

Foreword by
STEPHEN R. COVEY

Aspire!

DISCOVERING YOUR PURPOSE
THROUGH THE POWER OF WORDS

KEVIN HALL

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— FROM THE DUST JACKET —

“Just as I broke new ground in human development over twenty years ago by uncovering the habits that make for a meaningful and effective life, Kevin is breaking new ground by uncovering and revealing the true intent and meaning of the words that make up those habits.”

— **STEPHEN R. COVEY**, BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE

About the Author



KEVIN HALL is a highly sought after business consultant, speaker and coach.

He was a partner in Franklin Quest, makers of the Franklin Day Planner. As Vice President of Sales and Training he helped fuel Franklin's worldwide growth.

Kevin is Co-Founder of the Statue of Responsibility envisioned by Dr. Viktor Frankl, author of *Man's Search for Meaning*.

He has been recognized for his groundbreaking approach to uncovering the hidden, and often secret, meanings of words.

Kevin is also credited with wordsmithing, and trademarking, the original slogan for the 2002 Olympic Winter Games, “Ignite the Fire Within.” He has been featured in *Forbes Magazine*, *Worth Magazine*, *Nation's Restaurant News*, *Restaurant Business* and on the *Food Network*.

Kevin and his wife Sherry are the proud parents of six children. He enjoys cycling, running, fly-fishing, cooking, and reading.

Visit Kevin Hall online at www.powerofwords.net

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KEVIN HALL

BookWise
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*This book is dedicated to the undisputed Master of Words,
Professor Arthur Watkins.
I will be forever grateful that you appeared on my path.*

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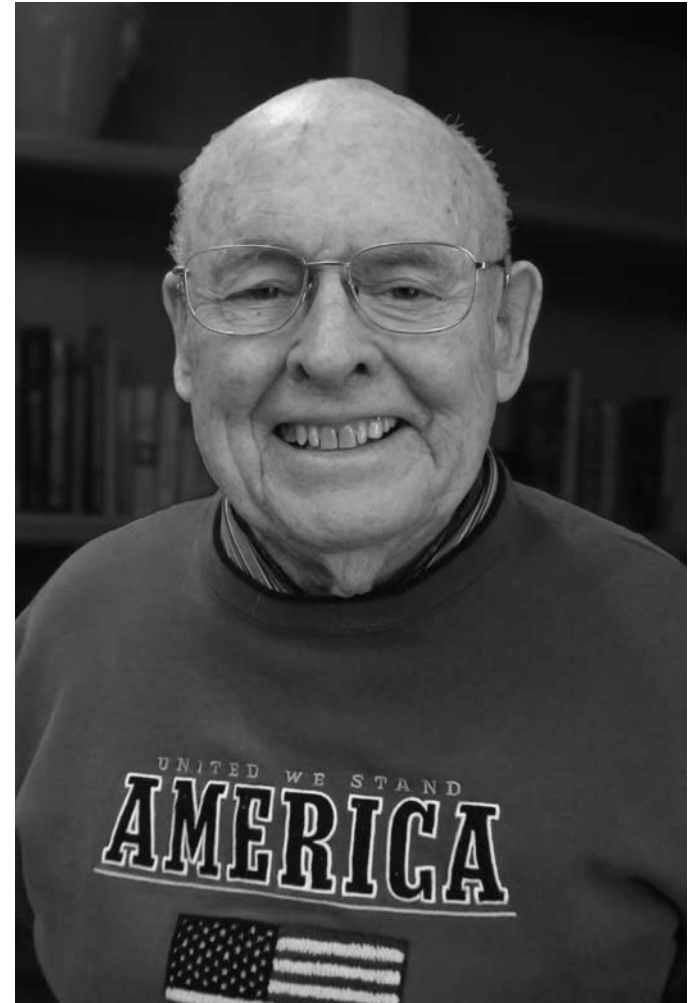
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ForeWord



It all started with words. In John 1:1 we read, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. And the Word was God.” Words are, and always have been, the creative force of the universe. The first recorded words of the Creator, “Let there be light,” put forth the illuminating power of words.

This masterfully written book will help you understand that words contain an inherent power, a force capable of lighting one’s paths and hoped-for horizons. Used correctly and positively, words are the first building blocks for success and inner peace; they provide the vision and focus that show the way to growth and contribution. Used incorrectly and negatively, they are capable of undermining even the best of intentions. This is true in business, in personal relationships, and every other walk of life. There is a language of success and a language of distress. There is a language of progress and a language of regress. Words sell and words repel. Words lead and words impede. Words heal and words kill. By truly understanding what words mean in their purest sense, we are able to unlock their importance and divine value and put ourselves in position to develop a new leadership vocabulary that looks up, not down, and inspires, motivates, uplifts, excites, and propels. When words are used properly, they sing out to the human heart.

ABOUT YOUR PATHFINDER

I first met Kevin Hall nearly twenty years ago when he was leading the Sales and Training team at Franklin Quest.

He requested that I speak at the corporation’s annual retreat on the principles of communication and empathy. His passion for timeless principles and sincere desire to help others find and follow their path and purpose in life was clearly evident back then.

Kevin was also the coach for my granddaughter Lauren’s club soccer team, where I was able to observe his ability to motivate and encourage young people to achieve goals many of them had never dreamed of. He was as concerned with the players’ personal success in life as he was with their success on the soccer field. I remember one occasion in particular when we opened up our home for a personal development session for team members and Kevin arranged for a handful of speakers to “breathe life” into the players’ dreams and aspirations. One speaker, Art Berg, shared a powerful message you will read about in Chapter 7. Many of the principles taught that night still resonate with me even today.

Over time, the company I founded, Covey Leadership Center, merged with Franklin Quest to form FranklinCovey, a leading global professional services firm of which I serve as Vice Chairman today.

Prior to the merger, Kevin left Franklin Quest to pursue the founding of a youth foundation and research the hidden, and often secret, meaning of words, and their relationship to personal growth and development.

We have since spoken together at industry conferences and worked jointly with executive teams in improving leadership performance. Just as I broke new ground in human development over twenty years ago by uncovering the habits that make for a meaningful and effective life, Kevin is breaking new ground by uncovering and revealing the true intent and meaning of the words that make up those habits.

I have been conferring with Kevin on this book over the course of the past four years and believe it to be a magnificent guide for living a life of fulfillment and integrity. Each chapter is infused with timeless principles that Kevin calls “secrets.” For example, in Chapter One, you will discover the Secret Word. It is an ancient and incredibly empowering word from India that I have personally found to be amazingly potential releasing. Discovering this word alone, and learning how to tap into its illimitable power, is more than worth the price of the book.

As you read about Kevin’s personal journey of discovering these secrets you’ll soon come to realize the power of your own heroic journey.

UNPEELING THE ONION

Understanding what a common word really means and recognizing its depth and true essence can be enormously empowering. By breaking down words, layer by layer, by uncovering their pure, original meaning, by exploring their roots, we shine a new light on words and phrases, many of which we’ve used forever. For example, I have always taught that the first imperative of a leader is to inspire others. When you realize that “inspire” means *to breathe life into another’s dreams*, and that the opposite, “expire,” means *to cease to breathe*, those words come to life. By learning to use words that inspire, you enable others to achieve their dreams. Conversely, by using words that expire, you disable others’ hopes and aspirations.

Another example is “opportunity.” I believe that effective people are not problem-minded; they’re opportunity-minded. The root of opportunity is *port*, meaning the entryway by water into a city or place of business. In earlier

days, when the tide and winds were right and the port opened, it allowed entry to do commerce, to visit, or to invade and conquer. But only those who recognized the opening could take advantage of the open port, or opportunity. I strongly encourage you to take advantage of the opportunity this treasure-filled book affords for enriching your life.

In addition to words commonly used in everyday English conversation, this book includes unique and profound words from other languages and cultures. The word “Ollin,” for example, is a word of depth from the Aztecs. It described a powerful event, like an earthquake or a great storm that shakes the Earth. It conveys intense and immediate movement. Ollin means *to move or act now with all your heart*. To experience Ollin you have to get “All in.” Global words such as this can unite people throughout the world with a common language.

FINDING YOUR BLISS

The more you understand words and the layers within them, the more it helps you understand your path and purpose. The great mythologist Joseph Campbell coined the phrase “Follow Your Bliss.” Words are the direction signs that show the way to that bliss. Words, in concert with the actions they inspire, help you become a better leader, a better spouse, a better parent, a better salesperson, a better athlete. The list is endless. The power in words generates wealth, health, productivity, discipline, spirituality, and limitless other desirable human traits.

LAYOUT OF THE CHAPTERS

By design, the book is divided into eleven principle-based

chapters – eleven core words – that you can visit and revisit several times a year to effectively cement permanent behavioral change.


The pattern and layout of the chapters reflects the author's background and experience in human development training over the past quarter-century. The first five chapters deal with personal development – how to use the secret power of words to help find your personal path and purpose. The middle chapter sits by itself, deliberately set apart because its theme is central to the whole book. Its key word is “humility” – a powerful trait I regard as the “Mother of all Virtues,” for it is the key to growth and constant improvement. The last five chapters are about leading others. They comprise the language of leadership: *it's not about you, it's about them*. As in a wheel, the chapters reflect how your sphere of influence expands from an inner hub and then gets bigger and bigger and bigger as the wheel keeps growing. The final chapter on “integrity” – which means whole or complete – completes the development wheel.

This enlightening book can easily be read in a single sitting. You can also select a chapter theme that calls to you and explore its depths thoroughly and deliberately. Either way, it will reveal essential keys for unleashing your true potential.

Whatever your goal, your quest, your passion, I am confident *ASPIRE* will unlock for you a universal force that will light the way to inspiration and personal growth. I suggest you keep a pen or pencil close by as you read this profound work over and over again. I know I will.

— STEPHEN R. COVEY

Preface

 As I finished this manuscript today, a fresh blanket of snow covered the mountain top community where I live. I stepped outside and took in a deep breath of fresh air, and slowly exhaled. The painfully sweet work of the previous four years seemed to evaporate like the steam rising from my breath. As I've repeated to myself on many an epic bike ride I thought: “The pain is soon forgotten but the memory lives on forever.”

If this book brings value and meaning into but one life, it has been more than worth the countless hours invested in it. As a connector of ideas and people, I doubt someone could pay me enough money to abandon this work and *not* pass along the secret power of words that I discovered while in my journey writing *ASPIRE*.

It is my hope that you will enjoy discovering worth in the principles I've learned and find use in applying them to your calling. As your personal journey continues to unfold I would very much enjoy learning about your unique experiences and by combining our energies we will help each other stay on our path, keep our commitments and fulfill our purpose. Please feel free to correspond with me at **kevin@powerofwords.net**. I look forward to hearing from you.


