



Stories *from Dan*

inspiration for your 48 Day journey

Dan Miller

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Looking Inward

Just yesterday afternoon I was working with a new client. At 46-years-old, this gentleman is a pizza delivery driver. Having reviewed his initial profile information, I had suggested a referral to one of the other competent coaches in our **48 Days** network. And yet he was adamant and very persistent about seeing me personally. Under duress I agreed to see him—he came into my office carrying a very heavy box, filled with rolled coins collected from his delivery tips—to pay my coaching fee.

I quickly assessed his background—high and college athlete—Bachelor's degree in a very reputable profession—from a very prestigious university. However, at 46-years-old, his history was full of repeated failures, firings from jobs, his own businesses that each time success was on the horizon—there seemed to be an unexplained downturn and failure. Three marriages to – as he described it, beautiful and competent women. He is himself attractive and presents initially with a lot of personal charisma.

I probed deeper—began asking questions regarding mind set, spiritual perspectives, and belief systems. Then he shared this story. At 9-years-old his alcoholic father grabbed him to discipline him for pulling the cat's tail. As that father began a violent beating, that little boy begged to go to the bathroom. Being denied that privilege the little boy wet his pants, at which time the father increased the merciless beating. With black and blue legs and blood caking around his ankles, this little 9-year-old escaped to his bedroom for the night. Once there he got on his knees and prayed to God—asking God to kill his father. Sixty-one days later his father was shot and killed instantly in the line of duty as a policeman.

What do you suppose is going on with this 46-year-old man—with regard to his checked career and job and marriage history?

Did I then pull out the Sunday classifieds and show him the many companies that are hiring? Do I tell him that Subway is the most successful franchise ever and perhaps he should try that business? Of course not. Every time he gets close to “success”—he is reminded that he is not deserving of that—he conspired with God to kill his own father. We talked about God’s grace and forgiveness and how inner healing is necessary before any outer success will appear and last. That’s always the case. Now I trust that few if any of you have such a traumatic story that is directing your current success—but this exemplifies the principle that our outer success IS always a reflection of our inner success.

That’s why we look inward first—then look outward for the application.

Incidentally, in case you’re wondering, I told him to take his box of coins and use it as a nest egg for an idea that we did discuss.

Work and Wealth

What is that connection between work and wealth?

Many studies have looked at the characteristics of America's wealthiest people. What are the distinguishing traits of those who ultimately become very wealthy? Was it IQ, GPA in school, college major selected, family opportunity, or business chosen? Surprisingly, none of these seem to be predictors of this extraordinary success. The one characteristic these people have in common: *They were all doing something they loved.*

Here's the message:

"If you love, absolutely love what you are doing, chances are excellent that you will succeed, and probably end up wealthy."

A few years ago, Jim Hodges was getting ready to exit from a military career. On one of their weekly dinner dates, his wife asked him, "Jim, what do you dream of doing? If money were not an issue, what would you like to spend your time doing?" He answered quickly, "I'd read history books and novels." Guess what he does today. He reads—out loud—and creates audio books of many of the old classics—much of his work centers on the writings of G.A. Henty. (www.jimhodgesaudiobooks.com). He reads the books he loves, creating audios that are purchased primarily by homeschoolers. He has an Internet radio program where he reads history books. He is in high demand with publishers wanting him to do audio recordings of their published books.

You Are Who You Hang Out With

A few years ago I put this quotation by Jim Rohn in my weekly newsletter – Jim says, “You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with.” I think I got more comments on that than any quotation I’ve ever used.

Now here’s another interesting fact—Do you know that most people earn within 20 percent of the average income of their closest friends? Maybe you need to watch whom you associate with and choose to spend your time wisely. Now this doesn’t mean you can’t be caring and compassionate toward people who need a hand up.

Proverbs 22: 24-25 tells us: *“Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.”* (KJV)

“Keep away from angry, short-tempered men, lest you learn to be like them and endanger your soul.” (TLB)

Life Balance

And here's another important concept. We hear a lot about balance and I'm a big proponent of that. But sometimes I fear that when we talk about "balance" people think that requires a trade-off. If you want to be successful in business, you'll sacrifice your family success. Or if you want to enjoy life you'll probably sacrifice being successful in your work or business.

Or I hear a real common question that implies this – "Do you want to do what you love, or do you want to make money?" Or "Do you want to focus on making money or do you want to make the world a better place?" I even hear "Do you want to be successful in your work or do you want to fulfill God's will for your life?"

Well guess what—I want to do all of those. Ask me if I want a successful career or loving relationships with my family. I want both! Ask me if I want to make a lot of money or do what I most enjoy doing. I want both! Do I want to be incredibly successful in my work or do I want to do something Godly. I want both! It doesn't have to be a trade-off. Poor people tend to think the world offers either/or choices. Rich people recognize you can have "both" options for anything that is good and positive.

