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# Well Done



A Story of  
Applied  
Spirituality™

by  
*Kathy L. Kirk*

With Foreward by Ken Blanchard, Ph.D.  
Co-author of *The One Minute Manager*©

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by

Kathy L. Kirk

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# *Dedication*

*For*

*Ernest Richard (Woody) Wood*

*1946-1997*

*and*

*The Staff at Chelsea Garden Restaurant*

*Solana Beach, California*

*You know who you are.*

*This book is my tribute to each of you.*

*You blessed me immeasurably.*



*“The crazier the times are, the more important  
it is for leaders to develop and to trust  
their intuition.”*

Tom Peters (b. 1942)

U.S. management consultant and author

\*\*\*\*\*

*“The only real valuable thing is intuition. The  
intellect has little to do on the  
road to discovery.”*

Albert Einstein (1879 – 1955)

U.S. winner of the Nobel Prize in Physics



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# *Foreword*

by Ken Blanchard

Co-author of *The One Minute Manager*<sup>®</sup>

In my management seminars I often ask participants this question: “Given the fact that you spend eight, ten, or twelve hours a day at work, how many of you would rather be magnificent than ordinary?” No one ever votes for ordinary. Everyone, given a choice, would rather be magnificent. And yet, why do we get so much ordinary behavior at work? It has nothing to do with the goodness of people - God did not make junk! People are beautiful. It is the way people are treated that brings out the worst in them. Most organizations are not fun places for humans to be. They are not esteeming to people. That doesn’t have to be the case anymore after you meet Kathy Kirk and read about her eighteen month experience refurbishing, opening, running, and closing a restaurant in a beach community in southern California. While the setting is in a restaurant, the book is not really about running a restaurant. It’s about life. It’s about humanity. It’s about self discovery. And it’s about relationships, whether they are at work, at home, or in the community.

*Well Done* is a book you won’t want to miss if you are interested in being the best you can possibly be and bringing out the best in those whose lives you touch. I often hear people say that they would like to make the world a better place. But

when they are asked how they intend to do that, they are at a loss for words. They don't understand that we all can make the world a better place by the moment to moment decisions we make as we interact with others. We all constantly have the choice to add more love to the world, more forgiveness, more acceptance, more gratitude, more honesty, more authenticity, more humility, and more restraint. Every interaction counts, as Kathy emphasizes.

Tapping into the unconditional love of God which is there for us to accept, and the guidance He is ready to give, is an important part of what drives Kathy Kirk's philosophy. She calls this "Applied Spirituality™." According to Kathy, this is all about recognizing how each one of us is "hard-wired into God for direct ask-and-answer," and learning how to accept His guidance. My belief is that God is for us, Jesus is with us, and the Holy Spirit is in us. Applied Spirituality™ focuses on the God within and encourages us all to rediscover our personal relationship with God and rely on it. Kathy always tries to keep the "God within us" light shining.

Sit back, relax, and learn the best way to manage, parent, coach and relate—the humane way—with the servant heart God wants us all to have. And when you do, watch your organization excel beyond your wildest dreams.

Thanks, Kathy, for nudging us in the right direction.

Ken Blanchard, April, 2009

## *Author's Note*

Dear Reader,

This book has had a long genesis. It began with the experiences of the Restaurant followed by a period of time of attempting to find the reason why it had been such a magical experience. I wrote the stories while at the Hotel School at Cornell in an independent study. Later Ken encouraged me to put them together as a book with a unifying theme.

The search for the uniting theme has been the Real journey. I found the first clue whilst reading Scott Peck's book, ***People of the Lie***, which is about human evil, between stretches of painting the house. Suddenly I knew that people were really Good at heart, not evil. That is what I'd done right in my business, seeing the Good and drawing that forth from them. Subsequently the book was written under a working title with the Principles of Humaneness. This version was used in Ken's Leadership Course in 1990 at The School of Hotel and Restaurant Management at Cornell as the text book.

My journey had not finished, however. As the years progressed and my own understanding and spirituality expanded, humaneness morphed into "Practical Spirituality", which evolved into "Applied Spirituality<sup>TM</sup>" by 1999 where it shall remain.



## *Introduction*

A phenomenon we see frequently repeated in life is that a lesson learned in one context is seldom successfully translated to another unrelated one. This is problematic for each of us as humans. For example, we might learn that speaking up at home nets us a favourable response from those we love, but then we fail to see that the same behavior would probably produce a similar result in social situations, work scenarios, and everyday encounters with the grocer. Odd, isn't it, that we can often experience a major "Ah Ha!" here, and then draw a complete mental blank when the same situation is presented to us with a different set of parameters there as though we'd never seen or heard of it before.

The Young Woman in this story is a metaphor for anyone; the story is a metaphor for any other context. The elements of humaneness are illustrated in a restaurant, a setting I know intimately. I could, however, have told the same story in another context: while working in a civic group, or performing duties at home as a mom, or working for a large hotel chain. The anecdotes used to illustrate important points would have altered to fit the time and place, and the names of the characters would have changed to accommodate the story, but the principles of humaneness would have held constant and true. Also, I chose the restaurant, trusting that the use

of the business arena would encourage more people to see the applications in the “real world.”

The story is told and represented simply, but don't be fooled into thinking it's facile. Some, maybe even most, of the content may seem obvious to you, but that's the paradox: obvious in this context, but perhaps not so obvious in your present situation. Try it on, though. Transport the characters, transpose the names to those that apply to your situation, and see that you can, indeed, take what you have learned across any discipline or scenario. If need be, challenge yourself to see the bigger picture or the smaller one, if that is required for you to “get it.” One thing I promise you: the principles of being humane to each other always apply when you have humans interacting with humans. In the larger context, now common and popular topics for impassioned debate, such as diversity, equal rights, women's issues, harassment, litigations, etc. recede into the background and almost disappear as skills in basic humaneness become familiar, then habitual in each of us, crossing all barriers of geography, color, language, and ideologies, leaving our diverse beliefs intact. It is a new way of seeing things, a new Common Denominator - the first one - the oldest one. Perhaps we are coming full circle to find that there is nothing new under the sun, only the old applied in a new context, any context where we deal with another. What becomes true then is that the microcosm, the small encounter, becomes the model for the macrocosm, the larger encounter, limited only by our ability to envision its application.

Throughout the book, you will find I have used capital letters for words such as Spirit, Intuition, Purpose, Uniqueness, etc. There is an important reason for this latitude. When I began trying to understand what the stories about the restaurant were teaching me, my mind was determined to sort out all the extraneous data, the fluff, the melodramatic details, and get to the bottom line. The bottom line I searched for was what did we all have in common? My knowing about this grand commonality came about one morning after months of searching for it in the most unlikely places. Most recently it had been by studying human evil. But then, as I've learned, life is often explained in the paradox. What we all have in common, regardless of race, color, creed, beliefs, geographic location, or any other factor is the Soul. And that is at the very core of each of us, as we are made in the very image of God. So be it. At the center of each of us is God. Call It what you will: Life Force, Universal Energy, God, the Buddha, the Christ, the Great Spirit, Innate or Mickey Mouse. This is another area where we've all gotten hung up on the differences; this time it is semantics. God is God is God by any name. What is more, God lives at the core of each and every living thing on the planet. We are One at Heart. We are One Soul. We are One Love. We are all Divine at our Center; every one of us. If you don't get anything else from this book, please, get that. So when you come to one of these capitalized words, impart to it all the power, all the magic, all the goodness, all the truth you now give to your definition of an external God. Only now realize that God lives and directs each one of us from within, if we are willing to listen. Ah, there's

the wild card, of course, our free will, which is solely under our individual control and direction, and is another commonality. Free will is the one that has probably gotten us humans the reputation we currently enjoy.

The major goal of this little book is to expose the Limitlessness of the human individual you, through your partnership with the Divinity of you. The Power of the human individual - you, when directed by God-center, and when willing to get ego or self out of the way is unconquerable. Then, applying this to your life, you *naturally* contribute your Uniqueness and fulfill your Purpose. When applied to the collective encounter, there is nothing impossible for the human race to achieve.

These times represent an unprecedented opportunity for global humanity in our collective evolution. Where we go and what we create next depends entirely on the interdependence of healthy parts (individuals) blended into an elegant synergy of the whole.

Applied in the marketplace, this synergy means inspired innovation, increased productivity and healthy corporations and businesses; applied in social groups, it means new ideas and achievement of the goals through clear and deliberate focus and intention; applied in families, synergy means a strong family unit - of any definition - that nurtures each member to value his/her gifts and talents, and to accept the responsibility to know, to be, and to contribute fully who he/she uniquely is.

## *Prologue*

Once upon a time, not so long ago, a small, sleepy Beach Towne formerly a weekend retreat for the City people up north, started to become a city itself, with progress and opportunity at hand. Many people from various backgrounds came to the Towne, with as many dreams for the future.

Around this time, a Young Woman moved to the Towne. She, too, was in search of a new life and a new beginning. The Young Woman had been married for a long time, over a decade, and now out of the death of her marriage and the loss of her family, found she was starting life over - this time alone, save a tired and broken spirit. Anyone who might have taken the time could easily see her despair, for when she looked into her future, all she saw was the bottomless, black void of the unknown.

With limited and still co-mingled resources, she consciously set about opening their last business venture, a restaurant. Consciously it was her intent to operate it; but if successful, it would support herself and her children. Unconsciously, she was determined to find herself and, therefore, her way in the world. What she found was the key to being a successful restaurant manager - humaneness - unlocked her own life, as well.

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# *Chapter 1*

## *The Young Woman*

I was a Young Woman much like the other women of my time: born and raised in one paradigm, the Post-war era, and coming of age in another, the Women's Movement, the Vietnam War, and the Sexual Revolution. With no college education, I spent my married years supporting my husband's endeavors as my own, as women in those days often did: assisting in the acquisition of his Ph.D. and his climb up the career ladder, while alternately, and often simultaneously, running our businesses and tending the home fires. I thought myself quite ordinary: small in stature - not quite five-foot-three - with black hair and deep, dark eyes. I also inherited above average intelligence, a generous amount of common sense, and a work ethic from both sets of immigrant grandparents. Unfortunately, colleges don't give out degrees in experience, because eventually I gained a wealth of knowledge from being the operating partner in our business ventures.

Since we were not divorced yet and hadn't worked out an agreeable property settlement, I was attempting my first solo business with community property, which eventually would have to be settled. I was opening a closed restaurant without ever having worked in one, but running a business, any business, was not a fearful thing to me, as I viewed businesses simply

as inflows and outflows with only the working parts varying from context to context. I had already proven myself capable of juggling the parts and achieving and maintaining the proper balance between the flows in several previous enterprises. The only scary part for me this time was the aloneness: would my sole judgment be good enough, did I know enough; was I strong enough, savvy enough, and shrewd enough to make a go of it? Did I have enough will?

My extraordinary attributes, though completely unknown to me at the time, were my indomitable will and my faithful Intuition. My will was of such strength and determination that it naturally pushed me onward, even if only one halting step at a time, especially when my heart was not able. The mere fact that I was rising from the ash of near-total loss was evidence of my stubborn will. I watched myself persevere with amazement and curiosity as if observing someone else.

Since my childhood, I had been intermittently and only vaguely aware of my Intuition as a way of noticing and feeling things about people or situations, especially despair and misery - the inhumanity - as though I were inside the experience myself. This capacity both drained and compelled me, because I did not understand its Source or its purpose. I felt deeply the unspoken messages of fear in human relationships, bureaucratic policies, pointless rules, and bizarre behaviors that enslaved people; and I was baffled by why these things continued to stand unchanged let alone unchallenged.

For example, when I was about 13, I puzzled over what the Protestants and the Catholics - two religions rooted in the same Christian beliefs - could possibly have to fight about when they had something so great in common. Obviously they thought they were very different, and their warring was over their perceived difference. However, two questions stuck fast in my mind: Why could they only focus on that difference? Would they continue to fight if they could see what they had in common?

In my first job at the telephone company, I worked in the poorest area of the City. There my Intuition called me to notice that the average telephone bill in this area was considerably above the City-wide average. My mind struggled with that paradox: if these people were so poor, why did they choose to spend so much money calling all over the world? Was it that people needed to communicate or to be heard to feel important? Or perhaps a phone call was a small vacation - a temporary distraction from tormented lives that they felt powerless to change. What if they could feel and know their importance? If they felt powerful, what then would they choose to do?

At 23 I became a student of life when we purchased our first enterprise, a small liquor store. The business became my classroom. In that little shop, I came face to face with the reality of just how insignificant people felt and realized the many not-so-beautiful ways in which they tried to fill their voids. At six each morning just before dawn, they would wait for me to

open. There they would do small chores for wages, and then spend their wages for a pint of Thunderbird - courage in a bottle for only 68 cents. As the days turned into weeks and the weeks into months, I came to know these nameless people intimately, because my Intuition compelled me to listen carefully when they spoke. I was in awe of the many things they just knew. These broken people taught me that despite outward appearances, each one had something to teach me from a special talent or a unique perspective only that person could possibly have. So, from the most unlikely people, I heard some of my most important truths. I wondered what unique message I was to bring to the world?

After a while I couldn't continue, in good conscience, to pay them money for sweeping the sidewalk or polishing the windows. Instead, I offered sandwiches or Twinkies and milk, fully expecting them to disappear. However, a funny thing happened, they didn't. They continued to come and privilege me with the wisdom hidden within their stories. Although no two people were the same in gifts or talents, they were equal in their basic need to be honored and to know within their being how uniquely important they were to the world.

What I learned about the human condition from the community of my customers further confirmed my suspicion that most did not feel honored or know their uniqueness. Some people made phone calls; some drank, did drugs, ate, or sold their bodies to stay numb to what seemed a hopeless existence. Everywhere I looked I saw inhumaneness: children

abused, families torn by divorce and deceptions; vicious acts of hatred towards anyone adjudged different, and therefore threatening, were justified. I was aware of these daily tragedies and tried to do whatever I could: once with her daily pint of vodka, I delivered a Bible to a lonely widow; at Christmas I left a decorated tree for a single mother who had opted to pay the light bill, because her two small boys still expected Santa; and I let people run “tabs” for food, laundry soap, and diapers because there was nothing in the house, especially money. I gave away sandwiches and cartons of milk, enough to feed an army, to drifters just passing through. I posted AA, CA, and OA cards and meeting schedules in conspicuous places, personally spent countless hours just listening, but gave precious little comfort to the massive suffering. In the end I felt I was ineffective, because I treated only the symptoms. The common obstacle to the cure was a lack of necessary will to change things for themselves and to effect their own cures. The cycle appeared to be unbreakable; people felt unimportant and ineffectual, then desperate or angry, then acted hatefully either to themselves or others producing guilt that had to be assuaged with their anesthetic of choice. Then, of course, the original feeling of powerlessness returned. This vicious cycle was something many people had in common. It didn't seem to discriminate victims by age, sex, race, religion, or economic status as people do. Anyone was fair game.