— KEVIN HALL

CHAPTER ONE

The Secret Word

*If I have no other qualities I can succeed with
love alone. Without it I will fail though I possess
all the knowledge and skills of the world. I will
greet this day with love in my heart.*

— OG MANDINO —

 It was a cold, brisk winter afternoon as I stepped inside the majestic St. Stephen's Cathedral, positioned at the very focal point of picturesque Vienna, Austria.

I found myself instantly drawn to a simple framed photograph of a young Mother Teresa surrounded by candles and benches. I silently reflected on the impact of this tiny woman's large life, a mega doer of few "words," who changed the world by doing one good deed after another and was known to whisper "Don't Talk ... Just Do," long before Nike's "Just do it" slogan came about.

Mother Teresa, who never bore children of her own, became the mother of the motherless by adhering to a mantra of "doing little things with great love." "Doing"... "Acting"... "Serving." Those words became her calling cards to the world.

I left the cathedral inspired by her legacy and committed to "do more doing." Surrounded by the magnificent spires of St. Stephen's, I aspired to reach higher and reevaluate and recognize the opportunities along my path. I had a reassuring feeling that something special was about to happen.

I then remembered why I had walked in that direction

to begin with and began looking for Christmas gifts for my loved ones back home. I began searching the alleys and side streets, passing the many gift shops and sidewalk cafés, in search of something special. Walking the cobbled steps from the cathedral, I paused in front of a store with a window display that reminded me of a jewelry box – only it was a fabric shop.

The light reflecting off the luminous silks and colorful linens caught my eye and tugged at my heart. I entered the store in hopes of finding the perfect fabric for my daughter Season's wedding dress. As I surveyed the colorful buffet of materials gathered from every corner of the world, I envisioned my daughter looking like a princess, radiating her beautiful smile and infectious laugh while her prince charming carried her across a new threshold of promise and hope.

I was completely unaware that the path I was following would lead to the discovery of one of the most meaningful gifts of my life.

This gift would come packaged in the form of a word, a word with the power to transform one's life forever.

AN UNEXPECTED GIFT

The middle-aged proprietor of the store leapt toward me with the bounding energy of someone half his age. He offered his hand in welcome. I was completely taken by his large intent brown eyes. His face was rounded with pearl-white teeth that accentuated his smooth, chocolate-colored skin.

As he shook my hand he smiled with a subtle wink,

tilted his head and said in proper and precise English, "Good evening, my name is Pravin. Pravin Cherkoori." His voice had the disarming soft intonation of one who had come from the country of his store's name: India.

"I'm Kevin Hall. I am pleased to meet you," I replied.

I was about to ask how long he had been acquiring the brilliant array of colors and fabrics that dazzled the eye when to my surprise he had a question for me.

"What is that pin you are wearing?" he inquired.

I touched the pewter pin on the lapel of my overcoat. I removed it and offered it to him for a closer look. He took it between his thumb and index finger and asked, "What do the two hands clasped at each wrist represent?"

"They depict our responsibility to reach out, uplift one another and lighten one another's burdens," I answered.

Pravin rotated the pin one half turn saying, "It looks as if both hands are equally positioned to either help or be helped."

"You obviously understand what the artist was trying to convey," I responded. "Emerson called it 'one of the beautiful compensations of this life, for you cannot sincerely try to help another without helping yourself.'"

His smile made the corners of his mouth curve upward as he added, "We often receive what we desire for others."

I nodded because his words rang true.

"So this pin ... this is why you are here in Vienna?" Pravin queried.

I was surprised he made the connection yet didn't comment. I explained that the pin is a miniature replica

of the Statue of Responsibility that Viktor Frankl envisioned being built on the West Coast of America as a bookend monument to the Statue of Liberty on the East Coast. I'd spent the past week with Viktor's family, showing them this model and discussing plans to fulfill his vision.

The shopkeeper's eyes widened at the mention of the name of the famed Viennese psychiatrist, Holocaust survivor and author of *Man's Search for Meaning*. "I knew Viktor, he was a great and noble man," Pravin said with admiration, at which point he reached beneath the front counter and produced a large leather guest book. "Viktor, like many others who have passed through Vienna, signed this Book of Greats."

He leaned forward as he opened the book and placed it on top of the counter directly in front of me and said, "Kevin, you are one of the greats. Will you sign my book?"

I looked at the names on the pages. There was Dr. Frankl, and Mother Teresa, and members of Mahatma Gandhi's family. *This man has just met me*, I thought. I felt unworthy of signing his book. Certainly my name didn't belong alongside such distinguished company.

After pausing for what seemed an eternity, I responded, "I appreciate the compliment and your thoughtful gesture, but I do not believe that I am one of the greats. I'm sorry, but I can't sign your book."

Pravin came around the counter and placed his hand on my shoulder. "I have a word I wish to teach you," he said. "Would you be so kind as to join me for dinner?"

Without waiting for my reply he led me out the front door, where the cold air was a chilly reminder that growth and discovery are often accompanied by a degree or two of discomfort.

I became the caboose of a two-man train following in the tracks of my lead engine. As we chugged through the narrow granite-paved streets our breath sent up puffs of steam.

After a series of turns and bends we followed the sweet scent of stir-fried vegetables, roasted garlic and ginger to a quaint Chinese restaurant. Once we were seated Pravin called the waitress over and ordered a few of his favorite dishes. He then scooted forward on his chair and placed his elbows on the table in front of me.

Looking me in the eye, he asked, "What do you believe about me? I am dark skinned. You are light skinned. I am from the East. You are from the West. What do we have in common?"

"First of all," I joked, "I believe that you didn't have dinner plans. But secondly and more importantly, I believe that you are my brother created by the same Creator. We are part of the same human family."

My Indian brother relaxed back in his chair and exclaimed, "That is what I believe also!"

From that moment on our conversation took on a depth of personal interest as if we had broken new ground and understanding.

Pravin spoke about his early years. "I grew up in Calcutta," he began, "among the poorest of the poor. Through education and hard work my family was able to break

the shackles of poverty.” After a pause, he resumed, “My mother taught me many great things. One of the most important was the meaning of an ancient Hindi word.”

That brought me to the edge of my chair.

“In the West you might call this charity,” Pravin went on. “But I think you’ll find this word has a deeper meaning.”

What word could have more depth than charity? I thought.

Speaking deliberately, almost reverently, he continued as if he were revealing a sacred secret.

“The word is ‘Genshai,’” he said. “It means that you should never treat another person in a manner that would make them feel small.”

I pulled out my leather journal and wrote the salient word (pronounced gen-shy) and its meaning as taught by my newfound friend.

Pravin continued, “As children we were taught to never look at, touch, or address another person in a way that would make them feel small. If I were to walk by a beggar in the street and casually toss him a coin, I would not be practicing Genshai. But if I knelt down on my knees and looked him in the eye when I placed that coin in his hand that coin became love. Then and only then, after I had exhibited pure, unconditional brotherly love did I become a true practitioner of Genshai.”

Chills ran up and down my spine as I sat speechless, reflecting on the power of what I just heard.

“Kevin, you are truly one of the greats,” my host proclaimed, as he motioned toward me with his hands. “But

you refused to sign my Book of Greats. When you made that decision, you treated yourself small. Genshai means that you never treat anyone small – and that includes yourself!”

He paused, and then implored, “Promise me this Kevin. Promise me that you will never, ever treat yourself small again. Will you do that for me?”

I felt humbled and surrendered. “I will Pravin. I promise you, I will.”

An inaudible *mission accomplished* seemed to dance across Pravin’s beaming face as he sat back smiling from ear to ear.

A MOTHER’S LOVE

Was it only fitting that this purveyor of fine fabric would so readily wear his emotions on his sleeve? Our magical encounter was surreal and it felt like being in a movie played on fast-forward. I nearly pinched myself to check if I was dreaming.

Just hours earlier, I had left the cathedral with a premonition that tonight would be memorable. As I glanced over at my guru-like guide *memorable* seemed to be the biggest one-word understatement of the year.

“Pravin, can you tell me more about meeting Mother Teresa, the Saint of Calcutta?”

“Yes,” he began. “She was walking through a throng of people dressed in her familiar white cotton sari. I raced in her direction shouting and screaming and as I ran up close to her she reached out and placed her hand over my mouth and firmly beseeched me to ‘stop talking and start

doing.' I remember it as if it were ... ”

“It was Mother Teresa who brought me to your very street tonight,” I interrupted, unable to contain my excitement. “A short while ago I stopped at St. Stephen’s Cathedral and paid homage to her life. I left vowing to aspire to do more in my life. My next stop turned out to be your beautiful fabric store.”

Pravin paused, looked intently into my eyes, and boldly said, “Our paths were meant to cross. We were destined to meet. You entered my shop for a reason.”

I looked into the eyes of my new friend and was reminded of my own mother who was the first to model Genshai to me, although I’m positive she never heard the word nor knew of its meaning. “Kevin,” she would say as she lifted my chin, “you can do anything that you want in life ... you can achieve and live every worthwhile dream ... you will surely do great and meaningful things in your life.”

As I reflected on my childhood, the words rang as clear as the day she said them and it was almost as if the empty chair next to Pravin at our table was now peacefully occupied by my maternal angel.

It had been four years since my beautiful mother had passed away peacefully at our home. For nearly a year she valiantly fought the ravages of cancer, finally calmly and serenely surrendering.

To my family, to me, and those who truly knew her, she will always be remembered as a remarkably strong and courageous woman.

She became a single mother of two at the tender age of nineteen, attending to the needs of my older brother and me when she could have been in her first year of college.

She was a teenage high school dropout who leveraged self-education, career training and sheer determination to become a substance abuse counselor right alongside colleagues with Master’s degrees hanging from their walls.

A recovered alcoholic, she had come full circle to counsel and comfort addicts who battled the same demons that she knew all too well. Her challenges taught her how to understand others and empathize with their struggles and disappointments, and through it all she learned the value of compassion and encouragement – the foundational elements of Genshai.

At her funeral a tall, strong looking, handsome man approached me with misty eyes and told me that my mother had changed and probably saved his life. He recounted a time when he was at the darkest point of his life. He had hit rock bottom and wasn’t sure if he would ever get up again. Then, with tears streaming down his cheeks he told me how she had believed in him when he didn’t believe in himself. “Without your mother’s help,” he cried, “I wouldn’t be here today.”

