale, and sang at the memorial service for the assassinated Harvey Milk less than a month later. In 1981 he traveled with the Chorus on a national performing tour that included his home town of Minneapolis.

He did return to the Twin Cities on his own for a few days in 1975 and spent an afternoon in my apartment telling me about his life in San Francisco. I still choke up when I remember him describing the man he loved: “Jerr,” he laughed delightedly, “I finally found somebody who made me want to put the cap back on the toothpaste tube!”

To my shame, I didn’t actively stay in touch. I went on cheering for him, but I didn’t understand his world, and I was busy raising a family. But those are just excuses...

Despite occasionally thinking I *should* try to see him again, I didn’t do so until his older brother Tom called me in 1993.

Steve had AIDS.

A few weeks later we met for dinner in San Francisco. I arrived first, watched him move slowly across the room toward me, gripping the backs of chairs to keep his balance, his body so thin I was shocked.

We talked for two hours. I like to think we were each trying to make up for lost time, but I know it was my fault, not his, that we’d stayed apart for so long.

I have no idea what Steve thought about his chances of surviving, but I knew he’d never stop fighting. *That* much I remembered about my old roommate.

We parted...and Steve died November 18, 1993, mourned by so many who loved him. Still mourned by me. What I missed by not knowing him during those lost years—by *not* loving him—is impossible to say, but I’m the lesser for it.

Which is one of the reasons I have such an emotional reaction each time I read about another teenager who's summoned the courage to come out and been supported by his parents and other family members, as I did this month when I saw the revised birth announcement Kai Bogert's parents sent to their friends: "A retraction...In 1995 we announced the arrival of our sprogget, Elizabeth Anne, as a daughter. He informs us that we were mistaken. Oops! Our bad. We would now like to present, our wonderful son—Kai Bogert. Loving you is the easiest thing in the world. Tidy your room."

Yes, Steve, we've come a long, long way in the past 50 years. I wish you were here to see it.

And it's one of the reasons my wife and I attended a Christmas concert by the members of a social enterprise two years ago in Dallas...

I wrote what follows the next day, then shared it with family members and a few friends...

* * *

I do not have the skill to fully convey the emotional impact of what happened last night...but I'll try...

Join us. Linda and I are in one of the finest performing arts centers in the nation during the final moments of a Christmas concert by the Turtle Creek Chorale, a world-renowned gay men's chorus. The auditorium is completely dark except for the spotlight on a tall, gray-haired man in formal dress standing quietly at the front of the stage. Silence abides for a few moments until the first piano strains of "Silent Night, Holy Night" drift across the room—and the man in the spotlight raises his arms. We expect the members of the chorus to begin singing, but they remain silent—and we realize the man is performing a poetic interpretation of the song entirely in sign language.

We're spell-bound, the words of the song whispering through our minds.

When he finishes, he turns and steps silently onto a podium, facing the members of the chorus. The piano falls silent, the spotlight widens, and we wait for an a capella version from the singers...

Instead, all 140 men begin performing the sign language translation together, without the piano...280 hands and arms waving and fluttering and drawing every one of us into their midst. We can “hear” the music and we are silently singing the words to ourselves—and I am not the only one in the audience crying.

Once their hands and arms become still, we are all invited to join in for one more verse as the chorus begins to sing aloud—and as we approach the final words I am suddenly back in my boyhood home by the Christmas tree as my father teaches us the German songs he learned as a child himself...and without even knowing how it happens I’m singing with him again in German as the closing words “Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!” (“Sleep in heavenly peace”) fall unbidden from my lips and I dissolve once more into tears.

*Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,
Alles schläft; einsam wacht
Nur das traute hochheilige Paar.
Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!*

*Silent night, holy night
All is calm, all is bright
‘Round yon virgin, mother and child
Holy infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace!
Sleep in heavenly peace!*

DECEMBER 14, 2014

CHAPTER 41

The moment of truth...

YOU START YOUR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE WITH \$1,000 OF YOUR OWN money. You're 33, living in a garage with no bathroom and no heat, earning less than \$10,000 a year.

Eight years later you're a few minutes away from selling the company. The buyers are waiting in the next room, the documents have been vetted, your partner's ready to celebrate.

And why not? You and your partner will each receive \$60 million.

* * *

You spend two years developing the pilot. CBS likes it and orders 13 episodes.

The network knows this will be a TV series like none before, but the new Vice President of Programming is trying to shake things up. You cast the show and tape the first episodes. The series will debut Tuesday night.

Monday morning the network's in-house censor asks you to cut one line from the pilot.

* * *

The Tonight Show calls. *The Tonight Show!*

You've been dreaming about this for years! You've practiced for hours in front of the mirror after the show signed off each night, imagining how you'd handle yourself.

Now the moment is here.

. . . but one of the most popular singers in the country pulled you aside not long ago, started cursing *The Tonight Show* host, and told you why you should *never* go on his show.

* * *

So what do you do?

Gary Erickson decided not to sell Clif Bar. Norman Lear refused to slice even a single line from the opening episode of All in the Family. Dick Gregory spurned The Tonight Show.

It happens to each of us. At some point in our personal or business lives—often more than once—we’re faced with a moment of truth. Will we compromise? Or will we risk the consequences?

* * *

Erickson’s story begins in 1990 during a day-long, 175-mile bicycle ride with a friend. In his book *Raising the Bar: Integrity and Passion in Life and Business*, he recalls “gnawing on some ‘other’ energy bars all day. Suddenly, I couldn’t take another bite, despite being famished and needing to eat to keep going. It came to me: ‘I could make a better bar than this.’”

Two years later, after hours of experimenting in his mother’s kitchen, he had a recipe he liked. By the time he almost sold the company in 2000, Clif Bar Inc. had \$40 million in annual sales. “I loved Clif Bar,” he wrote, “the product, the people, the spirit of the company. I felt that there was more ahead for Clif Bar, yet...I nearly sold the company. Why?”

One of the main reasons is that selling seemed to be the logical exit strategy. “The story went—and still goes—like this. You’re an entrepreneur. Your company grows and begins to feel too big for you. You’re tired, stressed out, and working really hard. You

become convinced that you can't compete against larger companies. You also become convinced that you can sell and maintain the company's—and your own—integrity. An offer comes along. The money is appealing. You sell the company.”

Erickson had watched bigger corporations such as Nestle and Kraft gobble up two of his biggest competitors. “It seemed like selling was the *natural path*, the normal culmination to starting a small but successful company.”