Creative Jobs and Right Brain Skills

- We are seeing the explosion of nanotechnology – new methods that make much of what we know and use in business obsolete.
- We are hearing more about outsourcing, and the creation of a category of workers called “electronic immigrants.”
- We are seeing a diminishing of value placed on left brain skills—analytical, calculating, detailed. Things like computer skills, accounting and financial analysis, database functions, even things like medical records, making medical diagnoses, and reading X-Rays—can be done by someone on the other side of the world—while we are sleeping—and for a whole lot less money than is required here.

You know what is growing in value? Right brain skills—abilities in empathy, creating relationships, high concept, high touch talents in creating artistic and emotional beauty, in finding joy in oneself and being able to elicit that in others—to lead in finding purpose and meaning. Today the defining skills of the last 10 years – the left brain skills that launched us into the Information Age—are no longer sufficient. Any job that depends on routine—that can be broken down into a repeated series of steps—is at risk. Facts and systems are readily available—and easy to duplicate in China and India. What is beginning to be more valuable—is the ability to give those facts human meaning—to add empathy and caring—to provide emotional and spiritual impact. Those capabilities we once thought frivolous – the right-brain qualities of inventiveness, empathy, joyfulness—displaying art, drama, healing relationships—these will increasingly determine who flourishes and who flounders. Let me give you an example. One hundred years ago electric lighting was rare—people used candles for evening light. Today light bulbs are cheap—we’re moving toward using LED bulbs that last ten or more years.

Light bulbs are everywhere—commonplace—no big deal. And candles are long since forgotten —right?

Wrong !!! In the United States alone, candles are a \$2.4 Billion a year industry. There is no logical need for candles, so why is their use growing? Because we have a growing need for beauty and transcendence. If you can provide beauty and connect people to things beyond the drudgery of day-to-day existence, you can thrive and become wealthy in the process. A couple of years ago I wrote an article titled “Dreamers, Healers and Peacemakers” addressing this very issue. The number of massage therapists has quadrupled over the last ten years. And that’s an example of how growth in one area fuels new opportunity in another. What happens to those of you who sit in front of computer screens all day long? Those neck muscles get tense, you get lower back pain and carpal tunnel syndrome. Do you think there will continue to be opportunities for massage therapists? And dreamers – And peacemakers?

The victims of this wave of change are not hard to find. They are the 179,000 bank tellers who have been replaced by ATMs, the 47,000 postal workers replaced by sight recognition machines, the 6,000 phone operators replaced by voice recognition technology and the grocery check out clerks who have seen self-scanning systems replace them in their jobs. They include the 334,000 steel and autoworkers, the 380,000 apparel workers who have seen their jobs continue to go to other countries. They also now include the 2 million-plus homeless men and women in our cities, the multitude of farmers facing foreclosures, our neighbors, and our friends at church. Godly, law abiding, loyal workers who have provided years of faithful service are not immune from the effects of these changes.

Change of all types—economic, social, cultural, technological, and political—is occurring at an increasing rate. In some areas, it is not merely accelerating but exploding. The rapid rate of change shows no sign of slowing in our lifetime.

Seizing the Opportunity

And yet, the world has always known change. At one point in American history, approximately 79% of our country's workers were directly involved in the production of agriculture. Today that number is less than 3%. Where have the other 76% gone? When an Eli Whitney invents the cotton gin, where do the farm workers who have been replaced go? When a robot replaces men on an assembly line, where do these workers go?

We have seen these changes and transformations as we have moved from the Agricultural Age, to the Industrial Age, to the Technological Age, and now the age of Service and Information. With each change, there are the seeds of new opportunities. That is one of the basic tenets of Napoleon Hill's classic book, *Think and Grow Rich* – "With every change, there are the equal seeds of opportunity."

Like always before in our history, we need creative people to see the needs, to see the opportunities instead of the obstacles, and to create the future. It's bad enough for the secular world to be confused, but surely those of us with Godly insight and principles at our disposal should have more clarity of direction. And yet we know that today, like at every stage of our country's development, the best opportunities may not look like those of yesterday. Today's best opportunities may not include punching a clock, having a company car or being provided health insurance and a retirement plan. They may not involve an 8-5 schedule or even the need to go to an office.

High-Tech Fosters High-Touch Opportunities

A creative, responsive person increases in understanding and appreciation of new ideas, of other people, and of the world in general. A creative approach unlocks the mind and makes the spirit soar. God gives us creativity and ingenuity to make us feel alive. We should be leaders, not victims, as the world becomes more complex and our societal problems become increasingly difficult to solve. Our schools need a major overhaul, there is crime in every community, and health care, families, churches, and world peace are full of problems that need new solutions.

Many of these issues are suffering from a dearth of originality, and they need the creativity and insight of every maturing and spiritually alive person. The solutions are not likely to be more information and more technology, but solutions that can only come from human touch and spiritual sensitivity. Even in the career arena, one does not have to be a technological genius to survive and prosper. The conventional wisdom, reinforced daily by the business press, is to scramble any way you can to a field with a future: software, engineering, or global marketing. Otherwise, you may end up the 21st century equivalent of a blacksmith—trained to do a job that hardly anyone needs.