“Without her,” I remembered thinking, “I wouldn’t be here either,” for she had consistently declared to me that I could accomplish *anything* that I set my mind to achieve, and fortunately I believed her. No matter how hard life became for her, she always held a view of a much better world for me.

A VICTOR NOT A VICTIM

As we left the restaurant my thoughts turned to another exemplar of Genshai, a man of extraordinary character and resilience, a man whose legacy had brought me to Vienna: Dr. Viktor Frankl.

One short week ago, I had left the warm confines of sunny Southern California to journey halfway around the globe with one hope in mind: the hope of learning more about Viktor's remarkable life and understanding how so much good could have come out of so much bad.

I began my course of study by walking the very same streets that Viktor had walked for all but three of the ninety-two years of his dignified and purpose-filled life.

The young doctor would spend those other three years far removed from the beauty and tranquility of his beloved Vienna, surviving the horrors and inhumanity of the Nazi concentration camps as prisoner #119,104.

To him, those three stolen years paled in comparison to what else the Nazis would take away and destroy: his beautiful bride and unborn child, his brother, his mother, his father and the manuscript he had devoted his adult life writing.

I will not forget how I felt as I stood outside the Frankl home, picturing the Nazis coming in the dark silence of the night and turning his haven into his hell, snatching Viktor and his loved ones from their warm beds to send them off in cattle trains to the concentration camps.

How could one choose to be victorious in the midst of such heartbreak and devastation? How could he choose triumph over defeat? Would I be able to approach that

kind of courage?

How could Viktor, like Anne Frank, choose to believe in the goodness of mankind after what he experienced?

Those answers are in the book that he wrote in nine successive days after his ordeal had ended, a book that would be recognized as one of the most influential books ever written: *Man's Search for Meaning*.

In the book he writes: "Everything can be taken from a man but one thing; the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

Despite his circumstances, he chose meaning, responsibility and contribution. By choosing to be "worthy of his suffering" he proved that we each have the capacity to rise above our outward fate by walking the dignified path.

Stripped of possessions ... every familiar piece of life snatched away ... everything of value or worth destroyed ... dehumanized and treated as if he were the smallest of the small ... forced to suffer pain, hunger, thirst, fatigue ... almost more than one can suffer without dying ... the man who had become a *number* became a *person*.

Viktor, aptly named, chose to be a "victor" not a "victim." He discovered humanity in the empty face of inhumanity; he found hope amid a vast sea of hopelessness. In the face of overwhelming resistance he refused to treat himself, or others, small.

WORDS LIGHT THE PATH

As Pravin and I retraced our steps toward his shop I told him about my daughter and her wedding. He suggested

we go back to the store where he wrapped three exquisite silk and lace fabrics. After I thanked him, an awkward silence prevailed as we left the store. Our echoing footsteps were the only sound as we walked the centuries old cobblestone streets.

We stopped at a crossroads. In one direction was Pravin's home, in the other the hotel where I was going.

Poised to go our separate ways, Pravin stepped forward and removed the scarf from around his neck and placed it around mine. He then gently tucked it inside my coat, where it felt as if it was warming my heart.

As we hugged a goodbye Pravin's last words were, "It is all a journey Kevin. We are all on a journey."

I turned and with a quick wave walked away reflecting on what I had just learned. The lesson I learned was profound, yet simple. *One word could change the world for the better.* Words are like passwords. They unlock the power. They open the door. Genshai. That single word contained as much depth as any lesson or sermon I had ever heard.

I will be forever grateful for the wise guide who helped me recall vividly my mother's message and at a deeper level understand what words are capable of. I vowed to never again treat myself small, to live Genshai, and to share this and other secret words, for it has been wisely said, "He who holds a lantern to light the pathway of his brother sees more clearly his own."

As I continued on my path, holding the package for my daughter, I realized that the Book of Greats has many empty pages to fill, and that one day I would return here again.

Now I had the light and the direction I needed to take was clearer than ever before. I had come to Vienna to help others and yet had received the greatest gift. I glanced down at the package and smiled – well, two very special gifts.

Pravin was right. It is all a journey. We are all on a journey filled with gifts.

MY JOURNAL THOUGHTS ON **Genshai**

The way I treat myself reflects the way I treat others.

When I treat myself with dignity and respect it will be reflected in the way I treat others ... if I treat myself with disdain and contempt that will also be reflected in the way I treat others.

I don't see the world as it is ... I see the world as I see myself.

Remember what James Allen wrote in As a Man Thinketh:

"Man is made or unmade by himself; in the armory of thought he forges the weapons by which he destroys himself. He also fashions the tools with which he builds for himself heavenly mansions of joy and strength and peace."

I have divinity within me ... I have greatness within me ... I attract into my life that which I believe I am.

"Believe" means to be love. When I believe in myself I love myself. When I love myself I treat myself with respect. "Spect" is to look at. "Re" is back. "Respect" is to look back at.

I will write the secret word Genshai on a piece of paper and put it on the bathroom mirror ... Each day I will look in the mirror with love, honor and respect ... From this day on I will commit to living a magical, extraordinary life.

Abundance is my birthright. I need to think abundantly. It's time to release the potential within. It's time to begin my own heroic journey.

As I reflect Genshai, to myself the world will reflect it back!

IDENTIFY AND HONOR A PRACTITIONER OF

Genshai

SELECT someone whose behavior best reflects the principles of Genshai.

WRITE their name in the box provided below.


REACH OUT and teach them the meaning of Genshai and explain why they personify this word.

CHAPTER TWO

Pathfinder

*The moment one definitely commits oneself
then Providence moves too. All sorts of things
occur to help one that would never otherwise
have occurred ... unforeseen incidents, meetings,
and material assistance which no man could
have dreamed would have come his way.*

— WILLIAM HUTCHINSON MURRAY —

 It is the last day of the year.
The final hours of the year are approaching as I am at my desk, high in the Rocky Mountains, looking north out of a picture window that frames the beautiful snow-capped Wasatch range, encircling the valley below as if it were a giant horseshoe.

In this elevated community suitably named Suncrest, our home is perched atop an alpine setting above 6,000 feet. Here, the sun crests over our mountaintop haven at the first light of day.

As the sun's eye slowly opens over the grandeur of Lone Peak to the east, I am reading *The Pilgrimage*, by my Brazilian friend Paulo Coelho. What he writes triggers a torrential downpour of fresh insights, confirming to me again the wisdom of always having two books with you: the book you are reading, and the book you are writing. Placing pen to paper, I write fast and feverishly in my leather journal, barely able to write and contain the abundance of ideas.

My thoughts are interrupted by an explosion of fireworks streaming across the sky, changing the clouds from amber to burnt orange to blazing red. As the color bursts

through the clouds, thin rays of light reach to the horizon like giant eyelashes, releasing life-sustaining energy to the new day.

Today's bright beginning will mark the ending of the year, for tonight when the clock strikes midnight we will bid adieu to the year gone by and welcome the New Year. Tomorrow at sunrise the Earth begins anew its 365-day journey around the sun, demonstrating the connectivity of all things in the universe.

The words of William Wordsworth, "Come forth into the light of things, let Nature be your teacher," call out to me, and I reflect on a day last summer when my son Konnor and I, along with several other fathers and sons, stood in the enormous glacial cirque at the base of Lone Peak, the tallest of the tall peaks above Suncrest. There, the rock-littered landscape provides clear evidence why these are called the Rocky Mountains. Everywhere are rocks: piled rocks, or cairns, carefully placed to mark the path by those who have gone before; steps and stairs made of rocks; benches of rock that sit next to granite boulders the size of homes. Atop it all is a smooth slide of nearly vertical rock as long as a city block, carrying a stream of water from the melting snow above.

This rocky place offers dramatic views of the valley and the sparkling lakes below and provides a perfect resting spot to view the towering spectacle of Lone Peak above. It's as if Mother Nature is subtly teaching that you can't look down and look up at the same time.

Gazing upwards at the fortress of rock, I realize that the giant steel and glass skyscrapers of New York and Hong

Kong have nothing on the sixty-story spires of stone that stretch into the clouds as they scrape the sky.

Upon the tallest of these natural towers Nature has painted with water-leached minerals a distinctly visible question mark that is so large you can't quite believe what your eyes are seeing. Resting at an elevation of over 11,000 feet, it stands more than ten stories tall and is known to experienced climbers and hikers alike as Question Mark Wall.

The purpose of Question Mark Wall seems self-evident: a reminder that no matter how high we climb, we each need to reflect and ask: How did I get here? Have I been following the correct path? Am I on target? How do I overcome the obstacles ahead of me? Am I clear about where I really want to go? Do I recognize those who are waiting to help me on my path?

I leave my reverie and write in my journal that questions such as these, and their answers, have dominated my thoughts since I first embarked on my own personal journey of discovering the secret power within words ...

OPPORTUNITY MEETS DESTINY

It was in Vienna, after my new friend and guide Pravin Cherkoori appeared on my path and taught me *the* secret word, that, as fate would have it, I learned of another guide who would teach me that *all* words have secrets.

He was introduced to me by Bill Fillmore, an attorney who was part of our delegation that had traveled to Austria to meet with Viktor Frankl's family. Bill mentioned how he couldn't help but notice that I was constantly

writing in my journal, and wondered what I might be writing about.

“Words,” I told him. “I’m learning all I can about words and the power within them.”

I opened my journal and showed him the entry with the secret word that Pravin Cherkoori had taught me.

“Please, tell me more,” Bill replied as his face broke into a grin as wide as a Cheshire cat’s.

“I’m on a quest to uncover the secrets of words and what they meant originally when they first surfaced,” I explained. “It’s like peeling an onion. By breaking down words layer by layer, by uncovering their pure meaning, you tap into a force that will help you find your purpose and better lead your life.”

Bill then revealed the reason for the big smile on his face.

“I want you to meet a mentor of mine,” he said. “He knows more about words than any living human being I know.”

The man’s name, he said, is Arthur Watkins, a retired university professor who has devoted his lifetime to etymology, the study of words. He earned his PhD in linguistics from Stanford and spent nearly forty years teaching language on the university level, and is fluent in a dozen languages. During World War II he helped decode German army transcriptions on the Italian front.

“And do you know what he does for fun?” Bill exclaimed. “He loves to teach others about the origins of words. That is his favorite thing to do in all the world.”

“Arthur Watkins is the undisputed master of words.

You have to meet him,” said Bill, who explained that Arthur was now living in a senior home.

I couldn’t wait to meet him.

Within days after returning from Vienna I called Arthur Watkins.

While waiting for the phone to ring, I pictured someone frail and ashen, on oxygen perhaps, hooked to an I.V. in bed waiting to share the last morsel of wisdom of his life.