So the due diligence began and the process of selling the company gained momentum. Erickson and his partner promised employees their jobs were safe, that the two of them would continue to manage the company after the sale, that doing so “was a non-negotiable criterion.”

But shortly before the scheduled day of the sale, Erickson and his partner were told new management would take over within three or four months and company headquarters would move from California to the Midwest. All current employees would lose their jobs. “I now tell people who plan to sell their companies to *watch the process carefully*,” he wrote four years later. “It often begins with a soft sell. At first you hear, ‘We love you guys. We think you are the greatest company. You are fantastic. We want you to continue with the company.’ The sales job is full on, and they say everything you want to hear. As time goes on you commit to the process itself and start to focus on the finish line and the money. Soon you’ve gone so far down the road that it seems irreversible, and you begin to give up on the promises you’ve made.”

Erickson had seen it happen with some of his peers in the food industry, who later told him they felt manipulated and would do it differently if they had the chance. “You come to believe that in the end, when you see that fat check, the rest won’t matter. Keeping the employees, maintaining the integrity of your products, running the company won’t seem that important. The knowledge

that a lot of money will be wired into your account looms larger and larger and you say, ‘Well, I can live with that.’ You detach. By the end of the process I was feeling ‘Let’s just get this done.’”

But, underneath it all, Erickson’s gut was screaming at him. “I didn’t listen. I detached from the process. I remember thinking, ‘You feel sick to your stomach, and you are not sleeping because that is what anyone would be doing in this situation. You are selling the company you started, and you don’t have a choice (or so I thought). Of course you feel bad. You wonder what will happen to the employees, to the products you have created, to the company.’”

His wife Kit and a few of his friends thought he was crazy to sell. He couldn’t hear them—but he felt nauseated constantly and hadn’t slept well in weeks.

Here’s how he describes the scene on the day of his decision:

“Attorneys from Clif Bar and Company X had worked feverishly all weekend. Head honchos flew in from the Midwest to finalize the details. Finally it was late Monday morning, and I stood in the office waiting to go out and sign the contract. Out of nowhere I started to shake and couldn’t breathe. I’d climbed big mountains, raced bicycles, played horn in jazz concerts: I handled pressure well, so this first-ever anxiety attack took me by surprise. I told my partner that I needed to walk around the block. Outside, as I started across the parking lot, I began to weep, overwhelmed. ‘How did I get here? Why am I doing this?’ I kept walking. Halfway around the block I stopped dead in my tracks, hit by an epiphany. I felt in my gut, ‘I’m not done,’ and then ‘I don’t have to do this.’ I began to laugh, feeling free, instantly. I turned around, went back to the office and told my partner, ‘Send them home. I can’t sell the company.’”

Most people thought he was nuts. Investment bankers predicted Clif Bar would go under within six months. His partner demanded he buy her out.

But four years later he wrote “Business has a purpose beyond money. We look for meaning in our lives. Business has meaning too. Walking around the block forced me to ask again, ‘What is Clif Bar’s meaning?’”

The answer led him to re-define his own values as an entrepreneur and the concept of shareholder value. He rejected the idea that financial return on investment is the only true measure. Profit “is not the reason we exist. Profit enables Clif Bar to remain healthy and to do good over the long haul.” He and his colleagues now insist upon including “product integrity, our people, the community, and the earth in the balance sheets” and in their definition of shareholder value.

* * *

“So, you’d lose an entire series for one stupid line?”

That’s CBS President Bob Wood speaking, as quoted in Norman Lear’s 2014 autobiography *Even This I Get to Experience*.

The adventure began months earlier when Fred Silverman, the incoming Vice President of Programming, grew tired of the rural comedies that had driven CBS for years: *The Beverly Hillbillies*, *Green Acres*, and *Petticoat Junction*. He wanted to change the network’s brand.

Wood agreed and, according to Lear, thought his show “would do the trick, but he asked me to rewrite the pilot. I said I wouldn’t do that.” Nor would he agree to create a different first episode. “It was deliberately based on the slightest of stories,” he wrote, “which gave me the opportunity to present 360 degrees of

everyone, but especially Archie—his attitudes on race, religion, politics, sex, and family, holding nothing back.”

Wood deliberated for a while before ordering 13 episodes, but the trouble started almost immediately. The CBS censor came to Lear with a long list of script changes the network wanted him to make. “There were pages of such requests,” Lear recalled, and they turned into “warnings and occasionally to threats.” He initially wrote lengthy letters of clarification and reasoning, “but rarely was I able to avoid the ultimate confrontation: ‘Remove that and I go, too.’”

CBS finally gave Lear a few days’ notice that *All in the Family* would debut Tuesday, January 12, 1971, at 9:30 p.m. (right after *The Beverly Hillbillies*, *Green Acres* and *Hee-Haw*). Lear “alerted everyone in my world.” Then, the morning before the air date, the censor “paid me a visit and—hold everything—asked me to make one trim” in the first episode.

Lear refused and the censor replied: “Then *we’ll* cut it. Either way it won’t be in the broadcast.”

Silverman called later that day. “You’ve got a great show, Norm. What does one line matter?”

But Lear knew how much it *did* matter. “I told him the line had to stay in,” he wrote, “and he said I could talk myself blue in the face but ‘the boys upstairs’ had drawn a line. Somehow I knew that far more than differing opinions over one line was at stake here. As tiny as this issue was, much of the program content of the series depended on our relationship with (the censor), and that would be determined right here and now.”

At 5 p.m. Los Angeles time, an hour and a half before the show was scheduled to go on the air in New York, Bob Wood called:

“He had a terrific compromise idea and felt sure I’d have no problem with it,” wrote Lear. “Listen, you’ll love it, we’re

gonna run the second episode first,' he said. 'Then next week we'll run the show intended for tonight. We won't change a word and you've saved your precious line. Done?'

"No,' I said. We weren't done, and the rest of the conversation was like drowning in the dark, legs pumping to keep head above water, hands grasping for something, anything, to hold on to.

"The point is that we can't keep giving in...'

"But we're still talking one line...'

"Yes, but after that, trust me, I know where this is going.'

"So, you'd lose an entire series for one stupid line?'

"It isn't the line, it's the decision.'

"So you'd lose the series for one stupid decision? Is that what you're telling me? We got twenty-five minutes to airtime, is that what you're telling me?'

"I'm sorry, Bob...I want the pilot to air first and the line of dialogue to remain as taped.'

"And if not?'

"Don't expect me back.'"

