

## **Quality #5: Joy in the Journey**

We are focused on bringing abundance to the lives of others. We are using our life experiences as reference points to better understand what others are experiencing. We are taking down walls of resistance and finding joy in connecting with people.

We are using our minds five constructive ways to receive inspired ideas, impressions and insights that will ignite our passion and drive our focus, discipline, effort and action. We shun escape and avoid fantasy, catastrophe and other forms of counterfeit pleasure. We want real joy that requires setting realistic goals and achievable expectations.

We take passion driven action and focus on the millimeters of creation. We know and understand that success does not just happen. Happiness does not just happen. We know that both are intentionally created and we are actively engaged in that creation. We are completing tasks and creating our dreams in tangible reality. Completion and accomplishment bring us joy.

We have surrendered our resistant and even rebellious natures and recognize obedience to the laws that govern abundance as an invitation to the very freedom we seek. We are disciplined and structured yet feel the joy of being free.

In short, we have a clear vision. Our focus is bringing abundance to the lives of others. We are disciplined in both the creation and nurturing of that vision and are intentionally taking the actions needed to create our vision in tangible reality.

We have two Qualities left to master. First, Finding Joy in the Journey - how can we stay focused in the now and enjoy being here regardless of the circumstances, and second, Self-Esteem - how do we overcome destructive internal dialogue that negatively impacts our self worth and robs us and everyone else around us of all of our natural gifts.

In Quality #3: Completing Tasks, we emphasized the need to live in the Now, passion driven, creating our dreams in tangible reality. This Quality was about the work of creation. Quality #5: Finding Joy in the Journey, is about experiencing joy while in the process of creation, in all the roles we play and in all the circumstances of life. We know that passion can drive action, but what creates or threatens joy at this deep personal level in the here and now?

### **Gratitude:**

When we are striving to create our dreams in tangible reality and the realities of our life differ, perhaps even significantly from what we want, how can we feel and express gratitude? Is it wrong to want more out of life? How can we be grateful and even content, yet focused on improvement?

Let's begin by exploring some common questions. As we explore these questions ask yourself, "Do I ever go here? Do any of these questions apply to me? Have I ever privately or even secretly asked these questions?" This is a safe place to be transparent.

Questions:

Am I where I thought I would be at this point in my career, relationship or life, in general? Do I ever wish it were better or different?

Did I think success would take this long or be this difficult to create?

Do I ever want it to be easier or more fulfilling and joyful?

Is there a gap between where I want to be and where I am? If so, how wide is it?

How often am I reminded of this difference?

How much time do I spend thinking about the need for more money?

How much time do I spend thinking about how others do not fully appreciate the magnitude of my service, sacrifices, or value?

Do I ever feel that what I do is of no value to myself or others?

Do I ever feel impatient, wanting things to happen faster?

Am I ever afraid to set goals or make plans because of the risk of pain experienced from past failures?

Do I ever believe that I could create more and faster if it wasn't for (my car, my computer, my home, my clothing, my education, my spouse, my children, my \_\_\_)?

Do I ever feel that I am meant for so much more but have not yet found that thing which really rings my bell and ignites my passion?

These questions and the associated feelings of wanting and wishing for more or something different are normal. They can be the result of very real and uncomfortable life circumstances that are often and for the most part out of our control. They can be the result of our life decisions such as current addictions or serious lapses in judgment. Most commonly they represent the difference between our expectations and reality.

What is the real source of my unhappiness? First ask, "Are inappropriate things occurring in my reality that make me uncomfortable? Is there anything happening that could threaten my safety?" If you are in a dangerous situation and the circumstances of your situation threaten your health or safety, immediately seek professional assistance. You should not do this alone!

If this is not the case and you are just unhappy with your life, you may want to ask, "Is it time for a personal inventory that includes

personal accountability?” If so, you may want to ask, “What do I have? Why is it this way? What part did I play in creating this outcome? What changes will I want to make in my life to create a different outcome?” However, you will want to be careful. If you are already struggling with a challenged self-esteem, this line of questioning can quickly become a self-depreciating conversation that will add little to your life other than blame and shame (See Quality #6: Self-Esteem for a more thorough review).