But after only half-a-ring, that illusion was shattered when a clear, confident voice answered, “Watkins residence.”

“Hi, I’m Kevin Hall,” I said. “Bill Fillmore gave me your number and said he’d tell you I’d call.”

“I’ve been expecting your call,” Professor Watkins answered in a formal tone but with obvious enthusiasm.

“I was hoping we could get together sometime,” I said, prepared to set up an appointment for later that week.

“I’m available tonight,” he said readily.

I looked at my watch. It was nearly eight p.m.

“I could be there within half-an-hour,” I said, with some hesitation. I didn’t want to invade his sleep time or violate any senior home curfews. But the voice on the other end of the phone was unfazed. “That will be fine,” came the answer. “I will be most pleased to have your company.”

When I rang the doorbell at Professor Watkins’ room, he opened the door wearing khakis and a sweatshirt with an American flag on the front. On his feet were black Converse All-Stars. The All-American professor was in.

(As I would learn on return visits, he was always in). This was not a young man. He hunched slightly. His face was lined and wrinkled. His ears were outsized and each had a hearing aid attached. When he smiled he took on a Yoda-like tranquility. Everything about his visage spoke of wisdom and experience.

There was no oxygen tank, no I.V. lines or monitors, and he was most definitely not confined to bed. After we shook hands and he ushered me in, he sat in a recliner and I took a seat on the couch to his right. That turned out to be on the side of his faulty hearing aid, however, and he quickly moved over and sat next to me on the couch. His knees and elbows nearly touched mine so he could better hear what I was saying. I immediately felt comfortable and surprisingly at ease. Although we were separated in age by over four decades, the connection between us was instant and, I sensed, mutually enthusiastic. My good friend, best-selling author Richard Paul Evans, is fond of sharing the Chinese aphorism, “When the student is ready, the teacher will appear.” I must have been ready because appear he did. It was as if I’d come home.

The words of renowned mythologist Joseph Campbell seemed apropos: “When you follow your bliss ... doors will open where you would not have thought there would be doors; and where there wouldn’t be a door for anyone else.”

It soon became obvious, as I looked around Arthur’s twelve-foot by twelve-foot room that he loved words. The evidence was everywhere. On the coffee table was a dog-eared copy of a book Arthur proudly proclaimed to

be his all-time favorite read: *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*. On one side of the couch was a thick, hardbound book, consisting of two volumes. Each was single-spaced and double-columned. Combined they contained 1,416 pages and over one million words that Arthur claimed to be, in the matter-of-fact manner of the elderly that does not come off as boasting, “The longest, most complete autobiography ever written in either the modern or the ancient world.” I asked to use his restroom, and stuck smack dab in the middle of the mirror was his vocabulary word of the day. I marveled, *here’s a man in his ninth decade, at the very top of the language game, and every day he’s learning a new word!*

I would discover that night – as is the case in senior homes everywhere – the wisdom, experience and knowledge of those who live there truly knows no bounds. In Arthur’s humble surroundings I couldn’t help but feel a bit overwhelmed.

“Kevin, tell me about yourself,” Arthur said with a smile.

LEADERS FIND THE PATH

I told him about my family and interests and explained to him that for twenty-five years I had taught and developed leadership training. Along the way I had become fascinated by words and their power, I explained, and now I wanted to learn all I could about the secrets of words and how they might help us lead purpose-filled lives.

“It sounds like you’re interested in leadership, in helping others lead their lives,” he said. “Let’s start our word

study by examining the origin of the word ‘leader.’”

He explained that the word is Indo-European, and that it is derived from two words. The first part – l-e-a – means *path* and the second part – d-e-r – means *finder*.

“A leader is a pathfinder,” he said. “Leaders find the path. They are the readers of the signs and the clues. They see and show the way.”

“Kevin, can you imagine a hunting party going out in ancient days?” he asked, waving his arms and hands for dramatic effect. “Those who become the leaders see the sign of the game and stop and listen, they pause to catch their breath, and get on their hands and knees to recognize the clues. They see the hoof marks. They are the ones with the best hearing who put their ears to the ground and listen to where the game is. They are the ones who touch the ground and can tell which direction the animal is traveling. In olden times, finding the true path of the game was life sustaining.”

“Being a leader means finding the path,” he continued, and then added, “But before you can help someone else find their path ... you must know yours.”

What he said gave me a whole new picture, a word picture, of what it means to be a leader. Arthur had opened my eyes to see words in a dimension I never dreamed of. If it’s true that a picture is worth a thousand words, it’s also true that a word is worth a thousand pictures.

In one short visit my new teacher revealed that words, all words, have an essence, and by understanding that essence we are in a position to be able to use them to light our paths.

I spent over two hours with Arthur that first night. We studied more than a dozen words and it felt like just minutes had passed. When I looked at my watch and saw it was 10:30 p.m. I could scarcely believe it! Such would be the case in our many subsequent meetings. We decided to meet most often on Thursday afternoons – “Thursdays with Arthur,” I came to call them – because that is when he would deliver a weekly lecture to his fellow senior home residents in a program he called “Culture Capsules.”

As I walked to the parking lot after our first meeting I felt a chill run up and down my spine, a repeat of the feeling I experienced just days earlier in Vienna when I met Pravin. First, my path led me to a guide waiting to teach me about a very powerful word. Tonight, halfway around the world in a retirement home no more than thirty minutes from my front porch, my path led me to a teacher waiting to instruct me about the power of all words.

Again, Pravin’s parting words to me rang loud, clear and true. It is a journey. We are all on a journey. And when we follow our path we find those who show us the way. It is not just some mystical, abstract concept, a metaphor, a figure of speech, a mathematical impossibility. It can be, and usually is, a very real, very physical experience.

LIFE ISN’T PRACTICE

A few years ago, I was scoutmaster of a Boy Scout troop and we were in the Grand Tetons in northwestern Wyoming for our summer camp. There were eighteen of us, including leaders. On the morning the boys were to attempt to pass off the toughest requirement for their

hiking merit badge, the dreaded twenty-mile hike, I gathered them around the campfire to talk about the importance of setting goals to give you direction and focus in your life. Peter Vidmar, a two-time gold medalist in the Olympics in gymnastics and one of the country's top speakers, had recently told me about appearing at a conference with one of the world's most respected human behavioralists, Dr. Gerald Bell, a professor at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. Peter told me about a survey Dr. Bell had recently completed that studied the lives of 4,000 retired executives. He had spoken to these proven business leaders, whose average age was seventy, in their homes, in senior centers, in rehabilitation hospitals, and he'd asked them just one question: *If you could live your life over again, what would you do differently?*

To build up Dr. Bell's credibility with the Scouts, I told them how he had helped the North Carolina basketball team win the national championship when a freshman named Michael Jordan was on the team. Before the season started, Dr. Bell and Coach Dean Smith had gone to every player's locker and hung a poster of the Louisiana Superdome, site of that year's national championship game. The idea was to get every player to visualize playing in that game in that arena. They needed to know where they were going if they wanted to get there. The poster served as a positive visual image that was worthy of their highest commitment. Every day before practice, and again after practice, the players would open their lockers and there, staring back at them, was a reminder of what they were aiming to achieve. An image that said: *You*

can do this ... Focus on this ... You are worthy of this ... It will be worth it! For the entire season they could see their goal. They could almost hear the cheering when they closed their lockers. And at the end of the season they achieved what they had envisioned. They played their final game in the Louisiana Superdome, Michael Jordan made the game-winning shot, and they won the national championship.

After that remarkable year, Dr. Bell and Dean Smith co-wrote the *New York Times* bestseller *The Carolina Way*. Dean Smith, I explained to the Scouts, was the coach of Michael Jordan's physical skills. Dr. Gerald Bell was his mind coach.

As these twelve-to-fourteen-year-old Scouts, some who didn't even yet know they had a life, looked up at me, I shared with them what those seventy-year-old executives answered when Dr. Bell asked them what they would do differently if they could live their lives over again.

Their top response, an answer that ranked far ahead of any others, was this: *I should have taken charge of my life and set my goals earlier. Life isn't practice, it's the real thing.*

I shared the rest of the survey answers with the Scouts: 2) *I would have taken better care of my health.* 3) *I would have managed my money better.* 4) *I would have spent more time with my family.* 5) *I would have spent more time on personal development.* 6) *I would have had more fun.* 7) *I would have planned my career better.* 8) *I would have given more back.*

The young impressionable faces around the fire displayed varying degrees of attention. My goal was that

they would start thinking about their future, and of more urgency, what they could do that very day. What were their real goals for today's hike? What was their sense of commitment? Were they determined to make it? Would they be content with just finishing the bare requirements, or did they want to set their sights higher?

Later, on the hike some of the Scouts started to lag, and I challenged them to go beyond the required twenty miles that finished at String Lake, and go a half-mile farther to Bear Paw Lake. If they'd do that and return to String Lake, they'd hike twenty-one miles. I promised anyone who went the extra mile that I'd take them into Jackson Hole and buy them the best steak dinner of their life at the Million Dollar Cowboy Steakhouse. They would see that there was a reward by going the extra mile!

I had four takers out of fifteen Scouts. We left the rest of the pack behind and started jogging away, eager about the prospects of going beyond what was required. But several miles later, as we reached the turnoff where you could take the quick and easy trail to String Lake or persevere along the more challenging route to Bear Paw Lake; two of the Scouts had a change of heart. It was interesting that these were boys who had never had to deal with many hard challenges in their lives. Some could say that their lives had been so privileged that they were born on third base and thought they'd hit a triple. By the time we reached the crossroads, they were content with finishing the hike as quickly as possible. Instead of going on to Bear Paw Lake, they made a beeline for String Lake.

On the other hand, the two Scouts who stayed were

boys who were always up for a challenge, willing to go higher, to risk, grow, and go past their comfort zone. For boys who ranged from age twelve to fourteen, it was impressive to watch. What kind of home life instilled this in them?

After reaching Bear Paw Lake and turning around, knowing we just needed the final, gradual downhill half-mile to go to realize our stretch goal (and their steak dinner), I looked down the trail and saw a fit runner with a beautiful stride come into view. He was wearing glasses, looked to be in his mid-fifties, and instead of the painful look we see in many runners, he was wearing a big smile. I was enthused by the sight of new company, for it is seldom crowded on the extra mile. When he was closer he called out, "Are you scoutmaster Kevin Hall?" and I mentally joked to myself, *How can creditors find me here in the Grand Tetons?*

"Yes, I am," I responded.

"I just ran into two of your Scouts and they're worried that you might get lost and not find your way back," he said. "Do you mind if I jog along with you and help show you the way?"