The show ran without the cut. "Thirty minutes later America had been introduced to the subversive mind of Norman Lear, and not a single state seceded from the Union." The series lasted for nine years.

Lear was unaware how much his life would change—"and how much the establishment would come to believe that TV and the American culture had been 'radicalized' overnight." Within five years, he had seven series on the air (including *Maude*, *Good Times* and *The Jeffersons*) that were viewed by more than 120 million people each week.

* * *

Long before Dave Chapelle, Chris Rock, Eddie Murphy, Richard Pryor and other in-your-face black comedians, there was Richard Claxton “Dick” Gregory.

In their 2013 book about Pryor, authors David and Joe Henry write that Gregory belonged to a new generation of black comedians who rejected “the deferential buffoonery of vaudeville or minstrelsy. Gregory...did not flinch from skewering white audiences on issues of race.... Perched on a stool in a three-button Brooks Brothers suit, (Gregory) possessed an unflappable cool, taking long, contemplative drags on his cigarette and exhaling well-timed streams of smoke into the spotlight before delivering his punch lines. Not even the inevitable catcalls of ‘nigger’ could rock his composure. ‘According to my contract,’ he replied to one such heckler, ‘the management pays me fifty dollars every time someone calls me that. So will you all do me a favor? Everybody in the room please stand up and yell ‘nigger.’”

But breaking into the national comedy scene (read: white) had been all but impossible for blacks. Gregory usually performed at small clubs for mostly black audiences, earning an average of five dollars a night, and worked as a postal employee during the day.

Then, in January 1961, everything changed. The Playboy Club called him at the last minute to replace a comedian who’d canceled his performance. Gregory missed his bus, sprinted 20 blocks—and discovered there’d been a mistake...the nightclub was filled with a convention of white executives from the South. The room manager offered Gregory \$50, told him to go home and said they’d try to book him again sometime soon. “But I was cold and mad,” he told the Henry brothers, “and I had run twenty blocks. I didn’t care if (they) had a lynch mob in there, I was going on.”

The Henry brothers take up the story from there:

At the end of the show, the frozen-food execs gave him a standing ovation. They handed him money as he left the stage.... Hugh Hefner came down for the second show... and immediately signed Gregory to a three-year contract, beginning with a three-week run (at the Club)...

“And just like that,” Phillip Lutz would write in *The New York Times*, “with little fanfare or protest, nightclub comedy was integrated.”

Time magazine of Friday, February 17, featured a prominent article on Gregory, and the following Monday morning a call came from someone on Jack Paar’s staff inviting him to appear on *The Tonight Show*.

“My wife took the call and she’s so happy,” Gregory said. “I got on the phone and said, ‘No, I don’t want to do this,’ and I hung up and started cryin’....

(He’d gone) out drinking one night (not long before) with singer Billy Eckstine, who began “cussin’ Paar out to me. [He] told me, ‘Hey, man, that motherfuckin’ Jack Paar, he ain’t never let a nigger sit on the couch (after performing).’

“I was so embarrassed, so humiliated, I never told my wife that I could not do the Paar show. It was just a personal thing.”

Fortunately, Gregory’s phone rang again....

“This is Mr. Paar. How come you don’t want to work my show?”

“I just don’t want to work it.”

“Why?”

“Because the negroes never sit on the couch.”

There was a long pause and he said, “Well come on in, you can sit on the couch.”

While Paar and Gregory exchanged a few canned jokes...so many phone calls came in to the NBC switchboard in New York the circuits blew out. The calls, Gregory says, were coming from “white folks who were seeing a black person for the first time in a human conversation.”

Gregory had been earning \$250 a week at the Playboy Club. After sitting on Jack Paar’s couch, he said, his salary jumped to \$5,000. “What a country!” he would say. “Where else could I have to ride in the back of the bus, live in the worst neighborhoods, go to the worst schools, eat in the worst restaurants—and average \$5,000 a week just talking about it?”

But the money was only window-dressing. Gregory has spent the rest of his life fighting for social justice—and he might not have had the necessary clout if he’d said yes to Jack Paar’s staffer.

After his appearance on *The Tonight Show*, he became a nationally known headliner, selling out nightclubs, making numerous national television appearances, and recording popular comedy albums. He used his celebrity status to draw attention to such issues as segregation and disfranchisement, joined voter registration drives and sit-ins, participated in marches and parades to support a range of causes, including opposition to the Vietnam War, world hunger, and drug abuse. He also fasted more than 60 times to protest injustice; at one point, he weighed just 97 pounds.

Gregory published his autobiography, *Nigger*, in 1963 and it became the best-selling book in the country. At last count it had sold more than seven million copies.

SOURCES

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FEBRUARY 19, 2015

CHAPTER 42

They matter...

IT SEEMED LIKE SUCH A SIMPLE IDEA. PICK TEN POP SONGS THAT inspire people who are seeking social justice.

Right.

Then I started scrolling through my iTunes cache, asking friends for suggestions, jotting down song titles, and chasing after performances on YouTube.

Ten? Are you kidding me?

So this is *my* list. Forty songs, not ten, listed chronologically by their release dates. Some will be on your list as well—and many will not. But they all have one thing in common: They matter. They quicken the blood. They unleash our emotions, our hopes, our dreams for a better world. When we lie awake at night, we hear their lyrics, feel their rhythms. When we sleep, they invade our dreams. So many of us are seeking social justice in so many different ways—it's folly to imagine a list of ten pop songs that would satisfy us all.

Each of the songs on my list has touched me personally at important moments in my life. I've included the names of the performers who caught my attention, excerpts from the lyrics, and links to the songs themselves. I hope you listen to them again (you know most of them) and let them play upon your heart whenever you need them.

As I winnowed my choices from more than 100 possibilities, it became increasingly clear that each generation builds its own social justice playlist. Not surprisingly, most of the titles on mine were released before the mid-'70s—songs I heard during the first 30 years of my life that have stayed with me since.

You can go to each song by clicking on the link. If I've left out one or more of your favorites, feel free to roll your eyes. But please don't stop there. Send me a note and tell me about them!

**1. Where Have All the Flowers Gone
(The Kingston Trio, 1961)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=55FZnYhCM-Y>

And where have all the soldiers gone, long time passing?
Where have all the soldiers gone, a long long time ago?
Where have all the soldiers gone?
Gone to graveyards, every one
When will they ever learn, when will they ever learn?