For four years I did all that I could, but it was futile, because I didn't know how to inspire someone's will to change his own life. I couldn't watch anymore either, because it was

draining my own soul. So I got out, knowing I'd not even started to fill all the insatiable need or to soothe the never-ending sorrow. And, at some point in those years, I'd learned that I wasn't supposed to fill someone else's void, but each person had to do that for himself. People just didn't seem to know how to muster the will to begin, and I didn't know how to teach them to do that.

Things were changing rapidly in those days politically and socially. As traditional roles became blurred, people became even more confused and desperate, evidenced by the exponential increase of all types of abuses: drugs, alcohol, people, money, etc. However, I appeared to circumnavigate these obstacles by remaining focused on our goal of living the American Dream. My husband and I bought run-down properties or bargain businesses. I provided the sweat equity - long hours of personal labor in lieu of funds. I worked constantly in the business ventures to "get ahead," repeatedly postponing my own personal dreams. It was worth it, my husband assured me, to delay our personal lives to secure our financial future. No challenge was too great, no project was too big, and no obstacle stood in my way. I made up solutions as I went along. As my knowledge of business and life savvy grew, proportionately I grew increasingly deaf to the voice of my Spirit. I was living in my head and leaving the desires of my heart far behind.

Somewhere between the real estate development project and the sport fishing boats and amid the chaos created by

adopting two children, I noticed my Spirit becoming increasingly faint. Love became scarce. Joy was nonexistent. Peace of mind was illusive. Frequently my thoughts returned to the hopeless people left behind years ago. Why didn't I resort to drugs or sex or liquor when I felt down? I asked myself why I was different. Or was I? I pondered thoughts like that for a few years - right up to the day when I reached down into my boots for some more energy or courage or stamina or hope and found my boots were empty too. I had joined the ranks of the hopeless.

What happened? In the endless effort of external acquisition, I had lost touch with mySelf, giving it away bit by bit, day by day, by ignoring the voice of my Spirit - the voice of my internal longings and my Purpose. I was burnt out. Spiritually bankrupt. Empty. When I finally buckled under the burden of living a life so disconnected from my soul, my Spirit collapsed on my long-neglected, nearly forgotten dreams. I spent nearly five months in a mental hospital with severe depression. When I emerged, my husband wanted a divorce. It was then that I intimately understood the emptiness, the loneliness and the desperation of the people in the liquor store ten years earlier. When he moved out, I discovered the enormous difficulty of supporting two small children and myself on \$5.25 an hour. I knew what it felt like to face each day with only the same empty outlook. I was just one of the many faceless, unskilled employees hired to do meaningless work for soulless corporations. Quickly I learned that no one cared how hard life was for me, and no one was interested in my ideas about efficient, let alone meaningful,

work. A shell of my former self, I lived just as the others did in the long, dark shadow of futility. Pain and fatigue were my constant companions, as I aged before my own eyes. I thought I didn't matter to the world and believed I would scarcely be missed if I were to leave it. The thought of being shut of the pain beckoned like a siren song. But my unflinching will forced me to continue beyond what my conscious mind wanted. Finally, scarcely able to care for myself, let alone my children, I left them in the security of their home with their father. I moved to the Beach Towne. Here I would start over, no longer innocent and unpracticed, but deeply etched by fourteen years of business and human experiences. Surely I'd learned something about business and humanity through it all, and somehow, maybe I would put things back together for us, perhaps even for me. The year was 1983; I was 33 years old, but I felt more like 103.

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## *Chapter 2*

### *The Building*

During my days in the hospital, I learned to keep my thoughts in a journal in the effort to regain touch with mySelf. My journal became volumes as I learned to enjoy the process of writing and the uncanny insights that seemed to emerge from my ramblings. As a result, I now was prone to take my notebook everywhere and frequently wrote in it. On my first day at the building, having stored what few personal possessions I'd brought with me, I decided to get to work immediately. With journal and pen in hand, I began taking inventory of the project.

The building that sheltered the remains of the closed restaurant, I was told, was the oldest in the Towne, dating back to 1920's. In the Spanish Mission style it sported three graceful arches and an old tile roof. It was white stucco, two stories high, and had two hunter green bubble awnings over the arches showcasing the dining room windows on the ground floor. The third arch to the left led the way upstairs to two apartments. The apartment to the rear was light and spacious with one bedroom and a lovely living area underscored by well-worn wooden floors. I decided it would be the Manager's unit, offered as part of the compensation package. The front apartment, a one-room efficiency with a minuscule kitchenette and bath, was mine.

The furnishings in it were dismal at best, perfectly mirroring my life: an old, brown sofa bed liberally scarred with stains of unidentifiable origins with a mattress that rolled deeply to the center from all four sides; a bare light bulb suspended from a frayed cord looped through a rusted nail in the ceiling; and my suitcase, which served as my dresser, on the floor in the closet. This would be home, my home, for the next 14 months.

On the ground floor to the rear of the 70-seat dining room and directly below the Manager's apartment was the prep kitchen and pot-washing station with a door leading out to the overgrown backyard which sloped steeply to the rear lot line. The walls of the two adjoining commercial buildings rose up on either side, closing in the yard like an encampment. However, I saw possibilities as well: a large, lovely tree right in the center of the yard; an old mature bougainvillea climbed up one side wall, gracing it with generous red blossoms; and the small but unobstructed view of the sea only half a block away. The air smelled like the sea - fresh and renewing. I thought this a very good thing.

Adjacent to the main building, separated by a long brick walkway leading from the front sidewalk to the backyard, was a fully detached narrower building, which housed a tiny, dry storage area and the kitchen. The street-side one-third was for wines, linens and an office, while the rear two thirds comprised the main kitchen. The kitchen and dining room in two separate buildings posed an operating challenge that had

to be solved. I knew we had to be up and running quickly, because the longer the site remained closed, the sooner people would forget there had ever been a restaurant there. My constraints were the usual time and money. I'd inherited a lease of \$3500/month triple net, which I mentally translated to equal a lot of food out the kitchen door. The many tasks demanding attention before opening appeared monumental: the complete renovation of both kitchens including new equipment; the refurbishment of the dining room and the construction of decks in the backyard for outdoor dining. It was July. My will and Spirit had already started pushing my human limits once again. In the process they were revealing to me my own uniqueness, as I, unknowingly, began to learn and understand the fundamental elements of humaneness.

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## *Chapter 3*

### *The Staff*

One by one during the first few months, I came to meet the new players in my life's story. From the varied list of tasks at hand, it was apparent I first had to identify the other members of the management team whose expertise and insight could help me put this business together. I needed someone to direct the front-of-house operations and a counterpart to direct the back-of-house operations. The first person that came to mind was a beautiful Englishwoman, about my age, whom I'd met over a year ago at a dinner party. Little did either of us know at that first meeting that we had envied each other: I longed for the Englishwoman's freedom and independence; she yearned for my security and stability. What irony. The Englishwoman had a depth of practical experience in cooking, all phases of front-of-house operations, and even renovations. Clearly she was a hardworking and trustworthy professional, but she had been long footloose, staying with something only until a new prospect might tickle her fancy or sense of adventure. She had yet to test her mettle seeing any project through to completion and to understand that she was exceptionally able to meet these challenges. I decided to risk her leaving prematurely because of her qualifications. I needed someone who not only had broad experiences but also was willing to be flexible in contributing them. We agreed on

her title of Manager, a modest salary, and the rear apartment as compensation. By way of added incentive, if she stayed a full year, she would have a percentage of partnership in the business. I was confident that Manager would be my right arm and my trusted confidante in a very little time.

Immediately, Manager and I placed an ad looking for the third member of our team, the back-of-house person. In an operation of our size, that was often the chef. After what felt like an endless stream of applicants and interviews, we finally found our Chef. A Culinary Institute graduate. He had good credentials and experience with new openings. He was looking for a small operation this time, because he wanted to feel creatively challenged, and have direct impact on the operation, being wholly responsible for the kitchens and staff. He had a proven ability to run full back-of-house operations, create exciting food, and control costs; Manager and I had to confer only briefly before we decided to hire him, knowing how lucky we were to find him. He, too, was offered the same percentage of ownership in the business if he stayed a full year.

Chef was about our age and had served seven years in military service, including two tours in Vietnam. Manager loved that he was a sensitive, gentle soul and a voracious reader like herself. I loved that he came with a rollicking, robust sense of humor and a physical presence to match. He overpowered the tiny kitchen, weighing over 250 pounds in his combat boots and towering over 6'3" in chef's hat. He had to duck his head when

cooking to keep from knocking himself out on the exhaust hood. He confided in us that while on leave in Southeast Asia, he had fallen in love and married quite on impulse. Since then, even though they had produced two exquisite children, the marriage had been on shaky ground as here in America they had found little in common. His home situation tore at him relentlessly.

So Manager, Chef and I, each struggling with our personal demons, each offering a diversity of talents critical to the operation, found ourselves united by the Restaurant as our common goal and became the management team - and eventually friends.

Chef brought his staff along with him, a common practice when the members of a crew find that they work well together, both creatively and practically. So I was both relieved and alarmed to know that the positions of sous-chef, prep cook and pot washer were immediately filled. I didn't mind skipping the work involved in screening more people, but I wondered about the people who would work for me that I didn't know anything about. My fears were quickly dispelled when the crew arrived to begin help with the renovations. In sharp comparison to Chef, Sous was a tall, slender blond man of about twenty, who was both quiet and soft spoken in manner presenting a rather graceful demeanor. Although not formally schooled in cooking, he had developed his creative talent while working under Chef. In his spare moments, though, we could find him engrossed by his true passion - reading spiritual books or meditating.

Prep Cook was a short, compact Mexican man in his twenties. Efficient and precise in the way he handled food, himself, and his relationships. Prep was the obvious mainstay in the kitchen. Much of what happened in there pivoted on his ability to anticipate needs well in advance by reading the minds of Chef and Sous, Manager and myself. He was honest and loyal, and considered absolutely no chore outside his job description. Fortunately for us, bilingual Prep could assume total responsibility for communicating with Pot Washer, who spoke only Spanish. Any requests we had were conveyed through Prep, who handled Pot Washer evenly and effectively, like everything and everyone else.

Pot Washer was the funniest character of all. He was also in his early twenties. Because he spoke no English (or so I thought) and communicated through a system of nods and hand signals, we called him Harpo. For a very long time he remained an enigma to me. Since he never spoke to me directly, I first thought he might be a deaf-mute until one day I happened on him speaking with Prep. Then, for an equally long time after that, I thought he only understood Spanish, until one day I suspected he understood me, seeing a wee twinkle in his eyes. When I asked, “Comprende?” he grinned as if enjoying a tremendously satisfying joke, and nodded, “Si.” He was not exactly an inspired worker, so Prep often had to direct his duties vigorously and energetically. But Pot Washer was always reliably there, performing the lowliest duties pleasantly and competently, if not rapidly.

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On the other hand, assembling the wait staff proved to be an exhausting and time-consuming chore for both Manager and me. We sifted through hundreds of applicants. Together we interviewed, inquiring about specific experiences and supporting references, while attempting to assess the general compatibility of the illusive attitude and personality. Once we were able to verify the given data, we would then call into play some inexplicable mixture of our combined intuitions. For the dinner shift we finally selected Judah, a young married man of about 25, who was attending college classes during the day to become a CPA. Until business picked up, Manager and Judah were the only servers, but we also hired Dorian and Matt as bus-persons. Dorian, an exceptionally handsome young fellow about 19, was gay and had a dream of becoming an actor, perfecting his craft in local theatre productions whenever possible. Matt, a high school senior, with an abundance of youthful enthusiasm, was determined to win a college scholarship to study hotel and restaurant administration. His dream was to own and operate his own dude ranch.

So at last my Restaurant family was identified. Functions and job descriptions were outlined, uniforms were selected and fitted, and training was accomplished. Just like an army, my troops were ready for action.

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Stop! Time to go to <http://www.messengerminibooks.com> or go to <http://www.appliedspirituality.com> and do Module #4 – The Players: What Expertise Do You Need?



## *Chapter 4*

### *Preopening*

Of the many projects we faced, the largest and most costly in terms of time, money, and manpower was remodeling the two kitchens. The second was transforming the seedy backyard into ocean-view, patio dining by terracing it into several decks with redwood and used brick.

None of us had any idea that the County's building regulations applied to our 'minor' renovations, let alone understood the process of conforming to these regulations. So we proceeded to gut both kitchens and simply put them back together into the configurations best suited to our operation and concept. I insisted licensed craftsmen do the work, because the last thing I wanted was a fire or failed plumbing just because I'd have been penny-wise and pound-foolish. I'd learned that lesson the hard way many years ago when we remodeled the liquor store. My rule after that fiasco was always to hire expertise where I didn't possess it and jump in with hard work and elbow grease wherever I could to save money. Thus the Restaurant transformation proceeded with all the technical work: framing, plumbing, wiring, heating and air-conditioning performed by licensed workman. The rest of the work: flooring, painting, upholstery, cleaning, etc., were done by staff; but none of it with permits.