I laughed and said, "Thanks. I know this route but we'd love the company." Then I asked him what brought him to the Tetons.

"I'm on vacation. I love this area of the country," he answered.

I asked where he was from.

"I'm from North Carolina."

"What part of North Carolina?"

“Chapel Hill.”

To which I responded, “You wouldn’t happen to know a Dr. Gerald Bell, would you?”

He stopped dead in his tracks, as did I, only to have the two Scouts behind us practically run right up our backs.

He looked at me incredulously and said, “Well ... I ... am ... Dr...Gerald Bell!”

I’m not sure who was more astonished by this chance meeting, but as we recovered from our amazement we started again to jog while I explained to Dr. Bell how that very morning at our campfire devotional we had talked about his study of the 4,000 retired executives.

I asked him, “Is it true that the one thing they would do differently if they could live over again, is that they would carve out their life’s goals earlier?”

“That is absolutely true,” he said.

The two Scouts were stunned and delighted that our paths had literally crossed. I couldn’t have been more pleased to talk to anyone in the universe right there and then than Dr. Bell, who continued to run along the trail beside us providing additional insights and details about his study and enthusiastically stressing the importance of taking charge of your life through goal setting. Those Scouts learned a great lesson – when you go the extra mile, amazing things happen!

As we parted, I asked Dr. Bell what he thought the chances were of our meeting on the trail on the very day I shared his study with the Scouts. He said he couldn’t put a number on it, maybe one in a trillion. Or, as one of the Scouts put it, “one in infinity.”

But it did happen, and it does happen. As Joseph Campbell taught so vividly in *The Power of Myth*, “When you follow your bliss, you put yourself on the track that has been there all the while ... you begin to meet people who are in the field of your bliss, and they open doors to you.”

And while some might choose to attribute it to coincidence, or happenstance, or simple dumb luck, I know that when we aspire to achieve our goals each connection that we make leads to another and another and another.

KEYS TO PATHFINDING

In devoting a significant part of my life to the study of human potential and development I have come to realize that those who follow their true path and purpose do five things. One, they are able to read the clues that guide them on their path. Two, they are very clear about where they are going. Three, they recognize and embrace their natural gifts. Four, they are willing to sacrifice to make significant contributions. Five, they follow their bliss and as a result they meet people on their path who have been placed there to guide them along their journey.

“And when I think about it,” Paulo Coelho writes in the final line of *The Pilgrimage*, “I guess it is true that people always arrive at the right moment at the place where someone awaits them.”

LOOKING FORWARD

As I close my leather journal and prepare to join my

family in ringing out the old and ringing in the new, I reflect how appropriate it is that January, the month that ushers in each New Year, is named after Janus, the mythical Roman god with two faces. One looks backward at what lies behind and the other looks forward to what lies ahead. It is an ancient reminder that we each have a choice to live in the past or live in the present.

I think of Arthur in his room, surrounded by his books, journals, boxes of lectures, and his million-word autobiography, who still every day takes a moment to tape the word of the day on his bathroom mirror. At ninety-three years old, what fuels his constant aspiration to discover new depths to a word from his favorite book, *Webster's Dictionary*? In the quiet of his room, he inspires himself.

My JOURNAL THOUGHTS ON *Pathfinder*

Carrying two books is crucial to discovering my path. As the great adventure writer Robert Louis Stevenson said, "All through my boyhood and youth ... I kept always two books in my pocket, one to read, one to write in."

I have a unique path and the book I write in is the map of that special path ... It's a record of my own heroic journey ... It's where I've been and where I'm going.

In Old French, "journée" meant a day's travel. My "journal" is a record of the clues that I discover on my path each day. Journal means a day. I will write in and review my journal on a daily basis.

By setting aside regular reflection time I find joy in the journey ... I will take just one percent of each day - approximately fifteen minutes - and use it to reflect on the past twenty-four hours and contemplate on the possibilities that lie ahead.

Four things I need to recognize daily -

1 - People who appear on my Path to help me fulfill my Purpose.

2 - Actions taken on Opportunities.

3 - *Thoughts* that help me create a life of Meaning and Significance.

4 - Moments of *Happiness* and Bliss ...

People. Actions. Thoughts. Happiness ...
That spells *PATH!*

This written witness of my journey helps me stay on *PATH* and travel in the direction of my *PURPOSE*.

IDENTIFY AND HONOR A

Pathfinder

SELECT someone you know whose behavior best reflects a true Pathfinder.

WRITE their name in the box provided below.


REACH OUT to them and teach them the meaning of Pathfinder and explain why they personify this word.

CHAPTER FOUR

Passion

*This is the core of the human spirit ...
If we can find something to live for – if we can
find some meaning to put at the center of our lives –
even the worst kind of suffering becomes bearable.*

— VIKTOR FRANKL —

 In the cold desert night Chad Hymas checked again to make sure all was right with his three-wheeled hand-bike. For the next eleven days and nights, he would be riding it in his attempt to set a world record for distance traveled on a bike by a quadriplegic.

Aided by the light of the trailing support vehicle's headlights, he glanced up at me on my bicycle with a look that bordered between nervousness and eagerness. He was understandably anxious about the dark highway ahead yet ready to launch out. I was there to ride with him to offer moral support for the first stretch of his journey.

Knowing it would be chilly tonight and that Chad couldn't risk catching a cold, I brought enough warm clothing to cover him from head to toe. I insisted that he insulate himself with protective cover. He bundled up like a mummy and hit the road spiffed out in full winter cycling garb: thermal shoe covers, leg and arm warmers, a windbreaker, full-fingered gloves, winter riding cap and Oakley frames with clear lenses.

I smiled at the thought of the double-take a passerby might experience as they glanced our way and witnessed two seemingly mature riders on a desolate wasteland

road chasing their shadows at midnight with blinking reflectors on their backs; one in particular, pursuing a grown-up dream dressed like a child in winter, riding what appeared to be a tricycle in the middle of July.

Not able to regulate his body temperature, Chad chose July to pursue his goal that so many said was impossible. He would ride through the desert in the day and cool off with cold towels when he got hot and ride at night and layer on clothing as the temperature dropped. Chad knew from childhood that July was also the perfect month for parades. And that was how his day had begun, with a parade through Salt Lake City. Policemen were on motorcycles with lights flashing, escorting him safely through downtown intersections as a large crowd of family, friends and curious onlookers cheered him off on his mega-marathon. His goal: to wheel day and night, stopping only when necessary for rest and sleep until he made it to Las Vegas – 513 miles away.

Two years before, he lost the use of his legs and most of his upper body in a split-second accident while moving hay on his family's ranch. One minute he was lifting a one-ton bale of hay with his tractor and the next moment that massive bale lurched backwards off the forks and catapulted on top of his neck, pinning him to the tractor's steering wheel. He was rushed to the hospital, where skilled physicians saved his life but not his mobility. A severed spinal cord rendered him a quadriplegic. Except for limited use of his fingers, wrists and biceps, he was immobilized from the neck down.

Chad's life and his plans for it were forever altered. But

even though his body was paralyzed, his ability to dream was not.

After the stay at the hospital and a short *Why Me?* period that followed, Chad awakened to the reality that his life would go on. His wife Shondell and their two boys loved and needed him as much as ever. His role was not diminished in their eyes. If he couldn't physically work the family ranch anymore, he decided he needed to find new fulfillment and amended dreams for his radically altered body.

It was at this juncture that our paths crossed. A friend of a friend told him I had some experience in public speaking and arranged a meeting with Chad at my home. He told me he thought he had a story and since, he joked, he could talk as well as he ever had, he was considering public speaking as a way to provide for his family.

The idea for the epic hand-bike marathon evolved from there.

If he was to deliver a message that would encourage and inspire others to follow their dreams, no matter what life brought, he wanted to have something tangible, some kind of physical evidence that would give him credibility that he had what it takes to conquer adversity.

The more dramatic, demanding and memorable, the better he figured. He was confident rolling 513 miles in a three-wheeled bike ("never call it a tricycle," Chad would chide) powered by hands and arms with limited ability, from Salt Lake City to Las Vegas, in the sultry heat of the summer would qualify on all three counts.

He had the desire, the incentive and the support. Now,

as he pedaled into the cold night he would find out if he had what it really took ...

... He would know with conviction if he had the passion.

PAYING THE PRICE

He wouldn't discover the depth of his passion at the starting line. We seldom do. When we set out on a quest, no matter how daunting or challenging, is there anything easier than the beginning?

When Chad pushed away from the starting line that sunny morning in July it was all so easy. The police escort took him through red lights. Dozens of friends and family lined the streets offering cheers and words of encouragement. His two young sons, Christian and Kyler, rode alongside on bicycles with beaming smiles. Total strangers applauded as he passed, wishing him well. The media was there with television cameras rolling. He was the celebrity of the day. He would be on all the newscasts that night.

It wouldn't be until later, when the TV lights and police escorts were long gone, when there was no one on the curb to applaud and encourage, when the road turned upward, when his arms ached, when he was tired and hungry, that it would get difficult.

I rode with Chad for three days. Our relationship had turned into a friendship and I was pulling hard for him to achieve the audacious goal he had set for himself.

The price his dream would exact became clear one particularly tough day as he faced a taxing eight-mile

uphill climb. The heat was oppressive, radiating in waves from the asphalt well above 100 degrees Fahrenheit at road level. Chad's body was positioned just four inches from the blistering pavement. With every turn of his crank I sympathized with the difficulty of the task ahead and what it would take. Chad was struggling increasingly with the passing of every excruciating mile. The wind was in his face, the solitude increased with every curve and the miles that had passed so quickly on the first day now agonizingly dragged by.

To make matters worse, a horde of crickets decided to use the same remote highway we were traveling. In seconds, thousands of the hopping creatures no bigger than a man's thumb covered the pavement. On my bicycle I could see them hopping at my feet. But Chad, hugging the road, had it much worse as they swarmed over and under his extended legs and in and out of his seat and clothing. The sickening sight and sound of these leaping, chirping invaders intensified as our wheels couldn't help crushing the masses that got in the way. The repulsive stench of squashed invertebrates turned our stomachs, as did the ensuing scene of crickets cannibalizing the carcasses of their dead.

In the midst of this awful happening a smile crossed my face as I recalled Chad's initial wishes for his marathon ride: *dramatic... demanding... memorable*. "Enough already," I thought. "Mission accomplished."