Most of us have several areas in our lives that call for improvement. Identifying and then systematically improving each area is essential to growth. We will want to become the person capable of creating and then handling what we create. The word “becoming” means to “grow into.” Uncomfortable as it may be at times, intentional creators embrace growth.

If you are not in eminent danger, you will want to ask, “Is my life really that awful or is it only awful when compared against my expectations?”

In Quality #2: Goals and Expectations, we discussed at length the damage done by unrealistic expectations. As you will recall, 97% of those actively seeking financial abundance share in common two over focused thought processes. These two thoughts allow a person to vividly visualize. We also discussed that it is imperative for a person who has these two thoughts to be hyper vigilant about what they visualize. Due to the vividness with which visualization occurs, the creation of

expectations is inevitable. An expectation is a concrete condition for happiness.

When we engage in escape and avoid fantasy with such vividness the consequence is not only the creation of an expectation, but also the creation of deadly unrealistic expectations. We bring these unrealistic expectations into reality and unconsciously use them as measuring rods against which we determine the value of everything in our life.

These expectations are so real and life often so different that the body goes into an autonomic defense posture to protect our expectation. As a result the body releases chemicals that can leave us feeling anxious, discouraged, agitated, confused, overwhelmed, angry and of course dissatisfied and unhappy.

We can focus on what fantasy does to us, but it might be just as important to briefly explore what fantasy does for us – why would we engage? Foundationally, when we chose to engage in this type of vivid visualization we are usually attempting to escape from that which we view as unpleasant or disappointing. Typically this could include our job or work in general, past or current relationships, our current financial situation when compared with our dreams and other boring, mundane and repetitious tasks.

While in fantasy the sympathetic nervous system also rewards us with chronic doses of norepinephrine, a powerful and euphoric drug. We love how this drug makes us feel. We vividly experience in our mind

a stress free tangible life. No problems or challenges, just desired peace of mind. We want to feel this way all the time. Fantasy is so vivid, so real, that we can actually experience a clever counterfeit version of the real thing - both the reality in the experience and the related joy. However, both are brief and temporary and no matter how pleasant cannot be extended to tangible reality. This is what fantasy does for us. It provides a very pleasant vehicle to avoid life.

It is understandable how we can become addicted to fantasy. While in fantasy it is fun, even thrilling. It is also understandable how we can become deeply attached to the things and experiences we fantasize about believing that if we can acquire these things, they will ultimately create this joyful feeling. Have the thing, have the joy - a deadly and deceitful combination. We want the joy so we focus on having these things.

We may fantasize about homes and cars and exotic trips. We may fantasize about loving relationships that include quite intimate moments curled up by a fire or long moon lit walks on exotic beaches. We may fantasize about simply being out of debt. We may fantasize about having enough money to live a modest, yet stress free life. We may even fantasize about doing marvelous altruistic service projects. The list is endless.

Whatever it is, because of the vividness with which it is experienced, the mind believes it is true, that these things will give us joy and happiness and therefore joy and happiness are contingent on

having these things. This contingency is not negotiable. It is a concrete condition for our happiness. This is further compounded by the dualistic nature of these thoughts as discussed in Quality #2. Expectations are all or nothing, right or wrong, life or death. No middle ground. No compromise.

However, with every counterfeit high is an equally devastating counterfeit low – yes, “counterfeit” low. While in fantasy, we may have been freed from reality for a moment but reality never goes away. Fantasy does not change any of our tangible realities from which we have wanted to escape. When reality strikes, and it always does, we are rudely yanked out of fantasy and back into reality. In this process, the sympathetic nervous system releases large and often chronic doses of cortisol. This chemical is designed to heal wounds when released in small doses but this is not a small wound. Reality has again wounded us deeply!