2. Stand By Me (Ben E. King, 1961)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vbg7YoXiKn0>

When the night has come
And the land is dark
And the moon is the only light we'll see
No, I won't be afraid
Oh, I won't be afraid
Just as long as you stand, stand by me

**3. Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream
(The Chad Mitchell Trio, 1962)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0pBna6O5NE>

Last night I had the strangest dream
I never dreamed before
I dreamed the world had all agreed
To put an end to war

4. If I Had a Hammer (Peter, Paul and Mary, 1962)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_UKvpONI3No

It's the hammer of justice

It's the bell of freedom

It's a song about love between my brothers and my sisters
all over this land

5. Tobacco Road (Lou Rawls, 1963)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UyfJKg7Dddo>

Save my money and get rich I know

And bring it back to Tobacco Road

Bring dynamite and a crane

Blow it up and start all over again

6. Blowin' in the Wind (Bob Dylan, 1963)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3l4nVByCL44>

Yes, an' how many years can some people exist

Before they're allowed to be free?

Yes, an' how many times must a man turn his head

An' pretend that he just doesn't see?

7. Little Boxes (Pete Seeger, 1963)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUwUp-D_VV0

There's a green one and a pink one

And a blue one and a yellow one

And they're all made out of ticky tacky

And they all look just the same

8. Keep Your Eyes on the Prize (Pete Seeger, 1963)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wjamOIEGdFw>

Well, the only chains that we can stand
Are the chains of hand in hand
Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on

9. A Change is Gonna Come (Sam Cooke, 1964)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEBlaMOmKV4>

I was born by the river in a little tent
Oh and just like the river I've been running ev'r since
It's been a long time, a long time coming
But I know a change gonna come, oh yes it will

10. The Times They Are a Changin' (Bob Dylan, 1964)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QqvUz0HrNKY>

You better start swimmin'
Or you'll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin'

11. You'll Never Walk Alone (The Righteous Brothers, 1965)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pNJY2uut_fI

Walk on, walk on, with hope in your heart
And you'll never walk alone
You'll never walk alone

12. The Impossible Dream (Richard Kiley, 1965)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YGzqbEeVWhs>

This is my quest, to follow that star...
No matter how hopeless, no matter how far...
To fight for the right, without question or pause...
To be willing to march into Hell, for a Heavenly cause...
And the world will be better for this:
That one man, scorned and covered with scars,
Still strove, with his last ounce of courage,
To reach...the unreachable star...

13. Climb Every Mountain

(Peggy Wood, *The Sound of Music*, 1965)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxsCBIXr71M>

Climb every mountain,
Ford every stream,
Follow every rainbow,
'Til you find your dream.
A dream that will need
All the love you can give,
Every day of your life
For as long as you live.

14. For What It's Worth (Buffalo Springfield, 1966)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5M_Ttstbgs

There's somethin' happenin' here
What it is ain't exactly clear
There's a man with a gun, over there
Tellin' me I got to beware
(I think it's time we)
Stop, children, what's that sound?
Everybody look—what's goin' down?

15. Abraham, Martin & John (Dion DiMucci, 1968)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2hNLDigNVB8>

Anybody here seen my old friend Martin?
Can you tell me where he's gone?
He freed a lot of people,
But it seems the good they die young.
I just looked 'round and he's gone.

16. Revolution (The Beatles, 1968)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BGLGzRXY5Bw>

You say you want a revolution
Well, you know we all want to change the world
You tell me that it's evolution
Well, you know we all want to change the world
But when you talk about destruction
Don't you know that you can count me out

17. Those Were the Days (Mary Hopkin, 1968)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3KEhWTnWvE>

Those were the days my friend
We thought they'd never end
We'd sing and dance forever and a day
We'd live the life we choose
We'd fight and never lose
For we were young and sure to have our way

**18. And When I Die (Blood, Sweat & Tears,
featuring David Clayton Thomas, 1968)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8gxwutvITw8>

And when I die, and when I'm gone
There'll be one child born
In this world to carry on, to carry on

19. Sing a Simple Song of Freedom (Bobby Darin, 1969)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZ1ohsissjE>

Seven hundred million are you listening?
Most of what you read is made of lies
But speaking one to one, ain't it everybody's sun
To wake to in the morning when we rise?

20. Everybody's Talkin' At Me (Harry Nilsson, 1969)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2AzEY6ZqkuE>

I'm going where the sun keeps shining
Through the pouring rain...
Banking off the northeast wind
Sailing on summer breeze
And skipping over the ocean like a stone

21. Please, Don't Pass Me By (Leonard Cohen, 1970)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W90723antCM>

Oh, please don't pass me by,
For I am blind, yes I am blind, oh but you can see,
Yes, I've been blinded totally,
Oh, please don't pass me by.

22. Teach Your Children

(Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, 1970)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vnYKRacKQc>

Teach your children well...
And feed them on your dreams
The one they pick's, the one you'll know by
Don't you ever ask them why
If they told you, you would cry
So just look at them and sigh
And know they love you

23. Bridge Over Troubled Waters
(Simon & Garfunkel, 1970)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_a46WJ1viA

When you're down and out
When you're on the street,
When evening falls so hard
Well, I will comfort you

24. Big Yellow Taxi (Joni Mitchell, 1970)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=94bdMSCd7w20>

Don't it always seem to go
That you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone?
They paved paradise
Put up a parking lot

25. Imagine (John Lennon, 1971)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRhg-yO1KN8>

You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you will join us
And the world will be as one

26. What's Going On (Marvin Gaye, 1971)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-kA3UtBj4M>

Mother, mother
There's too many of you crying
Brother, brother, brother
There's far too many of you dying

27. You've Got a Friend (James Taylor, 1971)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3WJ1cf3nrLE>

You just call out my name, and you know wherever I am
I'll come running to see you again.
Winter, spring, summer, or fall, all you've got to do is call
and I'll be there, yeah, yeah, now
you've got a friend.