The *Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook*, forecasts 50 million new jobs opening up in the next ten years. The outlook is bleak for people already in technological areas who cannot embrace and move with the upcoming changes. But there is an explosion of opportunities for people who are those peacemakers, storytellers, and healers. 14 of the 30 fastest-growing jobs in the next decade are for healers. And these are not just for physicians and registered nurses. I already mentioned how the number of certified massage therapists has quadrupled as the 71.5 million baby boomers suffer an increasing burden of minor aches and tensions.

The need for counseling therapists will grow dramatically as depression and major life changes confront these people entering the second half of their lives. Universally, people are expressing more interest in spiritual matters, giving rise for directors of religious activities and education. Over 100,000 new jobs for clergy and religious directors are expected in the next ten years. The demand for simpler, more humane ways of resolving disputes will expand the opportunities for dispute mediation and arbitration. Ten years ago, there were about 150 dispute mediation centers nationwide; today, there are at least 500.

As people approach middle-age, have higher education levels and more disposable income, the number who go to a concert, play, or art museum at least once a year, has risen from 41% to over 50%. The Bureau of Labor projects that the demand for writers, artists, and entertainers will increase 24% over the next decade, with a total of 772,000 new jobs in those fields. If God has gifted you to tell a good story, write a good book, or direct a good play, there will be opportunities for you.

Change is inevitable. Our challenge is not whether change will occur, but simply, how will we respond? We can choose to wring our hands as victims, escape to the country and arm ourselves in fear, or we can use our God-given creativity to see where He is leading us as a country, and more importantly, where He is leading us individually. Each of us has been given unique skills, abilities, personality traits, values, dreams and passions. In the examination of those we should not be lacking creative applications that allow us to continue being salt and light to the world around us.

We should be at the forefront as innovators and inventors, but also as peacemakers, healers and storytellers. Creating an individual path of mission and calling, we cannot then be victimized by any corporate downsizing or any other effects of *Future Shock*. Rather, we will seize the opportunities and lead the way to higher levels of fulfillment, income and methods for blessing those around us.

Workaholic?

I grew up as the son of a pastor, so I spent a lot of time flipping through my Bible pages to find things of interest while my Dad was preaching. The tidbits of raw truth there are sometimes startling. Of course, it helps to have 30 different versions to finally find what you want it to say.

Here's a phrase that jumped out at me in Rick Warren's *(Purpose Driven Life)* newsletter.

He was talking about having buffer time in our lives and used this verse from Ecclesiastics 10:15. *"Only someone too stupid to find his way home would wear himself out with work"* (TEV). How do you like that? Have you been worn out with work lately? Did you know you've just been put in the category of being "too stupid to find your way home?"

Well, that's probably a little harsher than it was intended to be and you'll find much different wording in other translations.

But I like the message. Don't wear yourself out so much with working that you're no good for anything else.

Future Trends

Now here are some of the things that make knowing what we want to be when we grow up difficult.

Consider these predictions from *The World Future Society*:

- Education and learning will be “on-demand.” Education will follow the entertainment model, allowing customers (learners) to download what they want and use it when they want it. Faculty will increasingly upload lectures and educational “playlists” to Podcasting services for students to attend at their convenience. Traditional 4-year programs consisting of a wide variety of coursework will diminish in importance and desirability to students ready to enter the workforce. Mobile, personalized, on-demand information will pose a challenge for the traditional classroom. Superstars today are typically highly skilled in their area of specialty—the days of needing to know a little about everything as disappearing
- Children’s “nature deficit disorder” is a growing health threat. Children today are spending less time in direct contact with nature than did previous generations. The impacts are showing up not only in their lack of physical fitness, but also in the growing prevalence of hyperactivity and attention deficit. Studies show that immersing children in outdoor settings—away from television and video games – fosters more creative mental activity and concentration. The same “nature deficit disorder” is robbing adults of balance and pushing them toward robotic souls rather than spiritual ones.
- Businesses will “hire” whatever type of mind can do the work – robotic or human. Future human workers will be expected to collaborate with robotic minds on projects for a variety of enterprises, rather than work for a single employer. Be careful about the push in this direction. In Lesson Two I talked about the growing importance of “right-brained” skills—empathy, nurturing and meaningful relationships. The

opportunities for those with artistic, writing, performing, and speaking skills are increasing dramatically.

- Outsourcing will actually create jobs. The *U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics* has estimated that total U.S. employment will increase by millions as a result of efficiencies gained through outsourcing. Opportunities are increasing, but they look different than the “jobs” of the past.
- The workforce will span 4 generations. 71.5 million Baby Boomers are now turning 60 at the rate of one every 10 seconds for the next 18 years. The idea of “retirement” is changing significantly. With long work lives, there is a growing desire to find meaningful, fulfilling work. With an expected fifty years of work—people will experiment more and try new careers.
- We’ll have new job titles like:
 - Chief Optimistic Engineer
 - Experience Designer
 - Health-Enhancement Mentor
 - Coordinator of Workforce Development
 - Manager of Faith-Based Relations
 - Chief Innovation Officer
 - Vice President of Experiences
 - Telemedicine Technician
 - Skycar Mechanic
 - I saw an ad where the position was described as “Office Monkey”

Remember Wayne Gretsky’s response when asked why he was such a great hockey player. He responded, *“I always go to where the puck is going to be.”* You can take advantage of changes rather than feeling victimized by them – IF you keep track of where the changes are leading us.