In addition, the amygdala, the fight or flight center in the brain, sends fear dendrites up into the pre-frontal cortex where higher levels of consciousness occur. These dendrites shut down the metabolic energy needed for this portion of the brain to function. In short, the brain is attempting to consolidate all of its energy in the fight or flight center.

A big and dangerous enemy called reality is attacking. But, when all of our fears fail to materialize in a physical battle and there is nothing substantive to run from other than the ho-hum of life, we are left



emotionally paralyzed - frozen in our tracks or curled up in bed in a fetal position thinking life is unfair and wanting it to be different.

Bottom line: This negative and autonomic reaction to fantasy that is created when reality strikes can make our life challenges look even bigger or worse than they actually are. To compound this counterfeit low, we can engage in obsessive catastrophizing – playing out an endless array of worse case scenarios. We may become increasingly frustrated, fearful and even angry. No matter how bad things were before we engaged in fantasy, they “seem” much worse now. The quick cure for this counterfeit low is another injection of fantasy.

It is in this Quality, Finding Joy in the Journey, that our expectations are first revealed. Earlier I asked a series of questions. Each question was asked to reveal an unmet expectation. How did you do? Are you spending any time obsessively thinking about any of these questions? If so, is your unhappiness due to real life circumstances that are untenable or is it the natural result of the fantasy/catastrophe cycle and measuring reality with fantastical and unrealistic expectations? Let's go a little deeper.

When we step back from these sabotaging thought processes such as vivid escape and avoid fantasy, catastrophe and destructive self-deprecating internal dialogue and take a good look at our life, we may conclude that others are suffering far more challenges than we. In addition we may discover that others are so focused on their own stuff,

regardless of the seriousness, that they have little time to care about us. Both are great secrets to discover.

When discovered we may finally begin to understand the full magnitude of Og's admonition at the beginning of Scroll II, "I WILL GREET THIS DAY with love in my heart. For this is the greatest secret of success in all ventures. Muscle can split a shield and even destroy life but only the unseen power of love can open the hearts of men and until I master this art I will remain no more than a peddler in the market place. I will make love my greatest weapon and none on whom I call can defend against its force."

Why is this so powerful? It is powerful because people are so consumed in their own stuff. They are hungry for us to pay attention to them. When we step back from our pain and step into the world of others, we are perfectly equipped to serve because we know. We no longer need to make it about us. We use our painful experience to more perfectly serve. Walls come down and we become the beneficiaries of a latent reserve of cooperation and productivity. As it pours over us we experience unspeakable joy and gratitude for a new perspective to living.

As a result of stepping back, we may also commit more fully to use our mind constructively seeking inspired ideas, impressions and solutions to problems. This process will ignite our passion and free us from the bonds of unrealistic expectations – expectations that can hold even the best life hostage. As we take action, inspiration is validated. We

become increasingly grateful for a deep and abiding partnership with the Power that governs abundance.

Let us be clear. Gratitude is not about saying, “This is all I have and this is all I will ever have and I am okay not having anything more. In fact, I am so grateful that I have what I have. It could be a lot less or even worse. At least I have this. I am deeply grateful life didn’t take away any more than it did.”

Gratitude is about having a deep sense of appreciation for the solid foundation of reality on which to intentionally create a different future. Embracing what we have and owning it as our current reality facilitates peace. It removes obsessive regret, frustration, stress, the emptiness of envy and frenetic impatience of always wanting something other than what we currently have.

We can stay focused in the now; learn the lessons of creation in the moments in which they occur and at night sleep like a baby. We are content for a season. On the morrow, we arise early and honor the giver of these gifts by investing them wisely and maximizing and creating the most with what we have been given in the time allotted.

We are always grateful for that which has been intentionally created that day in partnership with our partner. We are conscious of creation. We are conscious of accomplishment.

We express gratitude and feel joy. We commit to create even more given the opportunity of another day. And when that day comes we rejoice. Og writes, “I will live this day as if it is my last. This day is all I have and these hours are now my eternity. I greet this sunrise with cries of joy as a prisoner who is reprieved from death. I lift mine arms with thanks for this priceless gift of a new day.”