28. American Pie (Don McLean, 1971)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tr-BYVeCv6U>

And in the streets the children screamed
The lovers cried, and the poets dreamed
But not a word was spoken
The church bells all were broken...
And the three men I admire most
The Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost
They caught the last train for the coast

29. Won't Get Fooled Again (The Who, 1971)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SHhrZgojY1Q>

I'll tip my hat to the new constitution
Take a bow for the new revolution
Smile and grin at the change all around
Pick up my guitar and play, just like yesterday
Then I'll get on my knees and pray
We don't get fooled again

30. Lean on Me (Bill Withers, 1972)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KEXQkrllGbA>

Lean on me when you're not strong
And I'll be your friend, I'll help you carry on
For it won't be long
'Til I'm gonna need somebody to lean on

31. Dream Weaver (Gary Wright, 1972)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZKuzwPOefs>

I have just closed my eyes again
Climbed aboard the Dream Weaver train
Driver take away my worries of today
And leave tomorrow behind
Dream Weaver, I believe you can get me through the night
Dream Weaver, I believe we can reach the morning light

32. Song Sung Blue (Neil Diamond, 1972)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ighSddnnaPE>

Me and you are subject to the blues now and then
But when you take the blues and make a song
You sing 'em out again...
Funny thing, but you can sing it with a cry in your voice
And before you know it get to feelin' good
You simply got no choice

33. Garden Party

(Rick Nelson and the Stone Canyon Band, 1972)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAHR7_VZdRw

When I got to the garden party, they all knew my name
No one recognized me, I didn't look the same
But it's all right now, I learned my lesson well
You see, ya can't please everyone, so ya got to please yourself

34. Cat's in the Cradle (Harry Chapin, 1974)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=etundhQa724>

And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon
Little boy blue and the man in the moon
When you comin' home son?
I don't know when, but we'll get together then son
You know we'll have a good time then

35. Take it to the Limit (The Eagles, 1975)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0HYiaYyfp8Q>

And when you're looking for your freedom
(Nobody seems to care)
And you can't find the door
(Can't find it anywhere)
When there's nothing to believe in
Still you're coming back, you're running back
You're coming back for more
So put me on a highway
And show me a sign
And take it to the limit
One more time

36. Another Brick in the Wall (Pink Floyd, 1979)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YR5ApYxkU-U>

We don't need no education
We don't need no thought control
No dark sarcasms in the classroom
Teachers leave them kids alone
Hey! teachers! leave the kids alone!
All in all you're just another brick in the wall.

37. Hallelujah (Leonard Cohen, 1984)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YrLk4vdY28Q>

And even though it all went wrong
I'll stand before the Lord of Song
With nothing on my tongue but Hallelujah

38. Everybody Hurts (Joe Cocker, 2004)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXh6wFhzN-8>

When the day is long and the night, the night is
yours alone
When you're sure you've had enough of this life,
well hang on
Don't let yourself go, 'cos everybody cries
And everybody hurts sometimes

39. I Will Rise Up / Ain't No More Cane (Lyle Lovett, 2007)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJr6fwMoBgo>

In the darkest hour
In the dead of night
As the storm clouds are gathered
And the lightnin' strikes
And the thunder rolls
And the cold rain goes
The future it holds what God only knows
(what God only knows)
And I will rise up and I will rise up
Though I be a dead man, I said, yes and amen
And I will stand tall and I will stand tall
Until I meet my end, until I meet my end

40. Don't You Wish it Was True (John Fogerty, 2007)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=huyLwVFy6h0>

He said, "The world's gonna change
And it's starting today
There'll be no more armies
No more hate"
Don't you wish it was true,
Lord, don't you wish it was true

And one bonus track, just for entrepreneurs:

41. The Roses of Success

(Anton Rodgers, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, 2002)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GND10sWq0n0>

Every bursted bubble has a glory!
Each abysmal failure makes a point!
Every glowing path that goes astray,
Shows you how to find a better way.
So every time you stumble never grumble.
Next time you'll bumble even less!
For up from the ashes, up from the ashes, grow the roses
of success!

MARCH 26, 2015

CHAPTER 43

Then he fired them all...

IT WAS ABOUT THREE A.M. ON A TRAIN HURLING THROUGH THE NIGHT somewhere between Kiev and Leningrad. November 1990.

Our friends had seen us off with a flourish. Bear-like Russian hugs, countless toasts, protestations of eternal friendship, and a last-minute bottle of home-brewed vodka slipped into our hands as we boarded the train.

Five of us were in the midst of a two-week fact-finding trip visiting centers for people who were developmentally or intellectually disabled in Moscow, Kiev and Leningrad...and there was magic in the Russian night.

John DuRand and I found ourselves alone together in the hallway outside our compartments, both a bit worse for wear from the evening's festivities. We just looked at each other and grinned and shook our heads: How did a couple of hide-bound Minnesotans wind up on the Russian steppes?

We started laughing—and pretty soon we were belting out the University of Minnesota fight song—the Minnesota Rouser—at the top of our lungs!

Magic.

* * *

It's impossible for me to be objective about John DuRand (1934-2008). We spent so much time together over the years and shared so much...

But I can tell you his story...

I met him in the mid-1980s. By that point he'd already established himself as one of the pioneers in the field of employment

opportunities for people who were developmentally disabled—and had coined the phrase “affirmative business.” But his journey began more than two decades earlier.

In the spring of 1964, he was a 29-year-old Korean War vet and former Benedictine Monk who’d returned to school for a graduate degree in business after working as a carpenter. He’d accepted a job with Bendix for \$8,000, not a bad salary at the time, and was preparing to graduate when his advisor at St. Thomas College asked for a favor.

“You want me to go for another interview?”

His advisor nodded.

“But I’ve already accepted a job!”

“You’re not listening,” said his advisor. “I just need you to take an *interview*. There’s this nun over at the Archdiocese. She keeps calling me and asking me to send her somebody to interview for a position she’s creating. She’s an old friend. Would you please go over there and get her off my back?”

John said sure. He owed the guy.

“So I went over to the Archdiocese,” he told me years later, “and they sent me down the hall to Sister Ann Marie’s office. The door was shut, her nameplate on the wall. I knocked and heard a voice telling me to come in.

“So I opened the door and walked in—and as soon as I saw the nun behind the desk I knew I was in trouble! It was the nun who’d taught me piano lessons 20 years before!”

Sister Ann Marie walked over to him, asked him to sit down, then placed a hand on his shoulder, looked him in the eye and said, “Young man, I want three years of your life!”

John recalled the experience years later. “I absolutely cannot tell you what the hell went through my head,” he laughed, still a bit stunned. “I really don’t know what happened in that meeting or why I said yes. This blue fog descended on me and I walked

out of there saying yes. I don't know what she did. I can't explain it to this day. It was voodooism—she just worked a magic spell on me. There was no good reason for me accepting. And then I had to go home and tell my wife I'd just accepted a job for \$4,000 instead of \$8,000!”

“How Much Do You Need?”

What Sister Ann Marie wanted John to do was start a high school for kids who were developmentally disabled. It took him four years, not three—and then Sister Ann Marie sat him down again.

“Great work,” she said. “But now what? What do these kids have to look forward to once they leave high school? Are they just going to sit on a couch watching TV all day for the rest of their lives?”