Volkswagen eliminated 20,000 jobs. Chrysler has already announced the elimination of 14,500 jobs at its Mercedes-Benz division and another 6,000

positions in management. We've all heard that General Motors is eliminating 30,000 jobs in the next couple of years. Delta Airlines says they are cutting 7,000 to 9,000 positions to survive their bankruptcy. Kraft Foods, the nation's largest food manufacturer, will eliminate an additional 8,000 jobs and close up to 20 more plants as part of its restructuring efforts. The company had previously announced the elimination of 5,500 jobs and the closing of 19 plants.

And if you're doing the math, that's 93,000 jobs gone in one brief paragraph. So much for the bad news.

The good news is there have never been more opportunities than today. Does that sound contradictory? Not if you understand the changing work market. You can find the 87% of the jobs never advertised, know what to do in the first 3-5 critical minutes of an interview, and have multiple job offers—if you are a skilled 48 Days “job seeker.” This process will help you ***find opportunities*** no one else sees.

Here's another workplace irony—you cannot be a generalist and thrive in today's workplace. You must identify a unique set of competencies that set you apart from the rest of the pack. If you are dependable, reliable, show up for work on time and do what's expected of you, you can get a job by sundown today at Burger King or Taco Bell. But those skills, as good as they sound, do nothing to separate you from everyone else who breathes.

When we look at résumés in *48 Days to the Work You Love*, I'll show you how to highlight your strongest areas of competence—how to set yourself apart from everyone else in the job search.

Opportunities are plentiful in many industries. But you have to be ready to market your unique “areas of competence.” Learn a new skill; get certified in a specialty, learn a new language, or practice your relationship-oriented selling skills.

I Want to Be a Greeter

Despite all the negative press, Walmart continues to attract droves of applicants. The hiring manager for a new store near Chicago said he filtered through 25,000 applicants for the 325 open positions.

Average pay for non-management full-time positions at the store was \$10.99 an hour, according to *Crain's Chicago Business*.

It always seems ironic to me that in any community, the people fight the prospect of a new Walmart store. Then the day it's open, the parking lot is jammed with happy shoppers and they have 100 applicants for every position. How is this possible? What explains the inconsistency? Walmart has a reputation for fighting any employee union and is open about wanting to hire only healthy workers to control their health care costs.

Don't complain about Walmart's hiring tactics. If you don't think their pay and benefits are fair, then prove yourself to be worth more than that. The workplace is a very open market. Ultimately, companies have to pay what a job deserves. If your marketable skills really set you apart from being a cashier, then be prepared to "sell" those skills to a company or in your own business.

And if you want to be a "greeter" then hold your head high and do it with excellence!

Discouraged Workers

Every month I receive the employment statistics from the U. S. Department of Labor. One of the names of the categories reported always amazes me; that of “discouraged workers.” This is an actual group of people that the government identifies. One December they identified 274,000 “discouraged workers.”

Here’s the official government definition: “Discouraged workers were not currently looking for work specifically because they believed no jobs were available for them.” How’s that for a technical definition. And how does that fit with the other facts? National unemployment remains unchanged at 4.5 percent. (Keep in mind we consider even 5% to be full employment. There will always be that many people in between positions or taking a self-imposed break.) According to CareerBuilder.com forty percent of all American companies say they need to increase staffing levels. Health care, food services, commercial banking, transportation, construction and many other industries are begging for new candidates.

How does a person become a “discouraged worker” in the middle of these opportunities? I often hear from people who have followed up on 10-15 ads in the paper and never got an interview.

They thus conclude no one is hiring and retreat in misery. Or they want to change from being a taxi driver to being a brain surgeon and the first hospital they approach turns them down. Recently in a live workshop a lady told me she was 54 and I ought to know that no one hires a 54 yr-old woman. All of these are set-ups for creating “discouraged workers.” And yet there is no connection to reality here – they all just show horrible job search strategies.

The Eagle's Push

Recognize that God can use frustrating circumstances to prompt you to take the initiative for something better. Uncertainty, frustration in or even losing a position can often be simply a prod to a higher level of success. As I often relate, the eagles build a nest using thorn bush strands to lock it together. Then they cover them with leaves and feathers to make it soft and comfortable.

However, when the eaglets are about twelve weeks old, mom and dad eagles begin to remove the protection from the thorns. Pretty soon the little eaglets are up on the edge of the nest to avoid the pain and discomfort. Then mom and dad eagle fly by with tasty morsels of food just out of reach.