Just when it seemed time to turn around and leave this madness, two cars pulled up and as if on cue, two doors swung wide and out popped two men on hand-bikes:

one, a double-legged amputee, the other a paraplegic with strapping arms and shoulders. They had seen the news on television the night before and understanding what it was like to be in Chad's shoes, and chair, they decided he could use a little help and support. With full use of their powerful arms, they wheeled up and down the road like soldiers in a reconnaissance patrol, relaying critical information about the enemy and terrain ahead.

This impromptu appearance of two fellow travelers confirmed again that when we follow our path and purpose in life we meet other people who have been on our path all along. They reignited our enthusiasm – our desire to aspire!

When it came time for me to leave Chad, I did so reluctantly. I could sense he was starting to have second thoughts. Later that night, as he rested in a motel room far from where he started and farther yet from where he wanted to end, he called me on the phone and wondered aloud what he was thinking when he dreamed up this crazy idea. It was just too hard, he said. The degree of difficulty was crushing him. He wasn't sure if he could continue on.

I responded as any friend would. I encouraged Chad to not give up, to not quit. I told him I knew he had what it took. After all, wasn't he the guy who already defied the odds and persevered for days, weeks, and months, to learn again how to eat; how to brush his teeth; how to get dressed; how to sit up? I reminded him that he'd actually been training for this epic marathon for over a year and a half.

Then I hung up the phone and felt that helpless feeling we all get when we realize that someone we care about has to make it on their own. As much as we would like to do it for them, it is up to them to decide if they are willing to suffer for what they want most.

Later, I would learn from the Master of Words that this process is summed up in a single word: *Passion*.

Afternoons with Arthur

It was Thursday afternoon and I found myself eagerly waiting for Arthur's popular "Culture Capsule" lecture to begin. Every Thursday at 2 p.m. sharp, a handful of Arthur's fellow senior travelers at Summerfield Manor make their way to the living room just off the main entry in their walkers and wheelchairs – and through the power of words, Arthur, ever the professor, takes them on a linguistic journey around the world. As the handful of "regulars" trickle in, Professor Watkins presents them each with meticulously prepared lecture notes, printed in an incredibly tiny script I can't imagine cataract-challenged seniors being able to read.

Arthur addresses the intimate group of six as if he were speaking to a class of 200, with clear, precise pronunciation and professor-like diction, each word delivered with a fervent voice and an infectious first-day-of-class enthusiasm. Minutes into Arthur's oration, an elegantly dressed woman dozes off, triggering a domino effect of an involuntary jerking neck, flailing of arms and hands,

and a scattering of notes. The slumbering octogenarian awakens with a sheepish grin and reaches to retrieve her stray notes.

Arthur pays little attention to the distraction, staying the course of imparting his life's work to all those within the sound of his resonant voice. His lecture today is entitled "Growing Your Vocabulary from 800 Words to 600,000 Words." As the lesson progresses, Arthur moves from learning about words to learning from words. "By knowing the true meanings of words," he says, "we allow them to have a profound influence on our lives."

After the lecture we go down the hall to his room for what he referred to as our "word study."

The word I request we discuss today is "passion."

The Master of Words smiled and began, "The word 'passion' first surfaced in the 12th Century. Coined by Christian scholars it means to *suffer*. In its purest sense it describes the *willing suffering of Christ*."

After educating me about the word's etymology, Arthur added, "Passion doesn't mean just suffering for suffering's sake; it must be pure and willing suffering."

He continued, "I have attended many festivals and plays in Europe that commemorate Christ's suffering. They are called Passion plays."

Arthur said that both passion and path have similar roots: the word "path" is a suffix that means *suffering from*.

"Think about it Kevin," said Arthur, "We have doctors

called pathologists. They study the illnesses and diseases that humans suffer."

Then he revealed a link between suffering, or passion and sacrifice. "The word sacrifice comes from the Latin 'sacra,' which means sacred, and 'fice,' which means *to perform*. To sacrifice is *to perform the sacred*."

"At its essence," he continued, "'passion' is *sacred suffering*."

What Arthur uncovered penetrated deep inside my soul. Suffering isn't necessarily a bad thing. It can and should be a good thing. It's noble. It's sacred. It's life defining.

It's one thing to suffer and be a victim; it's an entirely different thing to be willing to suffer for a cause and become a victor.

Even though it has become popular to define passion as deep or romantic love, the real meaning is *being willing to suffer for what you love*. When we discover what we are willing to pay a price for, we discover our life's mission and purpose.

WILLINGNESS TO SUFFER

Passion is what sent Viktor Frankl into the hell of the Holocaust. As an esteemed surgeon, psychotherapist and author, he could see what was happening. It was clear the Nazis would take over his beloved Vienna. He could have left, but he chose to stay because of his deep love for his

parents who could not obtain visas for themselves.

Elly Frankl, Viktor's second wife, shared the story with a group of us, gathered on the outskirts of Vienna in a restaurant that was once the home of Ludwig van Beethoven. It was in this very home that Beethoven composed his greatest masterpiece, *The Ninth Symphony*, while completely deaf. His final words were ever fitting, "I shall hear in heaven." He, too, had learned to elegantly master his suffering.

Elly told us how Viktor had arrived home from the American Consulate with his travel visa in hand to find a large block of marble sitting on the table. His father had rescued it from a local synagogue that had been destroyed by the Nazis. It was, she recalled, a piece from a tablet bearing a commandment that read: "Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy days may be long upon the land."

Viktor put his travel visa in his drawer and never used it. He willingly chose to stay and suffer alongside his parents. He was at his father's side in the concentration camps and was able to administer medication that helped relieve his pain and suffering until his father died in his arms.

After the war was over, Viktor kept two prized pieces of art in his writing studio in Vienna. The first was a wooden carving of a man with an outstretched hand. The name of the piece: *The Suffering Man*. The second was a painting of ten coffins in Auschwitz. It was in one of these coffins that he found the remains of his father. They remain vivid reminders of why he went where he went and did what he did.

Passion stretches you. The sacred stretches you. Viktor's willingness to suffer led him to his gift. It led him to what he was meant to do – help others find meaning and purpose in life.

Viktor taught, "Our core drive as humans is our search for meaning... The way in which a man accepts his fate, and all the suffering that it entails, the way in which he takes up his cross, gives him ample opportunity – even under the most difficult circumstances – to add a deeper meaning to his life."

We often find that meaning through suffering. Emerson said, "Every wall has a door." Passion in its purest sense, the willingness to suffer for what you love, is often the door that leads us to our path.

DISCOVERING COMPASSION

When I worked at Franklin, I loved to commute to the office on my bicycle, an hour each way. The fresh air and the physical exercise helped clear my mind so I was ready to create and engage the moment I stepped in the office door. But the riding would also tax me physically and to help with that I paid regular visits to a massage therapist named Den Brinkley. Den had a reputation as a first rate masseur. Not only did he get the knots out of my legs, he had a way of conversing that would get the knots out of my head.

One day I was biking and ran into someone. To be accurate, I should say he ran into me. I was traveling on my bike at about twenty miles an hour when the inebriated adolescent driver, fueled by methamphetamines

and a six-pack of beer, hit me from behind going over 60 mph. He had weaved into oncoming traffic attempting to pass a truck and narrowly avoided a head-on collision by swinging to the right, where he ran into me. He was a lethal combination: stoned, drunk and he never saw me. I bounced off the car's windshield and flew into the air, floating for what seemed an eternity until power line wires were at eye level. When I hit the pavement 55 feet later, everything started moving at warp speed. Like a rubber chicken, I flapped around until coming to a stop another 60 feet down the road. I looked back to see the car that hit me come to a screeching halt. I stared into the vacant eyes of the young man behind the steering wheel. He turned away, gunned his engine and left me for dead.

An ambulance soon arrived and rushed me to the hospital. I hurt everywhere. I had whiplash, road rash and a serious head injury. I was so nauseous I couldn't sit up. Miraculously, I was still alive. Dear friends brought my stunned wife to my bedside, then my oldest daughter arrived, and then came Den Brinkley, my masseur.

Den had to be the toughest guy I knew; the kind of man who can do a dozen one-arm pull-ups. On weekends he would fight wild boars and hogs with a knife; he was the ultimate warrior. If you were going to war you would want to take him with you. In fact, Den had been to war, in Vietnam, where he was part of a reconnaissance patrol on the front lines. Den was the one person with the ability to get me out of that hospital. He understood my suffering. He knew what was going on with my body and the physical and psychological pain in my head.

He knew at a personal level how critical my situation was and how important it was for me to recover and said, "Kevin, did you know that at one time in my life I'd given up and was going to take my life?"

Den said it had happened after he returned from Vietnam. He had seriously injured his back while working construction and was looking for another job when his wife said she didn't need him in her life, that nobody needed him in their life and after cleaning out the bank account she took the good car and drove away, abandoning Den and their young son.

Early one evening, distraught and discouraged, he walked out behind his apartment with a loaded .45 and placed the barrel in his mouth.

He told me all this while he was massaging my body, attempting to bring me back to the living.

Then, just when he was seconds away from pulling the trigger, he heard a distant call, a call that became *his* summons back to the living – the call that gave him his purpose. "Daddy, where are you Daddy?" his son called out. "I *need* you. I can't find you. Daddy? Daddy? Where are you?"

"I put the gun down and wept like a baby because then and there I found something to live for," said Den. "My son saved my life that night."

And Den saved his son's life.

This reciprocal accountability of a father to a son, and a son to a father, was better expressed by Viktor Frankl: "A man who becomes conscious of the responsibility he bears toward a human being who affectionately waits for

him, or to an unfinished work, will never be able to throw away his life. He knows the ‘why’ for his existence, and will be able to bear almost any ‘how.’”

One of my favorite and one of history’s greatest self-improvement authors was once a down-and-out alcoholic who nearly spent his last few dollars on a suicide gun. He thought the world would be better off without him. Fortunately, for the countless millions whom his words have inspired, he turned from the cold beckoning of a handgun in a pawnshop window to the safe haven of a public library. That fortuitous shift in destination led him to a book with a message that would forever alter his life. The words inside the cover read, “You can accomplish anything you wish that is not contradictory to the laws of God or man, providing you are willing to pay a price.” He knew then, he had some unfinished work to complete. Ever since he was a little boy he had dreamed of being a writer ... a writer who could be of great service. That passage inspired him to now pursue that dream, and in so doing, he transformed himself from a despondent, unemployed salesman named Augustine, into Og Mandino, the gifted writer of the best selling sales book of all-time, *The Greatest Salesman in the World*. He summed it all up when he said, “How can you be unhappy or depressed when you know there’s one person in the world who needs your gift, just one?”