John thought about it and said he had an idea. He went to the Archbishop and told him he wanted to start a job-training program for his high school graduates.

“How much do you need?” asked the Archbishop.

“One hundred dollars.” He needed to incorporate, buy a circular saw and a sewing machine.

And with that he launched a nonprofit in St. Paul called the Opportunity Training Workshop (OTW). Fourteen young adults were his first clients—seven men and seven women between the ages of 18 and 24. Within five years OTW had become a successful sheltered workshop, with more than 200 clients and 11 social workers managing the operations.

“I thought we were humming along pretty well,” said John years later, “so I took a six-month sabbatical and visited other sheltered workshops across Canada and the United States.”

Something Had to Change

It was a life-changing journey. At every stop, he became more and more depressed. The people in the workshops weren't doing

real work. They weren't being driven by market demand: They were simply assigned make-work, building birdhouses, stitching pot-holders, decorating ashtrays.

On top of that, they were only working eight or ten hours a week and being paid 50 cents or a dollar an hour. There was no dignity in the work and no chance for people to achieve any level of financial self-sufficiency.

John realized something had to change...

Back in St. Paul, on a sunny April evening, he asked his 11 social workers to meet with him at a nearby hotel. He served them wine and cheese.

Then he fired them all.

A moment later he passed out applications. "Starting tomorrow," he said, "we are no longer a rehab center—we're a business. Starting tomorrow we no longer have clients or patients—we have employees. And starting tomorrow we are no longer clinicians—we're business people.

"If you can get your minds and hearts and souls around that change, I want you back. If you can't, I'll understand and I'll help you find new jobs."

John had become convinced that the best way to enhance the self-respect of the people he employed was to *give* them more respect. That meant establishing conditions typical of a business—normal work hours, the use of appropriate technologies, market-driven benchmarks, training and development programs, competitive wages, bonus plans, career tracks.

Nine of his 11 social workers stayed, and by the time John retired in 1997, Minnesota Diversified Industries (MDI) had become a \$68.5 million business, all from earned revenue except for an occasional grant to purchase major equipment. MDI had more than 50 corporate clients, 1,000 employees (600 of them disabled or disadvantaged), and five plants throughout the state of Minnesota.

MDI's biggest client turned out to be the United States Postal Service, with two contracts: All the plastic tote boxes used in postal service offices nationwide were being manufactured at the MDI plants; and more than 30 million commemorative stamps issued by the federal government each year were being assembled into presentation packets for collectors by people in the MDI clean rooms.

But John's work wasn't finished when he changed the culture and name of his organization. During the next 25 years he became the nation's leading ambassador for affirmative businesses, writing three books and delivering keynote speeches and conducting workshops all over the world. He acted as a special consultant to the United Nations and to the USSR Social Services Fund. And he served as a mentor to countless others starting similar businesses, joined with me to co-found the Affirmative Business Alliance of North America in 1987, and became part of the core group (and later chaired the organization) that created Workability International, which today has more than 130 members in more than 40 countries.

* * *

Over the years, John continued to re-invent the world of work for people with disabilities and disadvantages. He especially emphasized the importance of four key principles, and I'll share his views in the next chapter:

Operating as a business and generating profits

Employing a "blended" workforce

Using non-disabled employees as role models

Giving employees the opportunity to fail

MAY 21, 2015

CHAPTER 44

“Just sit down and take the first bite...”

LAST MONTH I DESCRIBED HOW JOHN DURAND CHANGED HIS NONPROFIT from a sheltered workshop into a social enterprise.

“Starting tomorrow,” he told his senior managers in 1973, “we are no longer a rehab center—we’re a business. Starting tomorrow we no longer have clients or patients—we have employees. And starting tomorrow we are no longer clinicians—we’re business people.”

John believed the best way to enhance the self-respect of the people he employed was to give them more respect—and that meant establishing conditions typical of a business: Normal work hours, the use of appropriate technologies, market-driven benchmarks, training and development programs, competitive wages, bonus plans, career tracks.

During the next quarter century, until he retired in 1997, John continued to re-invent the world of work for people with disabilities and disadvantages—and especially emphasized the importance of four key principles:

- *Operating as a business and generating profits*
- *Employing a “blended” workforce*
- *Using non-disabled employees as role models*
- *Giving employees the opportunity to fail*

* * *

Money Comes First

“I don’t know how the idea ever came about that ‘profit’ is good or bad or that ‘business’ is good or bad,” he would often lament.

“Business’ is just ‘business’ and ‘profit’ is just ‘profit.’ The only evil parts are some of the people who happen to be managing the businesses or using the profits.

“I know I can’t do any of the things I want to do without money,” he’d say. “If I don’t make money, I won’t be here tomorrow to do *anything*.”

Of course, a lot of people, even today, object to “making money” in the nonprofit world, but John would remind them “they need to read (Peter) Drucker. Profit is what permits you to stay in business.

“Show me a company that is not generating a profit and I will show you one that is going out of business. If you can’t get comfortable with that then you don’t understand business and you need to get out.”

He also “listened, *really* listened to my employees. I heard them saying they wanted to be successful employees. And I realized they couldn’t be successful employees unless I was a successful employer—and I couldn’t be a successful employer without being a successful business. That’s what it’s all about.”

Critics often claim the nonprofit sector should not become what they call “a shadow private sector” because it will lose track of its social mission. They say the “corporate” way of doing business is fraught with dangers.

John’s response?

“Bullshit. You can use those exact words. Business is business. Business is neither good nor bad. There are some assholes running businesses that do bad things with them, but business is business.

“It comes down to this: What are you going to do with the business? I’m a social entrepreneur. I’m looking for both financial

and social dividends. But if I don't have the money, I won't have the mission."

Too Many Janitors

One of John's most controversial innovations took place when he looked more closely at sheltered workshops.

"They were trying to run businesses where all the employees were disabled or disadvantaged," he recalled. "I thought, if you tried that with a *real* business, you'd get killed! If you tried to open a bank and you hired all janitors, the building would be clean as hell, but you'd go down the tubes.

"So I wouldn't hire ten janitors—and I wouldn't hire 10 presidents. I'd have one president, a couple of janitors, some tellers and clerks. I'd have a mixed workforce. And if I'd do that in a normal business, why would I do it any differently in one of *my* businesses? So I decided we needed a fully integrated workforce with people who had different levels of skill, aptitude and ability."