Soon the little eaglet makes a big leap to get away from the pain and the hunger, and you know what happens—he learns he can fly. I truly believe that oftentimes God allows circumstances in our lives, not to leave us in pain and hungry, but to lead us to higher levels of success that we would not otherwise explore.

Perhaps You're Feeling Inadequate —Try This

Several years ago, my son Jared moved to Rwanda. He always struggled with academics—so we homeschooled him so he could have some form of high school diploma. Reading is difficult for him and he has always resisted the constraints of most things that are traditional. He never went to college and has learned high-level technology and graphic design skills entirely on his own. He became the Executive Director of a program called Sisters of Rwanda, located in Kigali, Rwanda. They have a facility where they bring in women who commonly have never known any method of income generation other than prostitution. They had 128 women in a program where they are teaching them marketable skills to break the spiritual, emotional and physical curses of their past lives.

In a note to our family, Jared said this:

"I am a bit intimidated by the magnitude of this project, and the possibility of it affecting so many lives, but I'm equally excited and I know I have the passion and determination to see it through, even if I am shaking in my boots. My passion for these people always exceeds my fears of inadequacy. In realizing that, I regain the confidence I need."

Now there's a key for overcoming the "fears of inadequacy." **My passion exceeds my fears.**

Passion for what you are doing will override your fears of inadequacy. Work at what you love. You'll never work more willingly, passionately and fearlessly than when you work at something you love. The extra boost of enthusiasm and energy generated by a clear passion will propel you to a level of success unattainable with any other motivation. If fear is crippling or limiting you,

perhaps you are trying to do work that is not your passion. Working with raw ability alone is ultimately not enough to keep you going.

Joanne and I had our own parental concerns about Jared going to Rwanda. Yes, he is our son and in the past has been an integral part of our **48 Days** work. But far be it from us to thwart him from the expression of his unique, God-given and compassionate dreams. With what I teach, how could I possibly do anything but support him? His “success” will undoubtedly be realized most completely in pursuing his passion.

Looking Ahead

Chuck promised his 7-year-old son Johnny that he would take him fishing on Saturday. The little boy waited eagerly for the day to arrive, but he awoke Saturday morning to the sound of rain. Johnny grumbled all morning, complaining and sharing his disappointment with everyone. But by 2:00 the rain ended, the sun came out and Johnny and his dad headed off for the fishing hole. The conditions seemed to be just right, and they came home with more fish than they had ever caught in an entire day.

At supper that evening, Johnny's mother asked him to say grace. Johnny did—and concluded his prayer by saying, "and Lord, if I sounded grumpy earlier today, it was because I wasn't able to see far enough ahead."

So how far ahead are you seeing? Are you just looking at the rain in your life today? Or can you see past that to the sun that will likely be there tomorrow? Do you have a vision for where you want to be three years from now? What you want your life to be like five years from now?

How Can I Make Money Quickly?

I recently saw a client who asked, “Dan, what is the best idea you know of for making a lot of money quickly?” I always cringe when I hear this perspective. It’s likely to lead to frustration and disappointment.

Dave Anderson is the founder of *Famous Dave’s*, the great barbecue restaurant. Dave told me once that as long as he chased money it stayed just out of reach. He finally gave up on being rich and just started doing what he loves doing—making great barbecue. At that point the money tracked him down and dumped truckloads on him. He is now able to fund children’s education and other worthy causes with the money that doing something he loves has brought him.

If I would have been looking just for ideas to make a lot of money I would never have chosen to be an author. Look at these depressing statistics from *Publishers Weekly*:

- 950,000 titles out of 1.2 million tracked by *Nielsen Bookscan* sold fewer than 99 copies
- Another 200,000 sold fewer than 1,000 copies
- Only 25,000 sold more than 5,000 copies
- The average book in America sells about 500 copies
- Only 10 books sold more than a million copies
- Fewer than 500 sold more than 100,000
- Nearly 200,000 new titles are published each year

I should have chosen a whole lot of other things. But doing what I love and doing it with a clear strategy and tactics has brought me not only deep

personal fulfillment, but also a level of financial success that few people ever experience.

Theologian Fredrick Buechner said, “The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.”

I encourage you to do the same. Find your deep gladness, create a plan and success will find you.

Who Is Significant in YOUR Life?

A helpful way to focus in on your values, dreams and passions is to identify two or three individuals who have been influential in your life or have contributed to your life in some significant way. You may consider these individuals to be mentors. They may be a parent, friend, work associate or teacher. Choose people you have known personally rather than public or historic figures.

- Who are two or three of the most significant people in my life?
- What qualities do I remember and admire most in these people?
- What have I gained from being around these people?

The things you identify as significant in these people will likely be a reflection of your own values, dreams and passions.