The work progressed at what I felt was a barely tolerable rate, subject to all the usual obstacles imposed by Murphy's Law. As it neared completion, by and by the County's Building Inspector came 'round to see what we were up to. In my naiveté, I proudly showed him all the improvements and all the additions, which were now nearly complete. Blissfully unaware of how seriously I was jeopardizing the opening, I left nothing out. The Building Inspector listened carefully, surveying the work with his expert eyes, and often, during my litany, made generous notations to his clipboard. At last I stopped talking and he stopped writing long enough to comment, "You need permits for the work you've done here. Furthermore" he droned on, "since the work has been done illegally, the permit process will probably be lengthier and more costly. Of course, you understand that you can't open without the permits signed off." His voice echoed like a deafening drum inside my head, and I just looked at him dumbfounded. "This can't be happening!" I said. But in the same second I said that, a series of bizarre ideas flashed through my mind in rapid succession: the first was did he want money? Obviously he realized the power he had over me at that moment. Did he expect a bribe, or would I risk insulting him - or worse yet going to jail - if I did that? The next thought was we could comply and open in maybe six months - probably a good four months after I'd filed for bankruptcy. Then, mercifully, another idea bubbled up from somewhere - my Intuition to the rescue.

“If I gave you my word that we will secure those permits, could you see your way clear to sign them off now? Provided, of course, that all the work you’ve seen here today is to Code?” I knew it was unorthodox, probably unheard of, but my promise was all I had, so I extended my hand to seal my proposed deal. The Inspector looked at my earnest face as though his hearing had gone bad, and then looked down at my waiting hand. The pause, I have to say, was about ten years long. Finally, he clasped my hand saying, “Deal. You’ve got three months to get the paper work done. The actual work here looks good.” There was an audible collective sigh of relief from staff and construction workers who had gathered to watch the drama. “Yes! Thank you sooo much! We’ll do it in one month, you’ll see; and you won’t regret this!” That’s what I remember hearing myself say over the loud thumping of my heart.

I saw to it that we did comply within a month, thus keeping my word. Ethics, though it had never been much of a problem for me personally in the past, had cropped up unexpectedly and early. Had I known he expected money, I wouldn’t have done it. What surprised me was my sudden idea and then the boldness to dare try it! “Where did that come from,” I wondered to myself, “was it my sixth sense, or what?”

As I wrote into my journal later that night, I reflected on the amazing events of that day:

Journal Entry: September 29, 1983:

*\*Promises. "I will guard my word as if it was my life, and I will give it only when I fully intend to follow through. My word - my reputation - is more valuable than money, and sometimes it just might be the only currency I have."*

*\*Reality: "It seems that I have the power to create my own reality when I keep my motives pure, rely on my own creative ability, my Intuition, and take full responsibility for my actions."*

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By the end of October, Manager, Chef and I had worked very closely together for several months and had done much talking and sharing during renovations, running errands, securing suppliers and collaborating on other myriad details. Throughout this process our distinct and separate areas of individual expertise and contributions quite naturally emerged. For example, Chef and Manager were both foodies; that is to say that they loved, knew, and enjoyed all aspects of the subject; and the truth was I was not. In fact, formally, I knew very little about food, cooking, or restaurant operations. Over the years I had deliberately cultivated my reputation as a cook based on the philosophy that Twinkies were better than Pop Tarts because they didn't need any heating. Manager, on the other hand, was really keen on food; one could even say she loved food. She savored every morsel, every swallow, and with sheer delight

could ferret out and correctly identify the source of each flavor. She was a true, albeit thin, foodie.

Chef was a fat foodie who loved food as much as the Manager did. Chef's talents made food to him what clay is to a skilled sculptor. He could see the possibilities in the combinations of textures, colors, and tastes, and he combined his creativity with an inexorable practicality that capitalized on economies of scale, even in our relatively small operation. He also knew everyone in the restaurant equipment business and was a valuable asset to the Restaurant in procuring excellent purchases at considerable savings of both time and money.

I, though thoroughly ignorant about food, had my Intuition and was beginning to hear and trust Its whispered messages. When Manager returned from her nightly dinner at a different restaurant each evening, she always gave me a complete review of each establishment, even smuggling menus out like a secret agent on an intelligence mission. I would nod politely, but the small Voice inside told me not to listen to her reviews of the local competition. After she left, I would put the unexamined menu away with the others. My mind's eye was busy receiving pictures of what I was trying to create at the Restaurant, and I didn't want my vision clouded by someone else's. At long last I was gaining a bit of confidence in my own abilities. So if I couldn't identify the perfect wines or foods, I knew I could identify appropriate talent; and I was well aware of the gifts the others brought to my organization, which filled in

my blanks. Though it still remained for me to discover, my forte was leading by Intuition and holding the Vision. I was well on my way to that realization.

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As the days flew by, the dining room renovations were finished; the construction was nearly completed, and all the requisite licenses were en bureaucratic route. However, we still hadn't created the menus. Chef came to me more often now to ask what I had in mind for the menus. By the time the kitchen renovations were almost done, Chef and I had ridden all over Towne and parts of the City, looking for the very finest in used restaurant equipment. On advice from Chef, I purchased what was necessary to equip his basic kitchen; but he had to know soon what the menu would be before anything else could be purchased and installed. I knew the time for decisions was closing in on me, but still I had no clear feel of what that might be or how it would come to me.

One Saturday in late October, all three of us were at the Restaurant, because I'd scheduled two wine tastings in preparation for drawing up the wine list, which, of course, couldn't be completed until the food menus were done. For weeks we had been sampling breads, coffees, desserts, cheeses, and pâtés. You name it; we sampled it. Then we compared opinions on which we thought were the best flavors and values for the money. To date we had tasted no wines; these two

events, however, would provide one of my more amusing and astounding lessons yet.

The first tasting of 16 wines was scheduled for 11:00 a.m. When the sales representative arrived, without ceremony he introduced me to a spit bucket. “What? You spit the wine out?” I was incredulous. “You’re not serious?” But they were! So they sipped and spat; I sipped and swallowed. All of us scribbled notes to refresh our memories later at decision time. My notes said things like “OK, fine, yuk, costs too much.” Manager’s and Chef’s notes had phrases like “hints of, essence of, strong finish, good legs.” While I could identify wines suitable for my Restaurant and what I liked, in true foodie fashion the other two described elaborately the complexities of aroma, style, flavor, and nuance.

The first tasting took nearly two hours with mere bits of bread between sips. The second tasting, scheduled for 2:00 p.m., back-to-back with the first, featured 15 more wines to sample. Round two proceeded in the same way as before: sips, bucket, and notes, but now with only crumbs of bread left to soak up the wine. I noticed, too, that the others were using the buckets less, with frequent requests for repeated tastes of wine. As you might guess, by the end of the second tasting, we were all a bit sloshed. The collective mood was light, the jokes were free, and the ideas were flowing. Stifling a giggle, I ventured, “What’s say we do the menus right now?” Chef and Manager, chuckling over some fractured pun, replied, “Great!” Together

we set to the ribald work of writing the menus. By 7p.m. we had finished the lunch, dinner, and wine menus, all replete with colorfully descriptive phrases laden with provocative innuendo and perfectly ready for the printers. We'd done it. In just a few hours we had created complete menus, a feat made possible by our months of getting to know each other, sharing my vision, and blending the fullness of our individual talents. The results were a splendid coupling and multiplying of our individual knowledge into the form of menus.

Except for the addition of nightly specials, none of the menus was ever changed after that. All were completely harmonious with the essence of the Restaurant: an eclectic combination of energies based on the commonalties of quality, value, and hospitality. Affordable Elegance we called it; and forevermore my vision was immortalized by those two words. It was really something else, though. It was synergy: creating collectively something greater than was possible individually. An apt name for the Restaurant could have been Synergy. I wrote in my journal about my personal discovery of the amazing concept of synergy:

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Journal Entry October 27, 1983:

*\*Synergy. I think synergy must be the ultimate in creativity. It seems simple enough to recognize and to allow each individual to bring to the workplace through his tasks, the fullness of his special and unique talents. If I encourage each one to contribute whatever he does best - his Uniqueness - then I only have to orchestrate all the individual and unique contributions, like musical notes in a beautiful symphony, the Symphony of Synergy. I like the way that rings.*

*\*Autonomy. "The hardest part for me is knowing and valuing my unique talents and skills and then deciding how and where to use them. Now I understand that my contribution to the Whole is equally important. That's amazing to me: my note counts too! And I'm responsible for discovering it, nurturing it, and making my contribution; but first I have to get to know me, to know fully who I am. I guess that's what autonomous means: being authentic with myself, being self-governing and being self-responsible. I love knowing that I am the only one who has the answers to the questions about my life, my purpose, and me.*

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Stop! Time to go to <http://www.messengerminibooks.com> or go to <http://www.appliedspirituality.com> and do Module #5: Your Vision: Allowing Others to Contribute Who They Really Are



## *Chapter 5*

### *Getting Along, Along the Way*

The Restaurant finally opened in early December. As they say in the industry, it was a soft opening, one without much fanfare. One day the beer and wine license arrived, and that evening we served dinner to six guests. It was a monumental occasion that only looked unremarkable. By New Year's Eve, when we served a record 45 guests, we'd worked out most of the serious knots. Of course, the numbers weren't there yet, but if we maintained our quality of food and service, compliments from satisfied diners surely would be heard around the Towne soon. Certainly a reviewer would get wind of us and rush to be the first to discover the Restaurant. We needed a review, and we needed it soon, as operating capital was growing dangerously thin.

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During the previous five months, I came to the humble realization that I was the central motivating force in the Restaurant. The others counted on me to be clear-headed, to make good decisions, and to lead the way confidently. However, I struggled deeply with the painful changes in my personal life, and I was not always able to handle things very well. At times I was overwhelmed with loneliness for my children or by enormous

feelings of failure and guilt about the marriage. Just facing the practicalities of the divorce proceedings physically sickened me, often rendering me paralyzed by fear. Manager, though, had proved invaluable to me. Not only was she always willing to do whatever was necessary, be it waiting tables or greeting guests or ironing table linen, but during times of my own incapacity, she made her most important contribution. It was in these moments that Manager had a way of extending a blanket of compassion by graciously pretending not to notice my tears or depression; and if she did, not to overreact, condemn or judge. Rather, she would skillfully deflect problems or decisions that might easily wait for my clearer attention at another time.

I took the entire restaurant venture quite seriously. It was, after all, my proving ground; it was my future. It was also employing people who depended upon my ability to lead and manage. The responsibilities and pressures weighed heavily on me at times. Together with the pain in my heart, they took a collective toll. “She never sleeps,” remarked Chef. “Si, and she won’t eat anything I fix her,” sighed Prep. “Even though she appears happy to the guests,” said the Manager, “she needs our support.” It was true they worried about me, but this time they followed Manager’s lead. They, too, chose not to react to my shortcomings, but rather supported me by their willingness to allow me my feelings and pick up my slack wherever they could. They never pried or intruded, but I knew they cared because of a kind word or a thoughtful action or a warm smile. I was so utterly grateful. No one had ever extended to me such exquisite

acts of kindness before. This both humbled and galvanized me all at the same time. Because of their gift of grace, my own Spirit was more courageous, which encouraged me to continue my difficult path. It was to my staff's credit that the show went on and that the guests never noticed anything other than the finest of hospitality and cheer from me.

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Journal Entry: January 5, 1984:

*\* Grace. These people astonish me. They extend TO ME, of all people, the gift of grace on a daily basis. I cannot believe such kindness, such humaneness, exists for me. The very experience of receiving this blessing makes my heart grateful, less sad, and encourages my Spirit to press on. I swear I will always remember this and return this grace wherever I can, now knowing how it feels to receive it.*

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One evening in mid-February, I was in my office brooding about the real and imminent possibility of lay offs. January had proved to be a disastrous revenue month. I hadn't understood the seasonal nature of the restaurant business, one of those quirks particular to an industry that previous experience would have taught me. Not only was there seasonal demand that saw January through April as relatively slow revenue months, May through Labor Day as the high revenue time, slowing again

September to November, and the holiday season seeing another brisk period, there was also weekly seasonality. Demand always peaked on Friday and Saturday evenings between 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. If only we could sustain that demand throughout the rest of the hours of all the days of the week! The seasonality phenomenon coupled with our gross undercapitalization meant that Pot Washer and Dorian would have to go. A decision such as this, like any parting, was very hard for me to make. It was nearly 9:00 p.m. when I went to the kitchen looking for Chef to tell him the bad news. Manager came flying in from the dining room, breathlessly shouting, “We’ve been reviewed! I mean we’re being reviewed. Tomorrow. In the Paper. She’s already been here! I think I know when, too. She sat in the front booth with a pitiful wig on and ordered the Green Lip Mussels and the Wellington! I knew it!” She had just heard the Paper’s advertisement on the radio featuring the Reviewer’s Weekly column. It was the most widely read paper in the County, and our Restaurant was the subject of the Reviewer’s article in tomorrow’s column! It would be Valentine’s Day.

For a long moment we three stood speechless, staring from one to the other trying to grasp the full import of this news. I broke the silence, “By tomorrow night we will either be famous or finished.” It was true, the Reviewer was that powerful. She had quite a reputation for ruining restaurants overnight. Not only that, she seemed intentionally stingy with even a mere decent review. “I’ll never sleep tonight. I’ve got to know what it says. I’m going to find a copy of that review. Chef,

do you want to go with me?” I had to know. If we were to be doom, I wanted to know it now. So Chef and I climbed into my old VW van and set out for the publisher’s warehouse, just a few miles down the road. Silently we rode in the dark, drawing closer and closer to the future the Reviewer had cast for us.

At the warehouse we came onto a scene of forklifts loading thousands of copies of the Paper onto pallets for the next day’s distribution. All we wanted was one copy. Chef took over and approached a fellow who appeared to be in charge, asking if we could have a copy, NOW. I stood frozen, watching as Chef returned to the van waving the paper high over his head victoriously. Beside me in the van, he asked, “Do you want me to read it to you?” “Yes, please, Chef. I can’t.” My fingers held the steering wheel in a death grip. I scarcely drew breath as Chef read aloud:

*“The new year has brought with it a fine new restaurant in North County. Once inside, you’ll rejoice that you made the effort. The room is so serene, sensitive to privacy...an unfolding of time, unrushed. So much loving effort has gone into this restaurant, the food is so generous in size and conception that I truly hope [it] succeeds. You should give the Restaurant a whirl. It deserves it.”*

“It’s good. No, it’s great. No, it’s fantastic! Thank you, Reviewer!” I shouted, tears streaming down my face as little sobs of joy and gratitude choked my throat. By this time tomorrow night we would be known all over the County. No layoffs. More

work...yes! Thank God, more work. The Reviewer got it, she felt it, she tasted it, and she saw it: our Affordable Elegance, the results of our synergy. No, there would be no sleep tonight, but who cared? There was too much to plan for tomorrow.