The blended workforce strategy ran afoul of the protective mentality embraced during the 1970s by most social workers and family members. "Sheltered" workshops meant just that: Protecting people who were disabled from the outside world.

But John believed integrating the workforce was essential to building his business—and thereby creating more jobs and career paths for people who were disabled or disadvantaged. A blended workforce opened up broad areas of business opportunities for MDI that would otherwise have remained closed.

"If all my employees were disabled," he reasoned, "then out of all the jobs available we could probably only do about 40 per cent. The other 60 per cent would be beyond our reach. But, if I had an integrated workforce, I'd have a shot at the other 60 per cent as well."

As the years passed and the blended workforce approach began to be widely adopted, people would ask John for the ideal ratio of disabled to non-disabled workers.

“There isn’t any,” he’d tell them. “What kind of work are you trying to do? Sometimes it might be an 80/20 mix based on the demands of the job. Sometimes it might be just the reverse—20/80.” Over-all, however, John did find “if we deviated very much from a 60/40 mix, we lost a lot of our viability and punch. If we dropped below 40 per cent non-disabled workers, we changed as an organization significantly.”

Tying Up Her Kerchief

Once he began to integrate his workforce in order to function more effectively as a business, John began to notice something else as well.

“It’s so important to people who are disabled to be just like the rest of us,” he’d tell me repeatedly. “Our non-disabled employees became role models—and how powerful that is!”

He noticed it the first time when MDI started a production welding operation.

“Jan O’Rourke, one of the welders, had two people who were disabled serving as station loaders, filling up the jigs with components to be welded. And Jan, of course, tied up her hair in a kerchief so she wouldn’t get sparks in it and catch on fire.

“Well, the next day, Bob and Greg both came to work with kerchiefs tied around their heads.

“And it dawned on me...of course! They want to be like us! But we were training them in sheltered environments and expecting them to go into the outside world and be a success on a job when they didn’t even know what the hell it’s like out there.

“I can’t give you a chambray shirt and a pair of jeans and a wide belt and a buckle and a wallet with a long chain on it and

a pair of boots and expect you to go to a truckers-only counter and pass as a trucker, even though you've got the uniform—you still can't pass if you don't have the language, the body language, the experiences you need.

“So what we had to do was make our work settings more realistic, more industrial, so that when they did leave for the outside world, they took with them not only the job skills they needed, but also the social skills.”

One aspect of the integrated workforce really surprised him, though.

“I didn't anticipate how much trouble the non-disabled people were going to have working with the disabled,” he admitted years later. “That one snuck up on me. I expected our non-disabled employees to come in neutral, maybe a bit negative, but over time see that these folks were able to do a lot of things—not everything—but a lot of things.

“What I didn't realize was how emotionally charged any situation is when you have a large number of people with disabilities involved. I didn't realize the impact it was going to have on the non-disabled. We had something like 70 per cent turnover in the first 18 months among the non-disabled workers.

“The only thing I could ever put my finger on was that it was such an emotionally charged situation, so demanding emotionally, that small problems they would probably have dealt with easily in a lot of other circumstances just became more than they could handle.

“So we addressed the issue by creating an employee support service program for both disabled and non-disabled workers, and almost 80 per cent of the non-disabled people used it. And eventually we re-wrote our mission statement to emphasize “providing a supportive environment for *all* employees.”

The Opportunity to Fail

John believed passionately that his employees could do anything they put their minds to—and he constantly challenged them to take risks.

“Too many systems are built to exclude the possibility of failing,” he complained, “and if you do that, you’ve excluded the possibility of succeeding. Sure, any time you build a system where only success can happen, *you’ve* succeeded—but *not* the individual who goes through the system.

“So we challenged our people, asked them to get better and better at what they did. Yes, it was a risk, but without risk there’s no dignity. And there’s no success unless there’s an opportunity to fail.”

John believed people with disabilities could accept more responsibility than they had been given in the past. So he gave it to them. But he also believed that was *all* he could do.

“As a company,” he told me once, “we can’t ultimately be responsible for the happiness of specific employees. We can create opportunities for them—but that’s as much as we can do. We can’t go beyond that point. That’s it. The maximum you can do is create an opportunity. Whether the person takes advantage of it or doesn’t, that’s their choice. If you try to do more than that, you’re going to drive yourself crazy.

“So, we fired people. People with disabilities and people without disabilities. They didn’t all make it at MDI. Because some of them chose not to try.” The rationale was simple: “Our business depended on them,” he said. “If they couldn’t fulfill their obligations, we had to take them off the line, send them back for more training or send them somewhere else.”

* * *

John had an aversion to “people who see the glass half empty all the time. They look at all the problems in society and complain about everything that’s stopping them from doing what they know really needs to be done.

“That’s not how I see the world. I see a world with unlimited possibilities. The fact that the money isn’t available today doesn’t mean anything—it means I haven’t looked in the right place yet. It doesn’t mean the world is going to hell in a hand-basket.

“It’s dangerous being around those people. It’s scary. You could start thinking like them after awhile.”

John never did.

“There are so many challenges out there,” he would tell me, again and again. “So much for us to do. It’s like sitting down at a table to eat an elephant—the task just seems completely overwhelming. So there’s only one thing to do.

“Just sit down and take the first bite.”

JUNE 18, 2015

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The beginning...

WHY ARE YOU AND I SO PASSIONATE ABOUT SOCIAL JUSTICE? WHY ARE millions of people like us—all over the world—devoting their lives to helping others help themselves?

I'm not sure when it all began for me...

Was it waking to a drum roll on the radio and a voice telling me my President had been murdered?

Was it staring into the ovens at Dachau?

Was it the obscenity of Vietnam?

Was it being pushed against a wall in Watts and screamed at by black activists trying to break through my privileged white fortress?

Was it pouring out pages of agony when a bullet felled Robert Kennedy?

Or was it...finally...when I chose peace, not war, and departed for a village in India?

* * *

January 1995: Narwana

The village remains, but its boundaries have exploded. Dozens of shops bustle down the road toward the school. A model town grows to the north. Motorcycles shoulder through the streets, and television antennas leap from every other rooftop.

But...

In the older part of town, the lanes still wander quietly, then disappear. Women sit comfortably outdoors on *charpois*, surrounded by their children. Solitary pigs snort past them toward unseen

destinations. Cows pick their way across broken cobblestones. Occasional students race homeward.

As the day wanes, the sky reaches down, all reds and golds and orange, inches above my head. Chants from the temple drift across the rooftops, and spices scent the air from hundreds of kitchens. Families gather...and a warm glow slips over my memories.