Den Brinkley knew I needed his gift. After hours of personal attention and rehabilitation that succeeded in getting me released from the hospital, he continued to come to my home each evening for the next several

weeks. He would arrive after a full day of giving eight or nine hour-long massages and then spend another hour or two massaging and manipulating my mangled body. He was more concerned with my timetable than his own. Den demonstrated true compassion for me.

Compassion, I have come to learn, combines “com,” or *with*, and “passion,” or *suffer*. “Compassion” is to *suffer with another*. I will be forever grateful for how Den willingly suffered with and for, me.

SUFFERING FOR WHAT MATTERS MOST

For a seven-letter word that originated well after most modern dictionaries were established, few words carry more strength and depth than passion. Beyond prescribing what we need to do on a personal level to find purpose and meaning, it is also the word that best describes the heroic, selfless deeds done every day by one person for someone else. The list is a lengthy one: coaches, teachers, writers, mentors, trainers, therapists, psychologists, nurses, counselors, doctors – people who passionately and compassionately enrich and enlarge the lives of others.

And could there be a more consummate example of passion than a devoted mother?

Have you ever caught the eye of a mother in a crowded parking lot who has momentarily lost sight of her child? You would not want to get in the way of that passion. Mothers are willing to suffer for that child, that baby, that embryo in the womb. They endure nine months of suffering just to give birth and their willingness to suffer for

their children lasts a lifetime.

I watched my own mother sacrifice for my brother Rick and me. I watched my wife Sherry suffer to bring our six beautiful children into the world. And more recently I watched in awe as my oldest daughter, Summer, chose to birth a third child. Not an easy decision because when she is pregnant, she is constantly nauseous, experiences severe migraine headaches, gets dizzy and sees double and she has to stay in bed a good deal of the time. Once I asked her, “Why would you put yourself through that?” She looked across the room at her two beautiful little girls. It didn’t take a word, just that glance. That was why she willingly agreed to suffer again for nine long months.

All worthwhile contributions are achieved through passion, *if* one is willing to pay the price.

ENDURING TO THE END

As Chad rolled his hand-bike to the top of Apex Junction at four in the morning, he could see below him in the distance the glittering lights of Las Vegas, his ultimate destination. He told me later that just as no one could fathom the joy he felt at that moment, neither could they fathom the fatigue and despair he had faced during the hours and days prior to cresting that final hill. There were times, he said, when he was too tired to even weep. It had taken everything he had and then some. Chad had learned what Viktor Frankl meant when he said, “What is to give light must endure burning.”

Chad had endured the burning of his neck when that massive bale of hay fell on him. He had endured the

burning fear that overcame him in the dark hour when he came out of his surgery to discover that he would never walk again. He had endured the awful thought that he might not be able to take care of his family and the terror that he could not care for his wife and his sons the way he had grown used to. He faced the fear that he might even lose them. And then he went on to relentlessly rehabilitate what was left of his body for eighteen long months.

And now, through a combination hell and heaven of his own making, he had endured the long, slow, all-important miles almost no one else sees or experiences: the middle of any journey always gets more difficult—as does the middle of accomplishing our goals and dreams.

That is where true passion comes in.

On our gravestone are two numbers. The date we were born and the date we die. But what symbolizes our life is the hyphen in between. What happens in the middle? What happens between the traumatic moments? The euphoric moments?

In all those *middle* miles, when the temperature of the pavement soared above 120 degrees and his grip became so weak that his hands needed to be taped to his pedals and he was averaging less than two miles an hour, Chad went from counting hours to counting mile markers. And when it got really tough his father stepped in and said, “Son, instead of counting the green mile markers, why don’t you count the yellow stripes in the middle of the road? They come a little faster. See if that helps.” Chad was too numb to protest and so he re-learned something he already knew: by reducing that purpose to smaller and

smaller steps, one day at a time, one mile at a time, one hour at a time, and even one yellow stripe at a time, you can reach your ultimate destination and achieve what you proposed.

And just like at the beginning, it got easy again at the end. The police escort was back. Family and friends who had cheered at the start in Salt Lake City had flown to Las Vegas to cheer him at the finish. The media returned, the lights were on, the TV cameras were rolling. Strangers stopped in their tracks and applauded. All the intersection stoplights were turned off on the Las Vegas Strip as the Nevada Highway Patrol escorted Chad to the finish line in front of the Mirage Hotel. As he passed, people walked out of the casinos and applauded the man in the hand-bike. There were no crickets.

Using only his hands, Chad had pedaled his way to a personal world record – 513 consecutive miles. He had traveled farther under his own power than any quadriplegic in history. He had reached his goal. No one could argue that he had passion; that he was willing to suffer for what he wanted most. No one could question his love for his wife and children or his desire to find fulfillment and provide again for his family.

Exhausted as he was at the finish, he didn't lose sight of his goals even then. Hearing of his accomplishment, an organization called and asked if he would be available to give a speech in three days—in Louisiana. Chad did not ask for time to recuperate. Immediately he started practicing his speech, got on a plane and after previously receiving little more than gas money to talk to groups, he

was paid handsomely for his speech.

He has since become a sought-after speaker. His clients include some of the biggest companies and organizations in the world. By the age of thirty-two, he became one of the youngest ever to earn the designation of Certified Speaking Professional, a distinction given by the National Speakers Association to a select few. The *Wall Street Journal* called him "One of the ten most inspirational people in the world." He now generates a seven-figure income annually. But his greatest accomplishment is that he remains a devoted husband to his loving wife Shondell and a proud father to their three children – Christian, Kyler and newly adopted Gracee.

Instead of letting outside influences determine the temperature and direction of his life, Chad chose to set his own controls and map out his own destiny. He transformed his tragedy into triumph.

His mother came up to me at the finish line and with tears glistening in her eyes, summed up what we all were thinking. "I'm so proud of Chad," she said. "Chad just achieved the impossible."

MY JOURNAL THOUGHTS ON **Passion**

There are a lot of starters in the world.
Who doesn't love to start new and exciting things?
Starting is the easy part. The hard part is
finishing. It is finishing that separates those
with passion from those without it.

What have I started but haven't finished
because I wasn't willing to pay the price?

What meaningful quest have I left undone
because I wasn't willing to suffer and sacrifice
for what I desired most?

What unfinished goal has left me feeling
unfulfilled and incomplete?

Everyone has specific tasks and dreams and
goals that when finished, when completed, when
successfully accomplished, dramatically improve the
quality of their life. There is nothing so lethal to
personal integrity as half-finished tasks.

Those with passion do ... Those without passion
try ... When I say, "I'll try," I build in an excuse. If
I start but don't finish, I can always say, "Well, I
tried," but if I say "I'll do," I commit to finish no
matter what.

"Mission" means to be sent forth. I will take care
to do what I was meant and sent forth to do.
There is nothing more fulfilling than taking a dream,
a goal, an aspiration - no matter how difficult -
and completing it.

I can then sojourn on my path and say, as did He
who defined perfect passion, "It is finished."

IDENTIFY AND HONOR A PRACTITIONER OF **Passion**

SELECT someone you know whose behavior best
reflects the principles of Passion.

WRITE their name in the box provided below.


REACH OUT to them and teach them the meaning of
Passion and explain why they personify this word.

CHAPTER SIX

Humility

*To keep a lamp burning we have to
keep putting oil in it.*

— MOTHER TERESA —

 Humility is one of the most misunderstood and misapplied words in all of language. Humility is not being passive and submissive, nor is it distinguished by slumping shoulders, bowed heads and subservient, downward glances. Humility is about being teachable and coachable. It trademarks a continual commitment to learning and growing and expanding. It is living life in crescendo, with shoulders back and heads up as we reach and stretch to become our very best, and then extend ourselves to help others do the same. And then, we start again!

Humility is the hub of the wheel, the solid core between self-mastery and leadership. It is here, in the middle of this book, to connect the words of the first five chapters – words for self-discovery and personal development – with the words featured in the final five chapters – words that empower us to help, inspire, and potentially lead others. We can't influence until we've been influenced. We can't change the world until we are changed.

Through humility this transition can happen.

The origin of “humility” is the Latin word *humus*, meaning soil – specifically rich, dark, organic soil. When

a seed is planted in fertile soil, it transforms into something far greater. The acorn becomes the oak tree. The smallest of seeds carefully planted in the spring becomes the bounteous harvest in the fall. It all starts with the nurturing quality of the soil – *humus*.

When we have sufficient *humus* in our lives, we grow and develop, and foster those around us to flourish. Humility fosters growth. “Grow” in Old English has its roots in plants and means *to flourish* or *develop*.

THE KEY TO GROWTH

Growth can occur in a variety of ways. Abundance is seldom produced through sterile and hardened soil. A fruitful crop is rarely fabricated from an unattended and overgrown garden. We can grow and learn by unlearning, by letting go of something in order to make room for new. There are times to add extra nutrients to cultivate growth. A plentiful harvest is preceded by careful plowing, planting and pruning.

When we “develop” our gifts we in effect *unwrap* and *unfold* them for the benefit of all – including ourselves. Our gifts and talents increase as we nurture our nature. On the other hand, when we feign to know it all we close off promising opportunities to develop and expand our gifts. A garden reciprocates the love and care it receives from the gardener. To develop yourself is to love yourself.

Limitless possibilities await those who have the humility to admit they don’t know it all. Prosperity is found by cultivating an attitude of life-long learning.

Success and humility are terms not commonly used

interchangeably, and yet the two words are intimately linked. As with humility, the etymological roots of success can also be traced back to the soil. “Success” comes from the Latin “Succeder,” and means *to come up through*. The middle part of the word, “cede,” is an offshoot of “seed.” When a seed pushes through the dirt, or humus, into the daylight, it follows a path of success and succession. To come up through is to succeed. And the only way to come up through is to take advantage of the rich humus. We plant seeds of success by getting grounded and rooted in humility. There is no real humility without success and no real success without humility.

Afternoons with Arthur

I remember the afternoon Arthur unwittingly taught me about humility and reinforced how it is never too late to embark on a journey of self-improvement. I was running late for our scheduled word study session. When I finally arrived at the retirement home and walked down the hall toward Arthur’s room, there he was, sitting on a chair out in the hallway, waiting for me. He was reading a book. I looked at the title as he closed the cover: *Spellbound*. On the surface, a riveting title, suggesting a mystery book, perhaps, or some other kind of suspense thriller.

Then I read the subtitle: *The Surprising Origins and Astonishing Secrets of English Spelling*.

Here was the greatest etymologist I’d ever met, a

wordsmith of no equal, and even in his nineties he was reading a book about *spelling*. The professor is, and always will be, a student first.

I kidded him as we walked into his “office” – the recliner in the corner of his room – about his choice of reading material. Without missing a beat Arthur responded, “Mastery is a life-long pursuit.”