After the celebrating had died down and the others had gone home, I sat at my desk late into the night organizing preparations for the next day. When I had thought of every small detail, even though exhausted, I had to record this never-to-be forgotten day in my Journal.

Journal Entry February 13, 1984:

*\*Change. "It's funny. One minute I'm contemplating the demise of this venture, and in the next celebrating its new life, birthed by one reviewer's opinion based on an anonymous experience in the Restaurant. The only thing that surfaces past my joy tonight is a thought about change. Perhaps change can be a friendly thing. Maybe we misunderstand change. Perhaps it is better viewed in a light of adventure and fun, an opportunity of growing and learning. This takes the fear out of the unknown for me and even makes me sort of welcome change as my friend."*

*\*JOY. "Joy has been illusive to me for so long. Somehow I know to photograph this moment. Memorize how it looks, feels, and tastes, so I can remember how to recreate it again and again for myself in the future."*

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It was a week of curious and wondrous events that began with that review. Because of our astonishing review, we naturally captured the attention of a wide variety of people interested in fine dining. Among them was a man of about 40, the Restaurateur, a long-time veteran of the restaurant business who once owned two restaurants of his own. He was now the general manager of five large restaurants for someone else; and he came to our restaurant the next day just to see who had finally won a word of praise from the ruthless Reviewer. I wasn't in at the time, so Manager accepted his invitation to be his guests at his club that night after we'd finished.

It had been nearly a year since my separation. During that time, I felt no interest whatsoever in men or dating. Manager and I frequently went out to dinner or dancing, but I remained content, comfortably distanced from that whole scene. After all, I hadn't dated since I was 18, and my broken heart wouldn't allow fraternizing with the enemy to appeal to me, yet. That night after we served a new record number of dinners, Manager and I went to the Restaurateur's to unwind. As we walked in, a craggy-faced, gentleman with laughing eyes took my coat. I asked him, "Where might I find the Restaurateur?" "You've found him," he beamed. And then a wondrous thing happened: I felt a long-forgotten stirring and beamed back, "I'm the Young Woman from the Restaurant." Manager, seeing our mutual exchange, discreetly excused herself leaving us to what turned into a long

night of conversation. First we talked of our businesses and then of ourselves. I felt as if I'd happened upon an oasis in the desert: a caring man who shared my passion for my business. From that evening on, scarcely a day went by without our conferring with each other about some minute detail of our restaurants, followed by many lovely meetings late at night after we'd both closed. He was both a man and a friend who slowly began breathing life back into me, the woman.

Even in the Restaurant we sometimes disagreed and quarreled. By now we had four reviews to our credit, and business was generally very good. Because of the increased volume, we needed to hire more waiters. Farad and Reza insured the mixture of personalities was well, eclectic, to be sure. Consider what a diverse lot we were: Chef was, a New Englander, raised as a Protestant, who spent almost a decade as a Naval officer with the highest intelligence clearance possible. Two young, previously privileged, European-prep-school educated Iranian waiters raised Muslim who were now college students. Add in both Prep and Pot Washer who were Mexican nationals and practicing Catholics. Stir in the proper British Manager raised in the Church of England; and finally toss in me, a third-generation Serbian Orthodox raised in the Midwest. Given that line-up, it sometimes happened that either egos tangled or ideologies became gridlocked. Even though I appreciated each one of us individually, the truth was that sometimes we made me weary.

My challenge was to encourage each one to make his or her unique contribution to the Restaurant and simultaneously focusing everyone on what we had in Common, while resolving the appearance of our obvious differences. This posed a communication challenge. For that reason, once a week I held paid staff meetings providing a forum to share information, to vent criticisms or anger, and to sort out any miscommunications or bad feelings left over from the previous week's activities. My goal was that we solve these challenges collaboratively. I set the meeting rules:

- Attendance was mandatory
- The wine tasting was the first item on each agenda (by now I was getting the hang of it and wanted the entire staff to become proficient)
- Speakers must speak respectfully, listeners must listen in kind
- Anyone could speak, but had to get to the point without too much pontificating

So we all gathered on the patio once a week: Chef, Sous, Prep, Pot Washer, Waiters, Bus persons, Manager, and me. First we each got a glass of fine wine. Then either Manager or Chef or both led the tasting with editorials to educate the rest of us. I would gauge when the edges had smoothed a bit, and then open the floor to discussion, usually by presenting an item of my own to get things going. Then, one by one, individuals would offer their version of a problem, a beef, a concern, and their idea of

a perfect solution. Now lest the readers think these meetings were warm and fuzzy, please recall the collection of people, beliefs, and needs all gathered in the same place, supposedly united by a common goal. Sometimes we were downright loud! I would listen just as I had in the old liquor store days, and often found myself mediating between warring parties. Sometimes the only apparent thing we had in common was that we were all human beings. But that seemed like a very natural place - maybe the most important place - to start. Often it amazed me how a seemingly BIG issue boiled down to someone's slighted feelings, a simple logistics problem, or just miscommunication. Once there was a particularly acrid fight over the timing of stuffed mushrooms. When the shouting was over, Chef, Sous, and the waiters had exposed the common enemy: a traffic flow issue fueled by the heat of the moment. Then they worked it through together. Most of the time they ended up finding an answer that was mutually acceptable and shaking hands on it, especially once the "injured party" was amenable to forgiving and the "transgressing party" was inclined to take responsibility. After these weekly meetings, I always had a lot to share with my journal. I never ceased to be surprised at how much we learned from each other at those gatherings.

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Journal Entry: March 18, 1984:

*\* Diversity. I'm not so sure diversity should be 'managed' or even tolerated. It's obvious that we're all very different. That's easy. I think rather than spend any energy on neutralizing our differences, it's much more constructive and productive to support and encourage the individual's uniqueness while focusing everyone's attention on our Commonalties - what we have in common. In doing it this way, we seem to have created a more solid foundation on which to build our many and varied relationships. This foundation, that of humaneness, is the most basic and profound cornerstone of all human relationships whether they are business, social, or personal.*

*\* Resolving conflict. It seems to me that if I allow people to be involved in the diagnosis of and the solution to problems, then they take the responsibility for implementation and ensure the solution's success. Also, the weekly meetings prevent frustrations from building into mountains. It also gives us all practice in transforming our difficulties into amicable solutions, which encourages us to solve rather than blame, talk rather than sulk, and listen rather than shut down. Though these meetings are always challenging to me, I see the progress in our communication skills and our productivity.*

One of my personal goals was to be a model to those around me. I thought this meant I had to act the ‘right way’ at least most of the time. Of course, I didn’t always do things right, but I always did things *my* way. Take for example, the night I was supposed to enter a tray of our specially prepared, now famous food in a food fair for a public relations event.

The publicity that had been generated by additional reviews significantly increased business. In addition we were facing the start of ‘the season’ when thousands of tourists came from all over the world to attend the County Fair at the Fairgrounds for two weeks followed by seven weeks of thoroughbred racing at the Fairground Racetrack, and of course to simply enjoy the sea.

I had planned for increased business during the summer season as the locals left, renting their homes to the influx of visitors. While this change in clientele posed a few marketing challenges, the additional reviews were timely and minimized them, leaving only the operating challenges that went hand-in-hand with rising volume.

The first area to be tackled was the pot washing station. That area of the prep kitchen always seemed to be a bottleneck, because our one-man system was too inefficient to accommodate the faster pace. There were never enough clean dishes and cooking utensils, and the soiled ones stacked on the floor awaiting attention posed a safety hazard. The

addition of a real automatic dishwasher promised some relief. This wonderful invention would automatically wash, sterilize, and dry the dishes and glassware in a short 7-minute cycle. The trouble was, as a bottom-of-the-line model (subject to my budget), it left those embarrassing spots on the glassware; and spots were unacceptable in a restaurant of Affordable Elegance. (I sometimes hated that phrase and the standards to which it held us.) So until the repairman could come to add the necessary parts to prevent the spotting, Pot Washer had to dry the glasses manually as soon as they came out of the heat cycle.

On this particular evening, I was storming; exasperated at having to attend the food fair when I had so much other work to do. On my way out to deliver the tray of food, I happened to notice about 40 glasses sitting on the drain board, air-drying and accumulating spots. Annoyed, I *told* Pot Washer to dry them; and I left.

For the next three hours I drove all over the County and never found the elusive food fair. I returned to the Restaurant hot, tired, angry, and loath to throw out good food, now gone bad. My eyes froze on the drain board full of spotted wineglasses. Of course, it didn't occur to me that many dinners had been served and many loads of dishes had been washed in my absence. One look at those glasses and I inquired in a very unpleasant tone, "Pot Washer, are you *ever* going to dry *those* glasses?" I'm sure it was my tone of voice that made him turn and shake his head slowly from side to side in a definite,

and unmistakably, “NO.” Furious, I repeated myself, this time adding a few four-letter words for effect. Again he shook his head, refusing to comply. It was a showdown of the proverbial rock meeting the hard-place. Exasperated, I fired him on the spot. Pot Washer left, still shaking his head.

As if scripted, some 35 customers walked in within the next fifteen minutes. All were expecting dinner, of course, and we now had no dishwasher. We managed to get through the evening without disaster, but as Manager and I were drying the last of the wineglasses at 1:30 a.m., I had to laugh at myself, “I sure showed Pot Washer a thing or two didn’t I? What was I thinking? How could I have been so unkind and presumptive?”

The next morning Pot Washer was on the job bright and early to perform his duties for another day. Even though I had fired him unjustly, he had the grace to forgive me my unreasonable outburst. It was my turn to be humble and apologize. “Pot Washer, lo siento. Por favor?” He just smiled broadly and nodded, of course.

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Journal Entry: March 22, 1984:

*\*Forgiveness: “Now I know how it feels to be forgiven. I’m grateful to Pot Washer for letting this stupidity of mine pass without recourse; that he was able to exercise restraint. Perhaps in an environment that allows for error, we are more inclined to be forgiving of others. It was important that I apologized to him and owned my own mistake. I think he respected that; I know he deserved as much.”*

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Stop! Time to go to <http://www.messengerminibooks.com> or go to <http://www.appliedspirituality.com> and do Module # Getting Along, Along the Way.



## *Chapter 6*

### *Leadership: A Lonely Road*

I knew what I believed was right for me, but rarely did I presume to understand what might be right for someone else. Therefore, I refrained from imposing my beliefs or values on others, but instead held that being an effective leader of any group required leading by example - walking my talk, as they say.

After the liquor-store days when I found myself working for others, I learned it was nearly impossible to respect a manager who blindly ordered people, “Just do it...blah, blah, blah.” Especially when the one issuing the command, rarely having performed the task personally, had any conception of just what “blah, blah, and blah” really meant in terms of getting the job done right. Since then, I’d made it a point to actually do the jobs I asked others to do for me. So at any given time, I could be seen stocking, loading, cooking, scrubbing, sweeping, waiting or whatever, either to understand the job or simply to help get things done. Eventually no one was surprised at the sight of me up to my elbows in any and every aspect of the operation; and I hoped I was setting the example: no one was above doing any job that needed doing.

The other reason for this approach was the Restaurant, not unlike my previous businesses, was on a shoestring budget which required my sweat equity to compensate for our under-capitalization. By the time the Restaurant opened, the total spent on everything - both front and back-of-house - for remodeling, supplies, decor, stock, etc., was only \$65,000.

One busy evening, I was unable to leave the dining room floor to do my usual rounds in the back for several hours. When I finally broke away, I found Dorian and Chef helping Pot Washer stack and carry clean plates and cookware to the kitchen next door. I felt pleased to see them all pitching in and appreciated their spirit of cooperation. I seized the opportunity to praise them publicly for their teamwork later that night when we were all gathered in the back booth for our customary food and drink. Evidently they had learned more from watching me than my words might ever have taught them.

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Journal Entry: March 30, 1984:

*\*Leading by Example. "I've always known that a manager sets the tone, but now I understand that it really isn't so much what I say, as what I DO that is heard. If I want teamwork, I have to demonstrate what it looks like. If I want cooperation, I must be cooperation in action. If I want leaders, I must model leadership. I can't blame them, if I haven't demonstrated the appropriate vision."*

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In the 80's popular opinion held that ethics was a tougher question than it used to be in the "good old days." Perhaps. Some people thought that ethics couldn't be pinned down to black or white; and a new term, situational ethics, came into vogue espousing the idea that ethics changed from situation to situation. Perhaps. Some said you had to bend and do whatever was necessary to seize any advantage to compete. Perhaps.

As in any other business situations cropped up in the Restaurant that brought forth the question of ethics. The first incident, early on, involved the Building Inspector during the preopening and another came along later that next summer.

In 1984 the Olympics were held in the City two hours north. As an adjunct to this, some of the equestrian events were held in a part of the County just east of the Towne, a mere two miles from the Restaurant. A notice went out from the local Olympic Committee soliciting bids for boxed lunches for these events. The three of us - Chef, Manager and I - were all eager to enter the bidding. Obviously whoever got the nod from the Olympic Committee would be the recipient of some heavy-duty publicity as an official supplier to the U.S. Olympic Games. We both wanted and needed that publicity. Dare we think we could win? We thought so, and went to work, collaborating over the best four ideas for box lunches considering the constraints of weather, taste, theme, and our capacity for production. For days we labored over every detail: designing a box to break into a mini lap table, creating innovative picnic foods befitting such

an event, and searching out a proper assortment of wines in miniature bottles to complement Chef's food. We priced the boxes at a scant 50 cents over cost, figuring we would just break-even allowing for production errors. At last we were ready to present our proposal.

Early on, I had hired an advertising agency in keeping with my belief of hiring experts and their know-how where mine was lacking. The agency, then, would present our proposal to the Olympic Committee. I thought we had a strong chance of winning: our package was unique, the cost was within guidelines, we were near the equestrian site, and we had a proven reputation in Affordable Elegance. So with our plan submitted, we eagerly waited the reply.