I lived here for two years. I came of age here. From 1968 to 1970 I served as a Peace Corps Volunteer teaching English as a Second Language to sixth and seventh grade boys. I was the first Caucasian to live in the village since the bloody massacres of Hindus and Muslims that birthed the nations of India and Pakistan in 1947. Me. A naïve, 23-year-old kid from suburban Minneapolis.

August 1968: Narwana

The Peace Corps jeep dropped me in Narwana shortly after noon one stifling August day, off-loaded my sea trunk, and disappeared in a swirl of sand and heat. One hundred miles northwest of Delhi, halfway to the border of West Pakistan.

Alone.

And then, emerging from the shade trees on the school grounds, came a slight, middle-aged man who would become my friend and mentor. A teacher and community elder, a Brahmin. He offered me chai, then offered me his home—and the adventure of a lifetime began.

The next morning, as I walked with Baldev toward the school where I'd be teaching, hundreds of townspeople fell in behind me. For days, whenever I started to speak, *everybody* leaned forward to hear what I'd say. School ended in early afternoon because of the triple-digit heat, and one morning a traveling yogi asked me to feel his wrist and verify for a school assembly that he could stop his

heartbeat, then serenely allowed groups of husky older students to strain at opposite ends of a bulky rope wrapped around his neck.

And the boys...

They were 11, then, and 12, learning English for the first time. I taught them on dirt plots, in sheds without walls, in my home. Scruffy little kids with brown uniforms, sparkling eyes and ear-splitting grins.

I chattered with them in broken Hindi and broken English, sent them scurrying on errands, brought them books. They called me “Mr. Bosch,” and one imp teased me unmercifully about “Many-apples,” Minnesota.

I quickly fell in love with them, and yearned to unveil the world beyond their village. I wanted to give them hope...because hope, in village India, in the 1960s, scarcely existed. Young men entering their teens would inevitably realize that the poverty bearing down on their parents would have no mercy on the next generation—and the light in their eyes would begin to die.

So I opened a library in my home, pinned huge maps to the walls, filled my lesson plans with stories about the greater world, took more than 50 of the boys on a three-day trip to Delhi. They’d never been out of the village before.

I coaxed an optometrist from a nearby city to visit the school and do eye exams for more than 400 students, then raised money from my father’s Lion’s Club in Minnesota to buy glasses for more than 100—and watched all but three discard them within months because glasses were a sign of weakness.

And then, near the end of my tour, I chose ten boys to join me on a month-long trip through southern and western India, and I asked my friend Surya for help. I needed to visit the parents, to ask their permission, and I wanted Surya to be my interpreter because I didn’t have the language skills I needed to tell them

what I hoped for their sons, why I wanted to take them so far from their families.

I can still see those one-room homes, none of them lit by more than a kerosene lamp. Dirt floors and hardly any furniture—yet always the offer of food and drink. I can still see the hopeful eyes of the parents, the boys sitting quietly nearby. And I can still feel the mother gripping my arm as I prepared to leave, whispering words I will never forget: “He is your son now, Mr. Bosch.”

We rented a train car and lived in it for a month: Fifty-three students, five Peace Corps Volunteers, five Indian teachers, three cooks and a thousand pounds of flour. The first leg of the journey went from Delhi to Madras, 48 hours straight south, with coal dust billowing through the open windows, cooks leaping onto the platform at each stop to boil tea and cook *chapatis*, vendors poking their heads through the windows crying “Chai-chai-chai! Coffee-coffee-coffee! Soda-soda-soda!”

We took the boys into the ocean at Madras, into the tropical forests of Kerala, into the Bombay metropolis, into the desert caves of Rajasthan, and into the Taj Mahal, the soul of India.

We took them home.

And then we left.

January 1995: Narwana

For 25 years, I dreamed of returning. Literally, at least once a month. Sometimes in color, sometimes in black and white, sometimes with my parents, sometimes my children.

Finally, my oldest daughter, Sarah, turned 21, and I turned 50—and we decided to take three weeks together, just the two of us. A week in Nepal, a week in Thailand—and a week in India.

I'd lost track of the boys, but hoped to find a few of them again. I needed to know what happened after I left. I needed to

know if I'd made any difference in their lives. I needed to know if they'd purchased glasses for their children.

On New Year's Day, 1995, Sarah and I arrived in the village—and Surya took us immediately to his home for a welcoming party. When I first met him in 1968, he was 23, my age, finishing college and dreaming about graduate school—and, along with Baldev, he became my lifeline. A year later I wrote about him to my father. I knew Dad had a close friend and business associate who'd been born in India and become a successful businessman in Arizona. Dad and Mr. Ohri decided to pay for Surya's graduate school tuition, room and board—and, when I embraced him again in 1995, Surya had become Dr. S. P. Gupta, a college professor with an educated, professionally employed wife and two college-bound children.

More than 30 members of Surya's extended family had gathered to greet us. The chai and cakes were ready, in abundance, and the memories started to flow. Time disappeared.

Suddenly, two of my former students were at the door!

We hugged and started talking excitedly, trying to cover 25 years in half an hour. Before long we found ourselves walking toward the school at the other end of town, moving slowly through the heart of the village, discovering the motorcycles and the television antennas along the way. Crowds began to follow, just as they had during my earliest days so long ago, and another former student roared up to us on a Kawasaki. My daughter walked quietly beside me, taking it all in.

As we neared the village center, I looked to the right, expecting to see the school across an open field, but shops and homes had filled the horizon. More people joined us, and when we reached the edge of town I quickened my step. The school began to appear. First the grounds, then the outlines of the buildings themselves.

With each step, my past came rushing toward me—and then I stopped.

They were waiting for me at the front gate, garlands ready...

My former students...

Twenty-eight of them...

I blinked, then blinked again. I couldn't see. My companions urged me onward, and I stumbled to life, kept walking, Sarah beside me. The "boys" were lined up to greet me, one at a time. As I approached the first man, he slipped a floral garland over my head and another over Sarah's, then looked at me with hands raised and palms together.

"Namaste," he said. "Welcome."

Each of the 28 men did the same, and as they greeted me and told me their names, I could see their youthful faces peering at me through weathered skin and memory.

Ten were shopkeepers, two were teachers, three were bankers...

For years I'd wondered: Did my two years make a difference? Kaku Ram, unbidden, told me they did. Molar Ram appeared in the morning mist the next day, with his children. Dharm Pal took me to his father.

And Baldev just smiled. "They've been telling stories about you," he said, "for 25 years..."