Social scientists tell us that the entire origin of your self-concept, and the determination of who you will ultimately become in life, can be traced to the events of a few precious days and the actions of just a few key people involved in those events. I suspect that out of the thousands of days you have lived, and out the thousands of little choices and decisions you have made, and out of the thousands of people you have encountered, the essence of who you are today can be boiled down to:

- Five Defining Moments
- Five Critical Choices

Shakespeare said, “Know thyself, and to thine own self be true, then thou canst not be false to any man.”

Knowing ourselves leads to a sense of continuity. These three major components we've covered are relatively changeless; however the career application can change multiple times. Knowing that the average job is about 3.2 year in length it is not even appropriate to try to identify the "right" job. Rather, we need to get a broader sense of the role work plays in a balanced and meaningful life.

What Is Your Unique Gift?

A recent Saturday was a beautiful day that allowed us to complete some outdoor projects. Joanne and I purposely had three of our grandchildren at our house to experience the excitement of the day.

A crew was working on forms for a new sidewalk before we woke up. The roofers were here by 7:30 AM. My grandson Caleb, who was six-years-old at the time, was especially fascinated by all the work being completed.

The concrete truck arrived and began to dump the concrete in the prepared forms. Intrigued by the big boots and the opportunity to walk around in wet concrete, Caleb quickly informed us that he wanted to be a “sidewalk man” when he grows up. Although he briefly reconsidered when we were sitting on the peak of our roof talking to the roofers, he informed them as well of his intentions. Of course, one of the roofers quickly dismissed his newly formed goal and told him to make sure he gets a desk job.

Finding our purpose or helping a child find theirs is an exciting process. By recognizing our (1) Skills and Abilities, (2) Personality Traits, and (3) Values, Dreams and Passions, we can see the patterns in what God has gifted us for.

Now I know the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence, and this is just one more example. But I also know that if a person provides a quality skill like creative sidewalk construction, they are not likely to ever be out of work. And we see those cushy “desk jobs” come and go like the wind today. Caleb is growing up in a world where his Daddy, Uncle and Papa are all doing desk jobs. How exciting it is to watch his unique God-given talents develop! I would certainly not want to misdirect him from finding his passion and the application of that. And personally, I really do believe the world could use another great “sidewalk man.”

We must allow each individual to find his/her authentic fit. As parents, we must embrace training up a child in the way that he/she is “bent”. (Proverbs 22:6)

Have you found an authentic application of God’s best gifts to you? What could you do to move closer to that perfect fit?

Engage the Imagination and the Body Will Follow

If thinking precedes reality, where is your thinking leading you?

Advertising wizard Roy Williams once said, “Engage the imagination, then take it where you will. Where the mind has repeatedly journeyed, the body will surely follow. People go only to places they have already been in their minds.”

Napoleon said -- “Imagination rules the world.”

Wow—that’s a pretty powerful thought—and thus the power behind spending \$3 million for a 30-second Super Bowl ad. That’s \$100,000 per second. Marketing people believe that if they can get us to imagine something, our actions and pocketbooks will follow.

This principle can greatly enhance your life or destroy you. An affair of infidelity never takes place instantly; rather it is the fulfillment of where the mind has already been many times. Physical vitality or sports excellence comes only after “seeing” it happen in advance. Financial success or ruin follows being able to “imagine” it well before the actual arrival.

Thomas Edison said, “Most of my ideas belonged to other people who didn't bother to develop them.”

Career or business success follows being able to see it in advance. What do you “see” in your future? Do you see failure? – then it will surely follow. Do you see success? Then nothing can stop you. Need a job? Do you “see” that companies are laying off and no one is hiring—or do you “see” like the young man I mentored who got six job offers in ten days...in a specialized chemical research field, with no experience and a very recent college degree? Incidentally, that was a real situation. Chris had a degree from a church

college and no real work experience. He moved to Nashville from another state because he had a couple of friends here. He had a degree in Chemistry, but because his Mom had suffered from cancer, he had a desire to do something in the medical research field. We created a list of target companies—just like discuss in 48 Days to the Work You Love—and he began his job search. In the very first interview he was offered a position...at more money than he had anticipated. He came by my office to celebrate by taking Joanne and me to lunch. I listened to his excitement—and then told him to tell them “NO.” He was shocked, but I pointed out to him that the job offered to him was not a good fit... and that if he continued the job search as we had it laid out, he would get other, more “fitting” offers. He reluctantly agreed and continued his job search. He actually did get six offers in ten days—the result of a great job search execution. He accepted a position with a clinical trials company; a perfect fit for him. He called on people in their homes, tracking their reactions to newly introduced drugs, to monitor results for FDA approval. In the first year he made approximately double the income he had anticipated in this first position—and then went on to a very successful six-figure income in that field.

Now this first company asked him, “How did you know we needed someone like you?” We didn’t—it’s just that they fit the profile we selected for one of many target companies. But they had not run an ad for this position ...thus, Chad was the only candidate they interviewed. Can you “imagine” that kind of success for yourself?

How about if you want to start your own business? Do you “imagine” that four out of five new businesses fail or could you “see” helping single mothers find shared housing and in the process create a \$144,000 income like Carmel Sullivan did? Do you “imagine” that people will love your music themed art and pay \$10,000 for a single piece like Ron Baldwin has done?