A week later the answer still had not come. I phoned the agency to see why the delay. The answer was the committee was still considering entrants but, in fact, was very impressed with our proposal. In a few more days, word came that the decision had narrowed to a choice between our Restaurant and a new little bistro, open only a few months, but located nearer the equestrian site. We were excited - 1000 box lunches with the Restaurant's name all over the Olympics! We would be famous! However, still more time passed with no word. I pressed the Agency to find out what would sway the committee's decision in our favor. Silence. I asked again. It appeared as if my agency was being stonewalled. As I pondered

what course of action to take to win the bid, the Committee awarded the contract to the bistro.

What I learned later that I hadn't known in time was the bidding process involved being "acquainted" with the local power brokers. I had naively assumed that our hard-won reputation and ability to provide a superior product were credentials enough to win the bid. I hadn't understood there were other, unwritten rules to the contest. But even if I had known, I wouldn't have played. I believed it was unethical to base a contract award on something called insider trading rather than on merit alone. But then, insider trading was a popular concept that year. I was also becoming aware that I usually saw things differently. I was beginning to appreciate that about me.

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Journal Entry: April 5, 1984:

*\*Ethics. For me ethics is rooted in the question: have I examined the underlying premise for myself? Have I accepted, as my truth, the rules set forth by someone else? If I'm going to risk myself and my integrity on a premise - a belief - then I'm going to make darn sure it is my own truth born of the conclusions of my own knowing and consciously chosen. I have to ask myself in any situation, if the Emperor has clothes on at all?"*

*\*Courage. "The other half of the ethics question is the courage to stand alone and act individually and contrary to group-think or popular trends - even in the face of losing the "prize." For me this is the loneliest part of being an independent thinker, but I see that we need to be unafraid to think things through, speak out, and act independently - to lead by courageous example letting go of a desired outcome if need be.*

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I took my job quite seriously and thought it was my responsibility to bear the consequences of all actions taken by anyone at the Restaurant and to bear the blame when things didn't work out as planned. Before I made a decision within my tiny realm, I tried to fathom out and understand in advance all possible ramifications of what I approved. Sometimes this could be tricky when someone was trying to be creative, since I didn't want to squelch enthusiasm. It was even trickier making intelligent decisions without all the facts, which was usually the case.

Once the patio opened and the racetrack running, we decided to introduce entertainment on the patio from 4:00 p.m., featuring a local classical guitarist and Chef's signature wine drinks. I knew the public would love the patio, the music, and the drinks, if they only knew about them. One day Chef and I were brainstorming ways to get the word out quickly to the track people, while living with the usual budgetary straightjacket. The normal advertising methods suggested by the Agency were magazine ads and radio spots, but they didn't usually reach the seasonal market, the transient beach and track crowd. Chef came up with an alternative, placing flyers on car windows at the track and other various parking lots and condo parking garages where most of the summer tourists were staying. I decided to go with the idea. The flyers had a mini menu on one side and a coupon offering a complimentary wine drink, redeemable with the purchase of a regular dinner, on the other side. The flyers, carefully and tastefully designed, were printed

on exceptionally nice stock to compensate for the inexpensive method of distribution. I didn't want these thrown away, but kept and redeemed.

So out went my little army - Chef, Sous, Prep and Pot Washer - to paper the small Towne with the good news about the Restaurant's new ocean-view patio and entertainment. After a few hours they returned having exhausted their supply of flyers. I had no doubt we would have increased business immediately.

The results were encouraging: that very day at lunch we collected 10 coupons, and if that pace continued, dinner promised similar results. Around 5:00 p.m., however, Chef summoned me to the kitchen where I found the local lifeguard being entertained amid dinner preparations. I greeted him, "What can I do for you?" "Are you aware of the littering ordinance in the Towne?" He asked amiably. "What littering law? I'm an environmentalist. I would never litter." "Putting flyers on cars is covered under the littering ordinance, Ma'am. You see, if people don't want them, they throw them on the ground. Since we can't usually catch the person throwing the flyer away, we go to the source of the paper. You can either retrace your steps and pick them all up, or pay the fine." Poor Chef, embarrassed that his idea had backfired, looked pained. However, the lesson was mine again. I assumed the blame for not investigating the legalities of putting out flyers. Then, almost simultaneously I had another thought. Blame was useless, as it only conjured up guilt and served to beat myself up. I had certainly done the best with what I had

known at the time. Looking at the situation practically, and now without any embarrassment for making a mistake, I said, “Officer, those flyers went out at 9:00 this morning; it’s now 5:15. I doubt we’d be able to retrieve them effectively. Also, we are in the middle of our dinner service. I’ll pay the fine and consider it an inexpensive lesson. I apologize.”

I realized that rarely would I ever have all the information I needed for good decision-making. Besides, outcomes were useful information for making *new* choices.

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Journal Entry: April 28, 1984

*\*Responsibility. This is not some heavy burden to be lugged about on my shoulders. Responsibility is simply my ability to respond. We do the best we can with what we have at our disposal at the time. We respond to the best of our ability. The outcome teaches, with each trial, and gives us increasing ability to respond the next time. The outcomes are neither right, nor wrong, nor good or bad. If we choose, outcomes add skills and wisdom to our cache of abilities with which to respond the next time.*

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Stop! Time to go to <http://www.messengerminibooks.com> or go to <http://www.appliedspirituality.com> and do Module # 7 What They're Up To Is None of Your Business!



## *Chapter 7*

### *A Symphony of Synergy*

Daily, I spent my time and energy largely dealing with people: staff, purveyors, or the public. There were as many lessons to learn as there were people I met. The staff alone was a mélange of talents and examples, creating for me my overall challenge of orchestrating them within the context of daily operations. However, this was complicated by the usual business problems demanding my attention and by my own emotions, which I was learning to deal with more effectively.

In the beginning I used my husband's and my communal funds to start up the Restaurant, but during the course of the divorce, my cash flow was cut off at a most inopportune time, leaving me dangerously undercapitalized. I needed operating capital while financing an immediate expansion in response to the demand fueled by the reviews. The patio needed more tables, chairs, and umbrellas; and I had my eye on a portable barbecue for mesquite broiling and catering. I wanted to cover the patio and add heat lamps so outdoor dining could continue into the fall, perhaps even into the winter; and I even had visions of a small bar and opening as an after-hours jazz house. Before I secured a credit line, I planned how to use the money judiciously, only as back up, when cash flow was too short to cover obligations. Otherwise, I intended to finance the

expansion solely out of operating funds. So at the next staff meeting, I asked everyone to offer cost-saving suggestions. We reviewed frugality strategies: the cost of a sugar substitute packet, so don't throw unused ones away when bussing; the cost of laundering napkins and tablecloths, so don't use them as clean-up rags. In the kitchen we refreshed everyone on portion control, delivery check-in procedures, and instituted new recipes utilizing leftovers more creatively.

Internal measures tightened; still it was all in vain if I couldn't secure a line of credit. But how? I had no collateral. I called a banker from my married days. After all, I reasoned, I'd been the one to run the businesses, pay the bills and see the bills were paid promptly; maybe he'd be able to help. But the answer was no, now that I was a single woman, and especially not for a restaurant. Then one day, from my now familiar Intuition, came an idea. It occurred to me that I'd been focusing on only what I didn't have. What I *did have* were great reviews from the toughest critics in the County. I also had an operating statement that reflected break-even by our third month of operation. So I called the Local Bank and spoke to the loan officer. Explaining who I was and that I was seeking a modest line of credit, I invited him to come to the Restaurant to have lunch, look around, and see for himself. He accepted.

On the appointed day the banker, a handsome, quiet man in his early forties, replete in traditional pinstriped suit and

starched white shirt, arrived on time. He ordered the Irish stew served in its own bread bowl and a lovely glass of hearty, red wine. I tried to spend as much time as possible with him but was up and down because our lunch business had picked up recently. That day we hosted the local Chamber of Commerce meeting, and out on the patio the corporate officers of a restaurant chain were having a luncheon meeting. It was a good day for him to visit, I thought. When he finished his meal looking quite satisfied, I took him on a tour of the patio, the kitchen, and finally into my tiny office. There I made him comfortable at my desk and gave him our reviews to read.

When he'd finished reading them all, he looked up at my patient but eager expression. "I liked the food very much, and it feels very comfortable here. Your reviews are certainly impressive. How much did you have in mind?" I told him the amount I was hoping for and waited. "Well, I think we could arrange that for you," he said. I couldn't believe my ears! I was back in business because I'd acted on my Intuition, my inner creativity.

In a very short time the patio was sporting the extra furniture, some crisp looking umbrellas, and a wonderful new portable barbecue to introduce our new concept: healthy, mesquite grilling while enjoying ocean-view patio dining to the sounds of a soothing classical guitar. That month we hosted the Towne's Chamber of Commerce monthly get-together, christening the new patio. It was an instant hit with everyone,

and it was all possible because I listened to my Intuition and had the courage to take a chance on the seemingly impossible.

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Journal Entry: May 2, 1984

*“The Sundowner for the Chamber was a ‘smashing success’ as Manager would say. The concept works; the food is great; and the patio is enchanting with all the twinkle lights in the trees! We all worked hard putting it together, but none of it would have happened if I hadn’t envisioned it and taken action to make it happen. I think it’s good to acknowledge me. These things - my Intuition, my Spirit, and my Creativity - are my gifts that make me unique. It’s imperative I express them fully. That might even be my most important job: to discover, develop and fully make my contribution strongly and clearly. You know what? IT WAS FUN!”*

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I always thought communicating was something that came quite naturally to me. Certainly it was one of those ‘woman things’ genetically acquired in the womb, right? Of course, all the while I was learning to exemplify teamwork, leadership and initiative; I never questioned my ability to intuit other people’s feelings and needs. But I should have.

Since the purchase of the automatic dishwasher for the pot washing station, the area’s efficiency had improved,

somewhat; but it still remained a major kink in the operation. The truth was the space was too small for the many tasks performed there: the coffee, desserts, wine, bread, and salads were stored and dished up by wait-staff; dirty dishes were bussed; and it was the central washing station for the whole restaurant. Too often it became a literal traffic jam of people and equipment, made worse whenever the demand out front increased.

One evening the demand persisted well past the usual 9:00 p.m., when the logjam in the prep kitchen reached crisis proportions. Chef yelled they were OUT of clean dishes in the main kitchen. I hadn't seen this building, because I'd been tied up in the dining room. I ran back to the prep kitchen to see what was happening. Poor Pot Washer was up to his eyeballs in sauté pans, dishes, and glassware. For some reason he didn't have his rhythm about him that evening and was getting further and further behind. The more behind he got, the more chaotic it was; and the more chaotic it was, the more the wait-staff yelled. The more they yelled, the more frustrated and angry Pot Washer became. As the pile around him rose, so did his emotions. It reminded me of the old I Love Lucy skit where Lucy and Ethel were boxing candy on an assembly line: as the belt sped up, the two stuffed the rapidly approaching candies in their pockets, mouths, and boxes just to keep pace. Sizing up the situation, I opted to jump in and just help get things going. I tied on one of Pot Washer's aprons and began scraping plates, soaking silverware, and clearing places to walk and work. Almost immediately, Pot Washer began yelling at me in a stream

of Spanish! I looked up at him in surprise and confusion, and kept right on working as fast as I could. He kept yelling. Then he was taking his apron off! Then he was heading for the door! I asked, “Harpo, ¿qué pasa?”

But by now he was so frustrated and talking so fast there was absolutely no way I could understand him with my very limited Spanish. Quickly I dispatched Dorian to fetch Prep to come translate for us, but I was too late. Pot Washer was shaking his head and threw his apron to the floor. He stormed out, leaving me looking after him in total and utter bewilderment.

Prep intercepted Pot Washer halfway down the back patio where they had a highly animated conversation in Spanish in front of the guests. I couldn't understand any of it, so I turned my full attentions to getting things under control. I worked steadily, clearing, cleaning, loading, and unloading. After a while Prep came in alone. “Where's Pot Washer?” I wanted to know, “and why the hell did he leave?” Prep took a breath and tried to explain, “You, eh, well, insult him,” he began. “What? That's absurd!” I spouted. “It was how you say - no manly. He think you have no, eh, no faith in him to even wash dish. He say he can't stay where boss lady think he no do job.” So there it was, my pitching in had been interpreted as a direct assault to his manhood. Go figure.

Good grief! From my viewpoint, all I'd done was help get the job done. You know, demonstrate teamwork; but from

his viewpoint, filtered through his cultural conditioning I had emasculated him. I felt terrible. “Prep, please, when you see him later, explain to him that all I was doing was trying to help him. It’s my job to make this place work for everyone around here. It’s the set-up in here that’s the problem, not him. Please, will you make him understand?” Prep nodded he understood and agreed to be my messenger. I was humbled and felt really stupid. Here I’d thought I could read people’s feelings and needs, and then I went and grossly offended him out of sheer ignorance. So much for that “sensitive woman thing.”

The next morning when I came down from my apartment to open, I found the side door to the kitchen already unlocked. Assuming Prep was there, I went on back to my office and found lying on my desk a single, red rose. I smelled deeply of it, and thought the Restaurateur had left it. I went to ask Prep to be sure. When I found him, I showed him the flower and asked who’d left it. He grinned and nodded over my left shoulder to someone standing behind me. I turned to see Pot Washer standing under the tree with a sheepish grin on his face. I looked quizzically at Prep. “Is he back?” “Si,” said Prep, “I tell him what you say. He’s sorry to act hothead. He come back, OK?” I laughed, “Yes, he can come back; but first he has to promise never to walk out like that again. First we work, and then we talk about what’s not working at the meetings. OK?” Prep translated my requirement to Pot Washer who nodded his compliance in true Harpo fashion. In my broken Spanish, I thanked Pot Washer for the rose, “Mucho gracias por rosada.

Adhora mucho trabajo.” Today was a new day begun in love, and there was much work for us to do.