He proceeded to talk about the word “master” and in a way that only he could, he brought it to life by explaining its early usage. He had a gift for taking words that are easily recognizable and in common usage and uncovering their original meaning that had been obscured by the layers of time.

A master didn’t become a master overnight, he explained. There was a process. First one must become an apprentice, then a journeyman, and finally a master.

Apprentice. Journeyman. Master. These three words illustrate the importance of going through fundamental and necessary steps to acquire the kind of humility that is commensurate with true leadership.

Arthur grew quite animated as if he were about to reveal an ancient truth. “Do you know that ‘apprentice’ means *learner*?” he asked, and then taught that the word comes from the French “apprendre,” which means *to learn*.

In earlier times, he recounted, apprentice was the name for someone who would select a trade and then find a master in his village to teach him the skills necessary

for his chosen vocation. After learning all he could from the local master, the apprentice would then travel elsewhere to broaden his education. Launching forward on such a journey turned an apprentice into a journeyman. A journeyman would often travel long distances for the privilege of working under that master who could best help him further hone his craft. Over time, a journeyman could eventually become a master himself – and be in a position to start the cycle all over again.

“But a master never stops learning,” Arthur pointed out. “No matter how many journeymen he might instruct, a true master continues to enlarge and expand his own craft to his dying day.”

No one epitomized mastery more than the master I was speaking with. When he was a full professor and head of his university’s language department he once took a sabbatical to enroll as a student at Georgetown University, where he studied Latin and Greek from a renowned Jesuit priest.

In his study, Arthur would recount such experiences the way a baseball player might recollect home runs. On a summer trip to Norway, he recalled, he knocked on the door at the University of Oslo and asked when they offered courses in Norwegian. They explained that they had a course for beginners in the morning, a course for intermediates in the afternoon and in the evening they had an advanced course. “Great,” Arthur said. “I’ll take all three.” Remarkably, within a few short months after

returning he had written and published a textbook on learning Norwegian.

Arthur's unslakable thirst for knowledge has allowed him to thrive into the winter of his life. He epitomizes the meaning of the word "master" and I reflect often on how fortunate I am to be his "apprentice."

EARNERS ARE LEARNERS

Arthur's words reminded me of a study we conducted when I was head of the sales and training division at Franklin. We wanted to find out what separated our top producers, those who made several hundred thousand dollars a year, from those who made a tenth of that. What made them unique? What set them apart? What differentiated a master sales professional, a high earner, from a minimum earner?

We brought in an outside consulting firm to determine the difference, and after hours of interviews and weeks of research the consultants summed up their discoveries in three words – earners are learners.

Our top performers, without exception, were avid and devoted learners. They were constantly taking in new information and using it. We found that they each read over two dozen books a year. They were tireless in educating themselves in a variety of topics – especially about the needs of their clients. It seems as though they knew their clients better than their clients knew themselves.

Our top sales people knew our product line inside and out, as well as the specific features and benefits of each of those products. Even though they were at the very top of their profession, the people everyone else in the company either looked up to or envied, none of them thought they knew it all. They demonstrated humility by always seeking to learn more, aspiring to always move to a new level of experience and expertise.

A HUMBLE LEADER

While working as a consultant in the hospitality industry, I made the acquaintance of a man named Norman Brinker, an unassuming multi-millionaire and restaurateur extraordinaire. Nothing about Norman suggested his abundant wealth and enormous influence. He was neither imperious nor aloof. So it was I found myself in his home in Dallas one Monday morning, invited there for breakfast before I caught a flight later that day.

I knew Norman's story. He grew up practically penniless in Plano, Texas. His first job was a newspaper bicycle route that was sixty miles long – truly Texas-sized. Somehow he went from that modest beginning to a life of iconic accomplishment. He was an Olympic athlete – he competed in the modern pentathlon, an event that involves running, shooting, horseback riding, fencing, and swimming. He became a legendary philanthropist. And as a businessman, and pioneer in founding the casual dining industry, he has few peers.

Now in his eighties, I had a long list of questions catalogued in my mind that I wanted to ask the great

Norman Brinker. How did he revolutionize the restaurant industry? How did he turn a handful of restaurants into the multi-billion dollar Brinker International, holding company of such popular chains as Chili's, Romano's Macaroni Grill, On The Border Mexican Grill, and Maggiano's Little Italy? How did he create a company culture so vibrant, innovative, and relevant? How did he know that Americans would respond so eagerly to sitting down and eating in a casual dining environment? How and why did he envision the first salad bar? How did he retrofit his Chili's restaurants to serve sizzling fresh fajitas? How did his involvement garner such widespread support for the successful launch of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, one of the most successful non-profit organizations in the world?

But I couldn't get a question in. And why? Because Norman was asking all the questions. He wanted to know about my life, about my goals and dreams, about my interests and accomplishments. He was as inquisitive as a curious child.

His close friends and associates attest that he is that way with everyone he meets – never domineering or autocratic; a man far more interested in others than he is in himself; a man who listens more than he speaks. He lifts himself by lifting others; he improves himself by improving others.

Dozens of executives who have apprenticed under him and observed his humble leadership have used his example to parallel his success. These CEOs now lead publicly traded companies like Chili's, Outback Steakhouse, P.F.

Chang's, Buca di Beppo, T.G.I.Friday's, and Pei Wei Asian Diner, to name just a few. They have one thing in common – they all sprang from the fertile soil that is Norman Brinker's life.

THE HABIT OF HUMILITY

One of the great master teachers in my life is Dr. Stephen R. Covey. He is the one who taught me that humility is the "Mother of all Virtues." His generous and affirming support have been instrumental in the development of this book. He embodies so many facets of this precious jewel of the earth we call humility. While discussing a unique word or meaning it is not unusual to hear him inquire, "How do you spell that word? What does it mean again? Where did it come from?"

Although Stephen is widely regarded as one of the top thought leaders of our day, he still recognizes the need for private, internal victories achieved through daily self-development and mastery. It is not uncommon to enter his home and find piles of books in his study, family room, kitchen, even next to the bathtub. These paper cairns mark the path of an assiduous reader who often scans a book or more each day. Corroborating again the results of our consultant's research of our sales team at Franklin, readers are leaders – and leaders are readers.

The man *Time Magazine* recognized as "One of the 25 most influential Americans" of our time, emulates daily how an influencer first needs to be influenced. The man who taught us *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* has made humility the core habit of his life.

Recently I was on a conference call with Stephen and a prized client of mine, a CEO of a retail enterprise with over 14,000 locations. I had just trained this executive's team of officers and directors and had made arrangements to have Stephen present to this same group. It would be his first speech after knee replacement surgery. The CEO, assuming that Dr. Covey, now in the autumn of his life, might not be doing too many more of these speeches, conjectured the assumption and thanked Stephen precipitately for agreeing to participate. A pregnant pause ensued ... the piercing silence finally broken by Stephen's firm but kind reply, "I'm not quite sure where you got the impression that I wouldn't be doing this much longer, but you can be assured that I will be doing this right up to my final breath."

Living life in crescendo is much more than a mere motto for Stephen. It is a habit. It is a way of living and learning every day. It is humility. And it should come as no surprise that a fellow cultivator of *humus*, Norman Brinker, attributes much of his professional success to the powerful lessons taught firsthand by a master teacher by the name of Stephen Covey.

To "teach" is to *show*. You can't teach what you don't know ... you can't guide where you don't go ... you can't grow what you don't sow.

PLANT THE SEED

Dr. Gerald Bell's serendipitous appearance on my path in the wilds of Wyoming, as I mentioned earlier, led to several conversations between us that taught me about

the link between humility and goal setting. His exhaustive study of retired executives – he called it his "Study of 4,000" – took thousands of hours to conduct and complete. Those surveyed averaged seventy years of age, and when asked what they would do differently if they could live their lives over again responded with deep remorse for not having a better plan for their life. The responses he received were telling: "I would have carved out life goals and owned my life." ... "Life is not practice, it is the real thing." ... "I should have taken charge of my life through goal setting." ... "I would have spent more time on my personal development." ... "I would have planned my career better."

Planning requires intent and preparation. To plan is to *plant*. We must first plant a seed if it is to ever have a chance to succeed. Contrary to popular opinion, it takes true humility to first plan and to then follow through and achieve worthwhile goals. Those married to false humility ... not going after what they deserve ... not measuring up to their potential ... not acknowledging the full measure of their talents ... endure "humiliation" – the very antithesis of humility.

BEGINNER'S MIND

In the East, great masters have developed an acuity they call the "beginner's mind." In the martial arts world a black belt, the symbol that the West commonly associates with great accomplishment, signifies a serious beginner. Perspective is described with a single word – Shoshin. The word and its ancient symbol 初心 – depict

an attitude of openness and eagerness. Shunryo Suzuki-Roshi explains, “In the beginner’s mind there are many possibilities, but in the expert’s there are few.” Practitioners of Shoshin pledge to bring no preconceptions when studying a subject. Even at an advanced level they approach the subject as a beginner would.

Developing Shoshin requires time and patience and a willingness to listen, observe, and learn from those who appear on our path. In Vienna, where Pravin Cherkoori taught me the word Genshai, he proclaimed, “Isn’t life magical! Look at what happens when you view yourself as an empty bucket and every person you meet as a well – and you put your bucket under the tap that draws from that well. All the nutrients that sustain life and produce growth flow right into your bucket.”

My JOURNAL THOUGHTS ON **Humility**

I change as I confront and conquer challenges.

To change is to bend or adapt.

A once dormant seed transforms into a seedling that bends and turns as it pushes through the earth to fulfill its purpose.

Growth and progression are impossible without change.

Challenges create change and change promotes growth.

Setting goals is a way to purposely create challenges.

Goals, like water, have the power to sustain me. Well-planned goals empower me to go over, under, and around obstacles.

Gifts and talents provide the fuel for goal achievement, but unless a gift is developed it deteriorates. It's the Law of Atrophy. Use it or lose it. Atrophy means wasting away. Talents, like muscles, waste away from lack of use ... When muscles are challenged and strained they grow stronger.

Resist and expand ... Change and grow ... Stretch and develop ... That is the true essence of humility.

By identifying the specific gifts I would most like to expand I will embark on a journey of self-mastery and make my life a masterpiece.

As English playwright Philip Massinger taught, "He that would govern others, first should be Master of himself."

IDENTIFY AND HONOR AN EXAMPLE OF

Humility

SELECT someone you know whose behavior best reflects true Humility.

WRITE their name in the box provided below.

REACH OUT to them and teach them the meaning of Humility and explain why they personify this word.

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