Sounds surprisingly like the Biblical adage, “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” Ps. 23:7

Guard your thinking; let it lead your body and actions to positive results.

We're going to look at the steps required to put you in the driver's seat in this process.

I Can Do Almost Anything!

A young man, armed with letters of introduction from prominent men, one day presented himself before Chief Engineer Parsons, of the Rapid Transit Commission of New York, as a candidate for a position. "What can you do?" Have you any specialty?" asked Mr. Parsons. "I can do almost anything," answered the young man. "Well," remarked the chief engineer, rising to end the interview, "I have no use for anyone who can 'almost' do anything. I prefer someone who can actually do one thing thoroughly." *

One thing I see repeatedly is people who are "generalists." They attempt to do a little of everything. But even in today's workplace you will advance more by being a specialist. If you are dependable, show up for work on time and do what's expected of you, you can get a job at Walmart or Burger King before the sun goes down. But those characteristics do little to separate you from thousands of other job seekers. What is it that you do uncommonly well? What is your USP (Unique Selling Proposition)? Define that and you will rise to the top of your field quickly.

*Source: Og Madino's University of Success

Stop Praying!

Sometimes praying becomes an excuse for indecision or lack of action. Yes, I'm sure I'm already getting heat from some of you for this lead-in. Certainly, praying is always the preferred response. No, it's not. In my continuing rampage about lack of action, I am now maintaining that sometimes praying is not in your best interest—action is.

And I'm not just pulling this out of a hat. In the Bible book of Exodus we see the story of Moses leading those whining, complaining people through the desert. After the miraculous exit from Egypt and escape from their captors, the people are now convinced the Egyptian army is coming to get them. And they are sitting on their backsides, wringing their hands about how awful things are. Life just isn't fair.

And what did God tell them to do? In verse 15 of chapter 14, we read, "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Quit praying and get the people moving! Forward, march!'" (The Living Bible)

Oh yes, some of you Biblical scholars will be quick to remind me of the often used verse in Isaiah 40: 31. "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." Doesn't that give encouragement to just "wait?" Unfortunately for slackers, that word "wait" comes from the same word from which we get "waiter" and the real meaning implies to be active doing what we know needs to be done.

I get rather impatient with some people when the mortgage is due, the children are hungry and the lights are about to be cut off and they are still just praying about what to do. I know what to do; quit hiding behind your pious excuse for inactivity – and start moving.

"Indecision and delays are the parents of failure." —George Canning, English statesman

Oh and yes, God did “save” the people that day—based on their getting up and moving forward. Once they got the idea they were participants in their success, I’ll bet they ran rather than walked.

“But Moses told the people, ‘Don’t be afraid. Just stand where you are and watch, and you will see the wonderful way the Lord will rescue you today. The Egyptians you are looking at—you will never see them again. The Lord will fight for you, and you won’t need to lift a finger!’ Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Quit praying and get the people moving! Forward, march! Exodus 14: 13-15 (TLB)

Direction for Today: What is an area in your life where you really know what to do but have been justifying “waiting?”

Keep On Truckin'

A few years ago, Kmart announced they would be closing 326 stores and cutting up to 35,000 more jobs in its struggle to get out of bankruptcy. This is the kind of news that can make us think that now is not the time to be looking for a new job. Yet the old cliché holds true; “With every change there is the equal seed of new opportunity.”

Here are some tips on how to look for new opportunities:

Think Small. People tend to think of big companies when looking for jobs. The growth of new opportunities in the last 4-5 years has been largely in small companies. They are quick to respond to changes and you will have less competition looking there. 97.4% of the companies in America have fewer than 100 employees, yet most job seekers go to the Apples, Amazons, and Facebooks when looking for jobs.

Pharmacists, nurses and other health professionals will be in increasing demand. According to the National Association of Chain Drug Stores, there are almost 5,500 vacancies in drugstore chains alone for pharmacists. And we are told there are more than 120,000 open positions for registered nurses nationwide. This shortage is expected to increase to 400,000 in the next 20 years.

The National Electrical Contractors Association estimates 80,000 more electricians will be needed in the next 3 years. The median hourly earnings of electricians is about \$20.

The number of teachers needed is expected to increase exponentially.

The need for truck drivers is expected to increase by nearly 500,000 each year. According to salary.com a heavy truck driver makes an average of \$34,539 annually.

The Transportation Security Administration has already hired over 50,000 federally employed airport security screeners. Private security for office buildings, closed-circuit television, and security related software are exploding areas of opportunity.

Rejection Letter Rebuttal

The next time you get a rejection letter from a hoped-for employer, just send them the following:

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for your letter of [date of the rejection letter]. After careful consideration, I regret to inform you that I am unable to accept your refusal to offer me employment at this time.

This year I have been particularly fortunate in receiving an unusually large number of rejection letters. With such a varied and promising field of candidates, it is impossible for me to accept all refusals.