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Journal Entry: May 15, 1984

*\*Cultural Differences: “While I sure don’t like to spend much time, if any, concentrating on our differences, I learned today that I must at least be aware these differences do exist. I think the weekly staff meeting is an appropriate forum for discussing them; but it’s each individual’s responsibility to make the others aware, in a constructive way, of something that isn’t working for him, because it seems so different from what he has always done or experienced before. While we can all be aware of these possible differences, we each need to be willing to extend grace to the perceived transgressor(s) for simple ignorance, and then accept our own responsibility for informing. This establishes our acceptable boundaries by clearly stating them to everyone else. America has always been a melting pot of cultures; that’s not new, and it’s probably what’s made us so rich in good old American ingenuity.*

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I now understood in a new way, that there was *something more* to each person than just the job he had been hired to do. That’s obvious you might think; but after the incident with Pot Washer, I vowed to take nothing for granted with anyone, anymore. When business picked up, I found we needed two

more waiters to accommodate the new patio and the increased volume. So, we hired a parade of waitpersons, one right after the other. We would try them out, and then have to let them go. What we saw were too many experienced, technically correct waiters but rude servers. After a while, Manager and I despaired. There had to be a better way to hire someone whose job it was to SERVE the public. We certainly had no difficulty finding competent people who could take orders and get it on the table with reasonable precision, but what we wanted were people with strong inherent manners and poise, so when a customer or a situation might be unpleasant, their automatic response would be with tact and diplomacy rather than retaliating with an equally rude or angry attitude. We wanted servers with grace, style, manners, impeccable grooming, and an attitude of dedication to excellent service. Professional waiters, though, seemed to lack these qualities. So instead, we decided to look for people with poise, presence, control and the capacity to be trained to wait tables, which was a new approach for us. After several weeks of advertising and many interviews, into our lives walked Reza and Farad within a week of each other. Both chaps were from Iran and here on student visas. However, recent political events had resulted in their becoming exiled, and they no longer had access to either family or family fortunes. Both Reza and Farad had been raised in an advantaged atmosphere, having been sent to European prep schools; and they both sported excellent manners and exuded style. Although they had never waited tables before, we hired each on the spot for his inherent qualities, rather than experience. It was the combination of style,

breeding, and trainability that made them perfect waiters.

Naturally with the passage of time, their other talents became more evident, as well. Farad had a flair for the dramatic. He was a flamboyant and fun personality who with his bravado turned mixing a tableside Caesar salad into a floorshow, which delighted the guests. He was also extremely responsible and always willing to do more than required. Once, when I was too ill to act as hostess for lunch and Manager was off, Farad quickly rose to the occasion and filled in as both waiter and host, covering my absence ably with his rare blend of humor and aplomb.

Reza, on the other hand, had a more subdued personality, but with patience and flair for detail. Reza soon became recognized by the entire wait staff as the unofficial headwaiter because of his proficiency and effective style of leadership. With his even temperament and quiet calm, he proved to be as efficient and effective in handling crises and people in the dining room as Prep was in the kitchen. Because of these qualities, he became the Manager's right arm in the front-of-house, and later when she left, he assumed for me a large share of her managerial duties.

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Journal Entry: June 29, 1984

*\*Integrity. I looked it up. It means completeness, unity, and soundness. Allowing people to use all of their talents at work allows them to remain whole individuals, integrated if you will. It also allows them to be challenged and interested by providing a way for them to put their own signature - their uniqueness - into their jobs.*

*\*Perspective. I've learned that there are many ways to see the same thing. In fact probably an infinite variety of ways to view anything; and every time I take the opportunity to look from a new direction (perspective), I see something differently, more deeply, more profoundly. We stumbled onto the idea of hiring waiters by hiring manners first. How many other stubborn problems or seeming impasses between people could be solved if we were just open to a new or different perspective; or if we just possessed a willingness to see another point of view or do things another way. I will try to remind myself to mentally stand on a chair and have another look. I will be willing to see it through someone else's eyes in some other way. Understanding things this way makes me now wonder about being judgmental. If I haven't walked in someone else's shoes, can I really understand his perspective? Probably not. So I best give up judging others at all.*

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Every now and then, Prep and Pot Washer would take off to Mexico for a few days, even a week at a time, leaving their chores happily behind and us to fill their positions temporarily. For these times I easily found substitutes from the neighborhood. By and by a pale, rather skinny fellow came knocking for the prep cook job in response to the notice posted in the front window. He had worked as an army cook in Vietnam, which was his only qualification. I soon learned that he lived on the streets and was eager to secure work. Chef and I agreed to hire Thomas, thinking at the very least we would get an adequate part-time potato peeler, but we got far more in the bargain. Thomas worked out so well, that Chef and I decided to keep him in a permanent, part-time capacity.

It was Thomas' job to report at 9:00 a.m., ahead of Chef, to help with the prepping for lunch and to receive morning deliveries, enabling me to work uninterrupted in my office until opening. One day about a month into his job, Thomas came back into my office and said, "Can I talk to you?" I looked up from my paperwork, surprised first by the intrusion and then by the unmistakable anxiety on his face. Sensing it was important, I put everything aside and invited him to a seat on a case of wine. I gave him my full attention.

He started slowly while wringing his white hat between his bony hands, "You know, you asked me to take that class toward my food handler's certificate? I think I've learned some things that we could, maybe, use here." He proceeded haltingly

as if thinking *who-the-bell-am-I to tell her what could be better here*. “I, well ah, noticed that a lot of the time the food doesn’t get covered in the fridge; and we really don’t know what temperature the boxes are cooling at.” Pause. “Yes, go on.” “Well,” he inched, “I could... (pause) ...since I am here every day...(pause)...keep a daily record of the temperatures. (faster) I’d even make the charts myself and post them on the cooler doors. You and Chef would only have to be bothered if I noticed a variance of more than 5 degrees, and it wouldn’t cost you any money.” He stopped abruptly, obviously wondering if he’d gone too far. I smiled at him wondering what depth of a person I had here. Well, I knew I certainly had someone trying to build some responsibility into a very tiny prep cook job; and that was good enough for me.

“OK,” I said aloud. “When can you get your plan into action? Also, are you fully committed to following through with it?” Shocked by my consent, he flashed a broad, broken-toothed grin, “Tomorrow. And yes, Ma’am!” I promised him I’d tell Chef of the policy change and charged Thomas with the responsibility of seeing that someone assumed monitoring duties on his days off. “What do you propose for the problem of keeping the food covered?” I asked him. “I’ll cover it, Ma’am, as part of my job.” I immediately pulled out the Restaurant’s Policy and Procedures Manual and flipped to the page describing the prep cook’s position. Together we amended the formal job description to include the duties he had just assumed. He was pleased with the results of our meeting and, I think, with himself. Thomas also received a small, unscheduled raise.

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Journal Entry, July 17, 1984:

*\* Listening. It's so foolish to snuff out or be threatened by new ideas or enthusiasm from someone else. On the contrary, it seems critical to encourage each one to discover and develop and offer the world his special, unique talents in whatever form they take. Thomas' contributions right now are his eagerness to apply his newfound knowledge. By letting him stretch and listening to his input, I think I let him know of his importance and connection to the Whole operation. I hope this will encourage him to continue to grow and to contribute even more.*

*I also continue to notice that people usually meet and exceed my original expectations if I've selected people well suited to the task, have clearly expressed my performance expectations and then trust them to perform. They rise to the challenge and the opportunity. The results are thriving people and enthusiastic employees, increased productivity, and decreased turnover.*

*My success as a leader or a manager, if I do my job correctly, is more often than not written in the successes of my fellows. Explain. Train. Listen. Trust.*

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The days in the Restaurant were long, very long. My personal demons fueled me relentlessly, and I worked as a body possessed, non-stop from early each morning to very early the next morning, sleeping but a few hours a night. However, since meeting the Restaurateur, I found time to spend with him either between lunch and dinner or after our respective restaurants closed late at night. As a result, our relationship grew strong as we were in love with the same lover - the restaurant business. But even before that, it seemed we had a ground already established by having known each other from some other place, in some other time. And for the first time in my life I felt as if I were home when we were together. He had a way, when he came to see me, of symbolically taking this huge burden off my back and placing it somewhere in the corner, never taking it on for me. I could breathe, stretch, feel lightened; and then just before he'd leave, he would gently place it back where it belonged and sort of ask, "Is that better now?" He believed in me; saw something in me that I'd lost sight of; he knew, evidently, who I really was and fully supported my Self.

Manager, too, worked long hours. It was customary for her to work from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., then leave and return in time for the evening shift, usually from 6:00 p.m. to closing. The Restaurant was closed on Mondays, and I tried to give her at least one other day off each week.

However, the long hours during the pre-opening months and then the slogging it out until the cash flow situation eased

after the reviews, took its toll on both of us. Because I was driven, I showed no signs of slowing down, but Manager, on the other hand, with no personal axe to grind, was simply growing weary. She loved the Restaurant and me, but the work was grueling and now quite repetitive. The real fun had been in the opening, the creating, and the newness. Now what remained was the daily drudgery - the routine. There was not much glamour, fun, or excitement in putting food out the same way every day, every day, every day...

I noticed Manager's disposition shifting ever so slightly at first, and then more obviously. First she asked for set hours, then for more money, and finally she announced she had to move out of her upstairs apartment to someplace away from the Restaurant. My intuition told me that it was no simple matter of money, hours, or accommodations: Manager's growing restlessness was at the heart of her requests.

For a while the set hours helped. For a while the raise helped. For another short while the move helped. Finally, one sunny afternoon after lunch, Manager approached me with yet another request: she wanted to leave. Once, before the Restaurant had opened, I had seen Manager in a similar emotional state, ready to bail out. Then, I had challenged her, "I dare you to stay and dig in! See what you can do if you force yourself to push past this urge to quit. Challenge yourself to stay interested and to set new goals and reach them." Picking up the gauntlet that time, she opted to stay.

Now, however, I knew I wouldn't even try to talk her into staying. Something was different in Manager: her sparkle was dulled. If she stayed a full year, she would gain her partnership share we agreed upon in the beginning. It was eleven months now, but she still wanted to leave. In a last ditch attempt, I thought perhaps a break from the routine, a vacation, would do the trick. So, I gave Manager leave, with the understanding that her absence would be considered only vacation time. We would discuss it further when she returned a month later. So Manager went to Hawaii, but when she returned, nothing had changed. She still wanted to leave the Restaurant, and was willing to walk away from the partnership. She felt it was simply time for her to move on. Her own internal knowing was leading her to move on. Her mission was completed at the Restaurant.

I had to accept my friend's decision, despite my full unwillingness to do so. I loved her too much to talk her into staying by making her feel guilty, reminding her how much I needed her. I also knew the Restaurant would never be the same without Manager by my side. I could cope with the work changes, but how I would miss the daily companionship and camaraderie we shared. We had been inseparable for nearly a year, and had even come to call each other Lucy and Ethel, because we'd shared so many escapades, both in and out of the Restaurant. We reminisced for a long while that afternoon on the patio, over a bottle of champagne. The challenge for me was to let go, this time without grief; but with grace and support, allow Manager to move on with her life. I was to experience

another parting, yet another change, and had the opportunity to do it all differently this time. The original trio had now become a duo. Life was all change, I thought...all change. “I resolve here and now to make friends with change. I’d better; it’s the only thing that remains constant.”

Subsequently Reza and I absorbed Manager’s duties. The Restaurant went on, of course, with one cast member sorely missed by all. We remained friends, but it was the close of an era. The Manager’s lovely note, now withdrawn from this symphony, could only be heard if we listened in our hearts.

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Journal Entry, July 30, 1984:

*\*Acceptance. Acceptance is not tolerance; tolerance implies a judgment or a superior ability to absorb something unacceptable. Acceptance is acceptance and has no judgment. It has no recourse. It has no qualifications. The hardest part for me has been accepting others’ boundaries and then trying to reconcile them with my own. Sometimes it appears that they cannot coexist, but that’s only when I am being conditional and stuck in a narrow perspective. It’s hard to see Manager go, but my love for her has no conditions, so I will open my mind and learn acceptance and allow a new perspective: this change is good for everyone, even though I may not be able to see how at the moment. Of course, the door to my heart will always remain open to her.”*

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Stop! Time to go to <http://www.messengerminibooks.com> or go to <http://www.appliedspirituality.com> and do Module # 8: Contrast, Desire, Allowing – Relaxing Into the Flow

## *Chapter 8*

### *Tough Decision: When the Heart Hurts: Open It*

**B**eing humane. The concept seemed so obvious, so natural, so easily done, so first nature, I thought. However, when I was in the midst of something that provoked strong emotions, it was easy to forget and react without restraint, good judgment or compassion. Take for instance the time I returned to the Restaurant after leaving specific instructions with everyone for special chores in order to get the new patio opened. When I returned and saw nothing had been done, in a rage I plunged into cleaning out the shed. Stuff flew out the shed door like dirt behind a dog burying a bone. Or the time I discovered a temporary pot washer drugged out, unable to stand up let alone keep up with the workload on a very busy Friday night. I remember I tried shaking him sober, yelling he couldn't do that on a Friday night - Tuesday maybe - but never, never on Friday! How quickly I could forget that everyone was watching me and learning from my example. However, every new situation was another opportunity for me to practice being humane.

After awhile, I realized the Restaurant was collecting quite a few stories, which were a sort of folklore. We never tired of retelling them, except two which I personally wished I could forget: the ones where I learned the delicate balance

between an individual's need and the organization's good - the illusion of a duality. The challenge was to find the harmony in the painful situations.

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Just as predicted, by mid July when the track was in full swing, the tourists came to the Towne and business boomed. However, for a while the cash flow had been inexplicably thin. I even had Chef recalculate all his kitchen costs and had others doing daily inventories and reconciling kitchen tickets. Awhile back we had implemented a 3-copy ticket for ordering. I had established, what I believed, was an adequate internal control system. Besides, we were a family by now, weren't we? Certainly no one was capable of stealing.

Beside the standard controls, was a rule that only Manager and I entered the cash drawer. Still, night after night we were short of money. It was peculiar; the drawer usually balanced within a few cents, but there simply wasn't enough revenue to match the volume. It obviously was going elsewhere; but where? The kitchen tickets always matched the drawer tickets. How I wished the numbered tickets I'd ordered would arrive. I stubbornly refused to believe that any one would steal from me.

On one Friday evening, Manager had agreed to help out for the night, because we had three separate events

happening simultaneously: the usual dinner service in the restaurant, a private party for 80 people on the patio, and a catered event off-site for a local television station. The evening was moving exceptionally well. With Manager stationed in the dining room, I devoted my attention to the private party and the catering event. Both were important opportunities for us and with luck would lead to more private party business. The three-team set-up in the kitchen with Manager's addition out front was working perfectly.