Our vision is more about finding joy in each millimeter of creation than lamenting unrealized escape and avoid fantasies. We want to engage in life, embrace principles, connect with people, create value in all that we do and contribute to the world. Creation becomes a journey not a destination and we receive one of the prizes of life at the beginning and end of each day’s journey. It’s called joy.

Although we continue to experience difficult life experiences while in creation that can cause pain and even sorrow, we stay focused on the task at hand. We know that in far too many instances, dissatisfaction has less to do with the reality of the circumstance and more to do with it disrupting or interfering with an expectation.

Our only expectation now is to show up fully capable ready and willing to handle whatever life throws at us. We have a vision but also know we cannot control others or the weather so we stop trying to do so. We focus on inspiring, supporting, and encouraging others. We are flexible and accommodate any unexpected changes in nature and circumstance.

While others weep and complain, resist and rebel, kick and scream, we proactively stick to the work of creation no matter what circumstances show up. We develop a “bring it on” mentality to life and thus gain an insurmountable advantage over the vitriolic victims of circumstance.

Until now we may have been trying to keep one foot in fantasy and the other in reality. Straddling the gap we are unable to charge forward. Let us commit to live. Let us choose life. Let us rise early today and take it on and when the day is spent, let us rejoice for what has been created in spite of difficulties. Let us focus on what has been learned and how these challenges have provided opportunities for more growth so that we can become the person who can create and handle success.

Starting today we are no longer going to build our lives on a foundation of fantasy. We are going to master the Quality of Finding Joy in Journey. We are going to engage in life and each day create another piece in the puzzle called life, built on the substantive foundation of reality. And when night falls and it is time to rest, joyful peace of mind will be our reward.

Fantasy is about escaping from our challenges and even believing that some great force will change our life simply because we can see it differently and vividly in our mind. We may have believed that there is no price to pay and no effort to expend. We may have become part of the television generation believing that every problem should be solved in

22 minutes. We may even dress, talk and act like some of these fictional characters.

If we have, we also know that our outcomes are very different from these fictional characters. When we have attempted to live their seemingly exciting and harmless approach to life replete with superficial and casual relationships, we have turned intimacy into a sporting event and destroyed trust. Integrity has become situational and dependent on circumstances. Rebellion becomes fashionable.

Survivors share the truth about the devastation that has occurred in their private and even secret lives by adhering to this vapid approach to life. Most are left disillusioned with hearts aching for real connection even if living in reality is at times painful.

It is time to step back and see life and living differently. To see it for what it is and what it is not. It is time to discover how to live and love and experience joy – real joy – not a titillating and often salacious counterfeit version.

This is not a Sunday sermon but instead a call to engage in the nitty gritty of life – the tenderness and flow of intimacy to the gritty and often difficult decisions to be disciplined and exert the action and effort needed to create our dreams in tangible reality. It is an invitation to be alive and embrace the realness and the rawness of living life to its fullest. It is an invitation to welcome the bruises from stumbling and the

bloodied foreheads from crashing into brick walls and express gratitude in every moment of the experience.

Og writes, “Henceforth, I will know that only those with inferior ability can always be at their best, and I am not inferior. There will be days when I must constantly struggle against forces which would tear me down. Those such as despair and sadness are simple to recognize but there are others which approach with a smile and the hand of friendship and they can also destroy me. Against them, too, I must never relinquish control.”

Og goes on to write, “The height of my goals will not hold me in awe though I may stumble often before they are reached. If I stumble I will rise and my falls will not concern me for all men must stumble often to reach the hearth. Only a worm is free from the worry of stumbling. I am not a worm. I am not an onion plant. I am not a sheep. I am a man. Let others build a cave with their clay. I will build a castle with mine.”

Og punctuated this sentiment with these words, “Henceforth, I will know that only those with inferior ability can always be at their best, and I am not inferior.”