Despite [Name of the Company]'s outstanding qualifications and previous experience in rejecting applicants, I find that your rejection does not meet with my needs at this time.

Therefore, I will initiate employment with your firm immediately.

I look forward to working with you.

Best of luck in rejecting future candidates.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

The Root of All Evil

How should we understand this basic Biblical principle?

Well, we know the root of all evil is money, right? No, of course not; this is not the Biblical principle at all. It's the love of money that is the root of all evil. Now, who do you see loving money more; a rich person or a poor person?

I don't hear the wealthy people I know talking about money incessantly like I hear poor people, who seem to relate everything they do to the issue of how much money it will cost or generate. And who really is slave to money; the person who is doing something they love and in the process making \$250,000 a year? No, it's the person who is going to a job he/she hates every day, JUST FOR THE MONEY. Now there's a person who has made money their god. There's the person who focuses on and loves money.

We have some dear friends who have hearts of gold – they are some of the most generous people I know. They have supported multiple worthy causes over the years, have given away cars, furniture, food and clothing to those in need and yet continue to have money come to them in massive amounts. The sale of one recent investment just added another \$32 million to their resources. I never hear them talk about money – they live a modest lifestyle and are simply faithful stewards of God's riches.

"If you are going to let the fear of poverty govern your life... your reward will be that you will eat, but you will not live." George Bernard Shaw

This is a difficult point for most people. A lot of us retain something of the old primitive religious idea that poverty and self-sacrifice are pleasing to God. Somehow this implies that God has finished his work, has made all that he can make, and so the majority of people must stay poor because there's not enough to go around. So they're embarrassed to ask for much as it may

deprive someone else of having their needs met. But obviously, the reverse is true. The best way to help the poor is to not be one of them.

The desire for riches is simply the innate capacity for growth and fulfillment. In 1910, Wallace Wattles wrote, “That which makes you want more money is the same as that which makes the plant grow; it is life seeking fuller expression.” What God requires is that we use our talents wisely—and in doing so, what I typically see is a release of peace, sense of accomplishment, and MONEY.

The Security of Imprisonment

The comfort of familiarity may be keeping you from new and brighter opportunities.

Charles Dickens wrote about a man who had been in prison for many years. Obviously this man longed for freedom from his dungeon of despair and hopelessness. Finally, the day of his liberation arrived. He was led from his gloomy cell into the bright and beautiful and free world. He momentarily gazed into the sunlight, then turned and walked back to his cell. He had become so comfortable with confinement that the thought of freedom was overwhelming. For him, the chains and darkness were a predictable security.

For many people change is frightening. The sameness and predictability of what we have may be more comfortable than the uncertainty of change. Day after day I hear stories from clients about the feeling of being trapped in their jobs and lives. And yet, the comfort of at least knowing what is coming each day appears to be more attractive than the uncertainty of initiating change. Right now there are a whole lot of people who are being offered early retirement packages by the auto manufacturing companies they work for.

Did You Lose Your Horse Today?

“Is losing my job, income, business or health a blessing or a curse?”

Once there was an old man who lived in a tiny village. Although poor, he was envied by all, because he owned a beautiful white horse. People offered fabulous prices for the horse, but the old man always refused. “This horse is a friend, not a possession,” he would respond.

One morning the horse was not in the stable. All the villagers said, “You old fool. We told you someone would steal that beautiful horse. You could at least have gotten the money. Now the horse is gone, and you’ve been cursed with misfortune.” The old man responded, “Perhaps. All I know is that my horse is gone; the rest I do not know. Whether it be a curse or a blessing, I can’t say.”

After fifteen days the horse returned. He hadn’t been stolen; he had run away into the forest. Not only had he returned, he had brought a dozen wild horses back with him. Once again the village people gathered around the old man and said, “You were right—what we thought was a curse was a blessing. Please forgive us.” The old man responded, “Perhaps. Once again you’ve gone too far. How do you know if this is a blessing or a curse? Unless you can see the whole story, how can you judge?” But the people could only see the obvious. The old man now had twelve additional horses that could be broken and sold for a great deal of money.

The old man had a son, an only son. He began to break the wild horses. Unfortunately, after just a few days, he fell from a horse and broke both his legs. Once again the villagers gathered around the old man and said, “You were right. The wild horses were not a blessing; they were a curse.

Your only son has broken his legs and now in your old age you have no one to help you. You are poorer than ever.” But the old man said, “Perhaps. Don’t go

so far. Say only that my son broke his legs. We have only a fragment of the whole story.”

It so happened that a few weeks later the country went to war with a neighboring country. All the young men of the village were required to join the army. Only the son of the old man was excluded, because he had two broken legs. Once again the people gathered around, crying because there was little chance their sons would return. “You were right, old man.” Your son’s accident was a blessing. Our sons are gone forever.”

The old man spoke again. “You people are always quick to jump to conclusions. Only God knows the final story.”

(I have modified the details of this story that I’ve seen in various forms in many sources. No author has been identified.)