During a lull in the action out back, I dashed through my usual rounds to see how things were going. In the kitchen it looked as if a food bomb had exploded. Surveying the damage, I winced at the thought of how long it would take to clean up. On into the dining room, Manager reported they'd been quite busy, so much so that even she had picked up a few tables just to maintain the service level.

"Where's Judah?" I asked, noticing a foursome at one of his tables looking about for assistance. As I approached the front door to greet new guests, I passed the cash station to my right, tucked under the stairwell out of view. In the corner of my eye, I noticed Judah on his way out of the cash station: right hand in his pocket and a look of terror in his eyes as he saw me. In that split-second of slow-motion frames unfolding in my mind, I struggled to understand: what's wrong with this picture? In an hour's worth of a moment - slowly and instantaneously - I realized what was happening. This was theft.

Words came to my now dry mouth. “Please show me what’s in your pocket, Judah.” (I have no idea where “please” came from.)

“There’s nothing in my pocket. My table is waiting.” Judah replied.

Scared to press the issue further but unable to leave it alone, I repeated my request. Realizing he was not going to get to do it his way, Judah pulled his hand out of his pocket. In it was a guest check and cash, all rolled up together.

“May I see that, please?” I unrolled the crumpled wad, read the check, and counted the money; there was nearly \$120 dollars there. “Please, follow me.”

By now Manager had read my face and intercepted the guests at the door. I approached Judah’s table and somehow greeted them with a broad smile. “Hello everyone, did everyone enjoy their evening?” There were nods all around and enthusiastic compliments.

“Who had the veal? Who had the salmon en crouete? And the duckling? What did you think of the fruit tart? Did you like the kiwi or the berry better?”

I had found the correct table. Finally I said, “If you’ll forgive me, I’ve gotten the tickets mixed a bit. Did you give Judah a credit card or cash?”

“Cash,” was the reply. “Six twenties.”

“Thanks for coming. I’m so happy you enjoyed everything,” I improvised. “Manager will bring you your change shortly.”

The wad in my hand was the exact amount of their check.

“Where’s their change?” I turned dully to Judah.

Without further prodding, he drew it out of his other pocket and handed it to me.

“Please gather up your things and meet me in my office in five minutes,” I said softly.

I gave Manager the change and the guest’s copy of the check to finish the transaction.

Now, if you’ve ever worked in a restaurant you know that word travels fast - about as fast as a Santa Ana-fanned fire. By this time all the employees knew something really wrong was happening out front: I had caught Judah in the act of stealing. I walked through the kitchen to my office, careful to reveal no expression, painfully aware that all eyes were on me.

Like a robot I closed the door and sat down at my desk to write Judah’s last paycheck. My hand was shaking; I could not believe this. I had trusted him! I felt so betrayed. How much had he stolen and for how long? He’d been with me from the beginning, and I’d been so grateful for his experience. Why? Why? Why? My mind demanded answers to explain it all. How could we have missed this? We’d thoroughly checked his references.

Pulling myself back to the task at hand and noting the hour, I quickly calculated the money owed him. I felt my hurt

turning to sharp anger. I wanted to lash out at him, hurt him the way he'd hurt me. My thoughts were interrupted by a knock at the door. Judah came in saying,

“It’s not what you think; I wasn’t stealing.”

My insides churned and my heart wanted to hear some other explanation, yet I knew what I had seen.

“Okay, then tell me what I really saw.” But he had no new words or explanations.

“I wasn’t stealing,” was all he could say.

“Judah, I saw the check, the money and the change in your pockets with my own eyes. Furthermore, you’re not permitted in the cash drawer. Why were you in there?”

I gave him one more chance to explain. Once again, he had no words, only tears now turning to sobs of shame. I guessed he could not continue to lie directly to my face. I handed him his check and whispered,

“Do not use me for a reference. Do not speak to anyone as you leave here. Just please go.”

He took the envelope and left crying. I closed the door behind him and, resting my head against it, wept too.

But just as in the theatre, the show must go on in restaurants, too. I had dinner guests to serve and a staff that counted on me. So, I mustered myself and went back out to finish the evening with a broken heart.

Later that night in the last booth, we gathered to split tips and share our customary bottle of wine, conspicuously minus Judah. The others were quiet, deliberately avoiding the incident. At length I broke our silence.

“Judah has left the Restaurant. I believe he was doing something unethical that was harmful to the Restaurant, and I believe I had sufficient evidence. I want you all to understand that I will not accept deception of any kind. This is my clear boundary. However, I trust each of you unless I am otherwise persuaded. Judah’s actions convinced me otherwise. At the staff meeting next week, I want you each prepared to discuss our control systems, and where you might see any loopholes. I also want to thank each of you for your individual loyalty and trust in me.”

Later that night relaxing at the Restaurateur’s club, I learned from him what a powerful message I had sent to my employees by the way I’d handled the situation. Evidently, precious little was missed through the thin door to my office. They had told Restaurateur of my strength and resolve. My standards and guidelines were clear. They also respected that I had not demeaned or slandered Judah, but acted with restraint, allowing him to leave with his dignity intact. Finally, I had handled it with swift, fair action. The key word to them was fair: I gave him sufficient opportunity to explain the entire incident, I paid him, and I didn’t humiliate him. The others saw I had clear boundaries and also knew they could trust me to protect their jobs by protecting the Restaurant.

My poor Journal got an earful that night. It was painful to recount all the details, remembering the looks, the fears - both his and mine. I continued to learn, and I continued to write down what was happening in hopes that someday it would all make some sense:

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Journal Entry: August 1, 1984

*\*Leadership by Example. I've always known that actions speak louder than words. Tonight that point was driven home when I realized what the staff learned from the whole messy affair. I found out that treating people humanely is not simply some lofty ideal that can be neatly discussed in the abstract. Tonight it became real when I had to demonstrate humaneness despite my own angry feelings. While I clearly wanted to do things in the old way, I knew that I had to act congruently with my expressed values of humaneness in order to be credible and to have the right to expect the same behavior from the others. I had to walk my talk.*

*\*Restraint. It was so difficult to deny my impulse to strike back at Judah and to rise above my urge to retaliate. I truly wanted to hurt him. What forced me to rise above those feelings and see the bigger picture was my small Voice within me, my Spirit, reminding me that I'd hurt plenty of people on my own. I had been grateful when they didn't strike back at me. Then I saw in his face, that he'd hurt himself far more than I ever could have. That was truly punishment enough. It was essential to be humane to him and*

*respect myself. It was important to bring as much love to a situation that felt devoid of it.*

*\*Forgiveness. I knew I had to forgive him and let the anger go, because it would only consume me. Besides, it's my turn "for-giving" grace to someone else. What I will preserve are the learnings from this experience with Judah. He taught me I could be better than I ever thought. I can be grateful for this. Perhaps I need forgiving from him for not having sufficient controls in place; or perhaps he needed a friend and I missed the cue. Bless you Judah! Bless you.*

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As we got busier, the pressure was on to maintain the soothing atmosphere, the high quality of food and service in the new context of rapidly increasing numbers. It was taxing for all of us. I felt like a juggler on a constant adrenaline high. It seemed I was always awake, usually only sleeping from 3:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. so I could be in my office early to get paperwork done before the others came on.

Chef asked me several times if he could sleep over in my office rather than make the 35-minute drive home at midnight each evening. I knew he was tired, but it was happening too frequently. Something was wrong with his story; but being friend as well as boss, I opted not to pry. I trusted him to sleep in my office, AKA the wine storage room, AKA the ironing room. At the same time, I noticed the atmosphere

in the kitchen deteriorating. I was certain something was afield when the joking ceased, and our normally good-natured Chef grew gruff and withdrawn. Up to now, the three of them - Chef, Sous and Prep - had been the three musketeers. Chef had brought them along with him not just because they were a good cooking team, but because they were all friends. Gradually the evidence painted the picture for me: Chef was drinking too much, eating too much, and he was doing some kind of drugs. What kind, I really couldn't guess. What I knew about drugs could have been thrown into a thimble with room left to spare. I knew he smoked some pot occasionally, but his erratic behavior, bad temper, and mood swings were telling of something else. Worse, and more important to the Restaurant, the quality of his work was slipping: the controls were lax, food was spoiling, and costs were rising. I knew I had to do something but stalled, hoping against hope that he'd sort it out by himself. I decided to try the Ostrich Method of management first. Finally, I could ignore it no longer, so I invited Chef to a game of pool at the corner bar. After a very short while, he spilled his feelings about the situation in his personal life: "My life stinks. My wife doesn't understand a thing here, and I'd rather be with my girlfriend. All of it makes me sick." I listened without comment. How could I presume to give him marital advice when I had just failed a 13-year marriage myself? Still, he turned to me with a desperate plea,

"What should I do?"

“Chef, I can’t presume to know what solution is right for you, only you can know that, and you do know. I know these are gut wrenching problems, believe me. However, I also know that only you have the answer for you. You have to be thoroughly honest with yourself, and tell yourself what your truth is. You have to have the courage to go beyond the drama, beyond the excuses, and beyond your lies to find your Truth. Then you have to take the necessary actions in accord with your Truth. Hiding in drugs or food or alcohol only distracts you from accepting your responsibility for these tough decisions. But I am telling you now; you cannot use anything on the premise of the Restaurant, ever. Do you understand? I can’t let you threaten the whole operation. Somehow you must find your way to leave it behind while at work. Somehow you have to stop. Tell me how I can support your effort to control this, Chef, and I promise you, I’ll do it. But you have to do something first.” I pledged my encouragement and support in whatever efforts he deemed necessary to help him. I knew this was all I could do, because long ago I had learned I was powerless to control or change anyone else except myself.

Just like the people from the liquor-store days, Chef was unable, no, unwilling to do anything about it. His abuse continued and so, staff morale sank lower and lower. We were all miserable, and I knew the others were waiting for me to do something. Finally one night, after Chef served a putrid Wellington, I was forced to weigh all the people who counted on me and all the work we’d done to get this far

against one man's personal nightmare which now jeopardized us all. That night, agonizing alone in my little apartment, I searched for a magical answer. I gathered myself and went downstairs to the office to deal with Chef. He lay in his sleeping bag, reading a book.

"Chef, we have to talk." I began. "A few weeks ago we had a conversation about your performance, and I gave you fair warning. I offered you my support if you mapped out a solution for yourself, but you haven't. Instead, things have only gotten worse, to the point where tonight you served rotten food to one of our guests."

It was early Sunday morning, and I vaguely wondered who would cook dinner that night. I only knew that I had to follow through and protect the others who depended on me to do the right thing, even if it hurt. I had set forth clear boundaries that had to be reinforced, humanely. "I am sorry, but you have to leave the Restaurant. I cannot let you continue to take us all down with you." Tears welled up in both of us as he gathered his things to leave. The management trio was now a solo.

Dinner on Sunday evening was skillfully cooked by the new head chef, (the former Sous), ably assisted by the new sous chef, (the former Prep), and the new prep cook, (the former Pot Washer), and Thomas was promoted to full time prep. The new kitchen team put out a near-flawless dinner in good spirits as morale soared. Chef was not a bad apple; but he was someone with a problem that was affecting all the others and, therefore,

the entire operation. As the leader I had to protect the whole, but as a human I was free to lovingly support Chef's efforts in sorting out his life and discovering who he really was. That was the magic

Writing the story into my Journal made me cry. Why were some lessons so painful, so difficult, and so hard to learn? Maybe it was more painful than it had to be because my first choice had been to avoid the issue. Or maybe it was painful because I was still trying to assume responsibility for someone else's life, which was impossible. Maybe my only job was to just love him no matter what; and that, I could do.

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Journal Entry: September 3, 1984

*\*Synergy. "I don't think of people as a disposable commodity like paper napkins. There simply aren't plenty more just like that one waiting in the wings. No one can ever make the same contribution as that lost individual. When Chef ceased to make his full contribution, the synergy of the Whole suffered miserably in the absence of his single, important note. Sure, I can fill his position with someone else, another drummer, but our symphony will sound a little different now. But worse, if Chef never makes his contribution, the whole world will be less."*

*\*Acceptance. "It feels so at odds to fire someone I love, while simultaneously offering him my sincere support and friendship. Harmony in the appearance of duality. It must be even more confusing to him; but I think it can be explained. I accept him and the way he is, and I see his full potential of what can be and believe in his ability to do it; but I also accept the situation and the way it is. I accept the inescapable conclusion that the two are not compatible. Accepting does not change my affections or my compassion - my feelings - for him. But I know my duty to protect the whole while unconditionally loving my friend is the resolution to the illusion of duality."*

*\*Self-responsibility. "I learned a long time ago that the individual in trouble must accept his own responsibility for making change first; I can't do that for anyone but myself. Since Chef chose, for now, not to change his behavior, I had no choice but to remove him from the Restaurant. That act in itself was compassionate. Now I am free to support him as a fellow human being that has chosen a path of learning that I don't understand, and don't have to. I leave the door open for him to return when he is ready, willing, and able; but*

*more importantly my heart is still open. Maybe that's a lesson all of its own, letting go: The ability to allow people to come and go from your life without judgment and conditions with your heart still wide open."*

*\*Boundaries. "This whole incident made it clear to me how important it is to know my boundaries, clearly state them, and take action when they have been crossed. Had I never told him where the boundaries were, then I would have to suffer the consequence of my own lack of action. But since I did, it was my responsibility to enforce my stated boundaries with clear, compassionate, and fair action.*

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SStop! Time to go to <http://www.messengerminibooks.com> or go to <http://www.appliedspirituality.com> and do Module # 9: Meeting Hurtful Situations with An Open Heart



## *Chapter 9*

### *An Ending Is Only A New Beginning*

By mid September the problem of seasonality cropped up again. This time it was to be formidable. As wildly busy as we'd been during the season, we became deathly quiet after Labor Day weekend when the tourists left the Towne. While the locals had returned, it seemed they were preoccupied with getting back into their familiar routines of school and work. Judging by the poor head counts, certainly they were not focusing on dining out. Accordingly, I decided I had to remarket the Restaurant to the locals all over again. Of course this wasn't in the budget, but I had to find money to do it. There still remained a bit on the line of credit, but I worried. What if business didn't pick up quickly and I exhausted it? And increasingly now was arising a new issue: my own exhaustion.

I met with my advertising agency to discuss strategy. We chose a plan targeting the local bread-and-butter customers with a mailer advertising our menu, new services such as catering and private parties, and the Tuesday evening prix fixe wine dinners. The pivot point to this new campaign was landing a live TV review by a local station, which the agency thought it could swing. The plans in motion, I crossed my fingers, hoping it would be sufficient to jump-start the cash flow one more time.

By now I understood and was regularly consulting my Intuition and knew I could count on It to carry me through the tough times. I recognized and trusted my capacity to meet any challenge head-on. I also knew by now that things always worked perfectly, even though it might not look that way at the moment. No longer did I view myself as ordinary, but as an extraordinary, ordinary person - just like everyone else. No more, no less. Somehow through the divorce proceedings, though excruciatingly painful, a healing had occurred within me that seemed to obliterate my old self, and in its place emerged a new, more powerful, more loving Self. Knowing I had my Inner Strength to achieve and survive anything sustained me in the immediate moments of uncertainty and doubt. Perhaps it was true that the new could be born only out of the death of the old. Still not totally healed, yet; but now I was able to deal consciously with my feelings of anger, hate, self-doubt, and revenge by committing myself to see the Higher view, the bigger picture - with a conscious willingness to embrace another perspective and another and still another if need be. Sometime in the past year, I had decided that any energy formerly spent on the negative would now be channeled to my positive transformation.

So, whenever I felt the old feelings of hopelessness or despair creeping in, I used my will to redirect my thoughts to the Higher plane and consulted my Inner Voice for any lesson inherent for me to understand. In short, I had learned to turn adversity into schooling rather than self-recrimination. Nothing

was either bad or good and every experience was simply useful in my new life.

The last few months had been particularly difficult for me without Manager. I deeply missed my friend and companion. Even though Reza had assumed a large share of her duties, the extra work and even longer hours took an increasingly heavy toll on me, physically. Over the last year, I had lost over 30 pounds and now weighed-in under 100 pounds. The months of poor diet and little sleep were evident in my pallor; and my once beautifully shiny hair was now dull and brittle. Was I able to pump up the volume on the business? I certainly couldn't hire myself additional help. Besides, I wasn't sure how much further I could personally take this endeavor alone. It was sapping me all too rapidly, now. I was not willing to sacrifice myself for the Restaurant. That lesson I had learned over my marriage. It was never about self-sacrifice; it was all about Self-love and appreciation.

During the summer, our professional baseball team made it to the League finals and it looked as though they'd probably go on to the World Series. Normally considered a joyful event, I saw it as wreaking even more havoc on our fine dining business along with the damage already being sustained due to the seasonality factor. Throughout the seemingly endless league playoffs, people weren't coming to our type of restaurant to listen to classical guitar on the lovely patio but gathered in sports bars to watch the games on wide-screen television. I thought to

myself, “Strategic planning? How could I have planned for two months of baseball?” By mid-October it was certain that our hometown team was in the World Series, and the Restaurant was sentenced to two more weeks of very poor numbers. My choices were clear. Either I took immediate measures now to staunch the hemorrhaging cash flow or continue and bet that by November I could book in enough holiday business to recoup the resulting, inevitable debt. I had to decide very soon. Perhaps it was time to fold up this chapter.

In a community property state a divorce settlement calls for all common assets to be split equally. Our property settlement was in its final stages now, with only one asset remaining for us to agree on - the Restaurant. The question, of course, was how. I had already made two promises to myself; the first was that I would not sell out to him. The Restaurant was me, not mine, but me. I had created it from the depths of my Soul, using my Intuition as guide. It wouldn't be fitting for it to continue as the Restaurant without me at the helm. The only solution palatable to me was that I buy him out; but would he sell me his half? So far, he was not willing to do that. Now he wanted to stay in the deal as a full partner and keep the Restaurant afloat with me running it. In other words, I would still be working for him, just like in all our past businesses. There was also my second promise to myself - to work only for mySelf ever again.

My days of working for someone else, anyone else, were over. Somewhere in this adventure, I had lost my fear of being

alone as I learned to value and trust mySelf in discovering who I really was. It had been a matter of awakening to the Me of me and trusting mySelf. I no longer held a bitter or vengeful attitude toward my husband. It was simply and naturally the time to walk separate paths. It was time to completely separate our lives, including our business connections. No longer dependent, I had found not just my undependence<sup>1</sup> but my autonomy. Before, I would have fought vehemently to stay enmeshed, fueled by my fears of being alone, unable to provide for myself and feeling unsafe with myself. Now there was no fight in my position. It was simply the truth; it was time to be two, not one, in every aspect. I was ready and eager to go forward on my individual journey. I didn't need him any longer, because I had mySelf back.

And so on a windy and cool October afternoon, alone on the back patio watching the sunset over the sea, I made my decision: to sell the Restaurant to someone else. I had always been pretty good at reading the writing on the wall. My health wouldn't hold out too much longer. It was time to begin valuing mySelf in that regard, by taking better care of me. And, for all intents and purposes, except for my relationship with the Restaurateur and other restaurant people, I had no personal life. I was ready to try living something of a more "normal" existence. Further, if I didn't let the Restaurant's debt grow any larger, all our obligations would be settled from the proceeds of a sale. This would preserve our good credit, my good business

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1 Undependence is my word as opposed to independence. I chose it purposefully.

reputation and give the Restaurant the honorable ending it deserved. I had had a good year: five wonderful reviews, and books that showed reasonably good numbers on average. The chances for a sale were excellent if I sold now. After that, there would be no connections with my old life, except the children, allowing me to finally put it to rest by clearing out the old, thus making room for the new.

I sat bundled up, watching the sea well into the darkness when I could only hear and feel it. My feelings about selling the Restaurant were mixed. They were familiar: another parting, another letting go, another death - and the promise of another birth - of what I couldn't know. That was evidently what life was: a series of beginnings and endings, one flowing into the other as naturally as breathing in and out. Death to Rebirth. Crucifixion to Resurrection. Caterpillar to Butterfly.

I had much to do to carry out my plan: advertise the sale, clear up the bills, and most importantly place all my staff in new jobs before the transfer of ownership was completed. I could do that easily. By now I knew many people in the business that admired our operation and wanted my staff. One last surge of energy, one last burst of courage was all I needed to see this through to a fitting ending and thus close out this chapter of my life gracefully.

Within three weeks I'd located a suitable buyer, an older Greek man with a colorful history of restaurant experiences.

He didn't want the Restaurant's theme, menu, or employees but was buying the business because of its now popular location. He would ride the coattails of the Restaurant's momentum. With little fanfare we agreed to price and terms. Out of the down payment the small, independent suppliers could be paid off, as well as the taxes. From the monthly payout over the next five years, I would pay off the commercial suppliers, having previously made arrangements to do so. Not a common practice, but it assured them 100% payment over time and secured my credit standing. The escrow period took less than six weeks, during which time I placed Sous, Prep, Pot Washer and Thomas. The waiters, Farad and Reza, were off to other jobs quite easily on their own effort.

On the last night in my tiny apartment, my confidante and friend, the Restaurateur, came by to help me move on - emotionally. He had been a strong and faithful supporter throughout the life of the Restaurant. He'd generously shared his twenty-plus years of experience with me not to mention his staff and equipment whenever necessary. Now old friends with a loving history of accumulated memories, both personal and professional, we walked the empty Restaurant which now bore a sign on the front door: "On Vacation - Back in November."

I would not be back, though. That thought gave way to old feelings of sadness for the loss and fear of the unknown. I started second guessing my decision to sell, along with every other decision I'd made over the last 14 months.

“What if I had done things differently? What if I had opened sooner? Maybe I should have marketed to a wider segment? Or changed the concept?” My questions could find no peaceful resting place in my mind. At length Restaurateur grew tired of listening to my litany of self-doubt and countered,

“There are always things that are just unexplainable; and looking backwards is useless. You did everything right at the time. Everything. The food, the service, the pricing, the atmosphere, the hospitality, your decisions - all of it, you did right. Given your undercapitalization, you made remarkable decisions at the time.”

“Why, then, do I feel such loss and this sense of failure?” I struggled hoping he had some wisdom to salve my pain.

“There are many ways to measure success,” he explained. “The usual yardstick is monetary gain, but that’s the world’s definition. The Restaurant succeeded in ways that no one else ever has - in heart ways. The way you managed the Restaurant, your employees, and your guests is the definition of a new type of success. And while I’m at it, your decision to sell was the most intelligent possibility. You haven’t lost money, your creditors are or will be paid, and your reputation in Towne is excellent. Selling, my dear, is also the most humane thing you could have done for yourself. Take your success home with you. It’s yours - you created all of it.”

I rolled his comments over in my mind and finally allowed myself to know he was right about one thing for sure;

the Restaurant had been a profound success in humane ways.

“Do you remember my first review?” I said reminiscing.

“Of course, that’s when I met you,” he smiled, remembering too. “I had to come see who in the County was able to wangle such a wonderful review from the wicked witch. No one had ever done that before. Wasn’t your biggest internal problem in the Restaurant table turnover, because you made people so comfortable and welcomed they wouldn’t leave? And what about all the marriage proposals, birthdays, and private celebrations that took place in your Restaurant. Remember that couple who reconciled?”

I remembered.

“And you. Look at the changes this place has made in you. When I met you, you had no idea who you were, didn’t know front-of-house from your backside. Sadness was the only thing I saw in your eyes. Now look at you. You are decisive, confident, clear-eyed and hopeful. And let’s talk about your employees? How many employees would work for no wages, keeping the Restaurant open with little or no business until the sale was completed as they did for you? I can tell you mine wouldn’t have done it for me. You won their loyalty and performance when I thought it wasn’t even possible. You managed them in a humane way with a blend of compassion and respect while fully expecting and encouraging them to be competent, contributing, and self-responsible. *You saw their individual potential, and they were honored by that and performed accordingly.* I thought you were nuts; but it’s your style, your balance of business and humaneness that

is both compelling and practical. So don't tell me you didn't succeed. Instead, Young Woman, count the ways.”

I smiled in gratitude. At last he'd helped me find peace of mind. It's hard to see your own successes, your own talent, or your own uniqueness; that was always the hardest thing for me to do - to value and love mySelf. Thank goodness for my good friend, this hard-core businessman who'd never lie to me. I respected him and accepted his comments. The Restaurant and I had won the admiration of peers, employees, suppliers, and customers alike. Most importantly, though, I'd won my own respect and admiration for mySelf. That was success enough.

By January the deal was consummated and the Restaurant ceased to be. It was a momentous event that, once again, only appeared unremarkable. Two weeks later, however, the Reviewer, the first and most influential, wrote a farewell tribute to the Restaurant in her column. This was the first time she had ever done such a thing.

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Stop! Time to go to <http://www.messengerminibooks.com> or go to <http://www.appliedspirituality.com> and do Module # 10: Determining Whether to Hold 'em or Fold 'em

## *Chapter 10*

### *The Lock: Life; The Key: Humaneness*

In the next two months following the sale of the Restaurant, I divided my time among resting, visiting Restaurateur, who had landed in the hospital from overwork, and getting settled in my new apartment. One morning, I rose to a glorious winter day along the Coast. The air was crisp and cool, but the sun was warm. I worked steadily throughout the morning unpacking and putting things away, stopping just before noon. I decided to fill my thermos bottle with hot coffee and walk down to the sea for lunch. Almost as an after-thought, I threw my Journal into my bag.

The sky was a vibrant blue with large, billowing clouds approaching from the south over dark, choppy waters. Another winter storm was approaching. Sipping the strong brew slowly, I absorbed the scene and allowed my thoughts to drift back to that last night in the Restaurant and the conversation with my dear friend. I truly was contented viewing the Restaurant as a success, but still the unanswered question lingered: why had it all happened? I couldn't accept that something like the Restaurant had happened for no purpose. "What did it all mean? What were our efforts for?" I asked myself over and over. I reached for my Journal and leafed absently through the pages that spanned the last 16 months. "Did I learn anything? If

so, what? What was the Restaurant really about? What? What? What?” I muttered aloud.

Just then a sudden gust of wind caught the pages flipping them rapidly backward. I caught the pages with my hand, and glanced down to see words on a page written many months ago. “I learned about forgiveness and restraint tonight.” I’d written that on the night I had to fire Judah. I turned a few more pages, “They’re all so unique. All I need do is encourage each to contribute his/her own special gifts.”

Suddenly, my mind went into search mode. I evidently sought some important message, certain it was hidden within my notes. I flipped the pages faster now, first reading, and then pondering. Then, as if focusing a camera one twist at a time, it came to me. I’d learned that, by being humane to my staff, guests, and peers, that not only had my business been successful, but also they had somehow discovered more of themselves in the process. And I learned that by being humane with myself, I had recovered, even flourished - and was beginning to remember who I really was. It was that simple. It was that basic. My friend had said it himself on that last evening.

But what was being humane? What did that mean? I did it without conscious thought, directed entirely by my Intuition. What were the parts of being humane? Faster now and with a great sense of urgency, I went back to the very beginning, making notes as I went from entry to entry.

I learned about trusting my Intuition with the Building Inspector. Ultimately that was learning about who I was. I learned about taking my own responsibility and becoming autonomous in the process. That was a part of being humane.

When Chef, Manager and I did the menus, I learned the concept of synergy; that together we could do things we never would have been able to accomplish singularly. That was humane, encouraging the unique contributions of the individuals and blending them into a symphony of synergy.

When I had to fire Chef and Judah, I realized where my boundaries were and the importance of enforcing them; about the qualities of forgiveness and restraint and how I had to be willing to feel them to use them. Then I was able to understand how compassion felt.

When I mistakenly fired Pot Washer over the spotted glasses, I learned humility and the necessity of forgiving oneself in order to be able to receive forgiveness from another.

At our staff meetings when everyone would argue and then move on to work things out, I learned how different our perspectives and motives were, but most importantly how equal we all were in our need to be heard, honored, and respected. And we all learned that each contribution was equally important to the whole. We were interdependent individuals; yet unique and precious.

With respect to myself, I learned I had to be *willing* to muster my courage to know mySelf, to trust mySelf, and then to take action to create change. From that I learned I had the power to create the whole of my own reality, and I was truly sufficient and capable within mySelf to assume my own responsibility, my ability to respond.

In allowing Thomas to change policy, I encouraged his autonomy and self-responsibility. In that I honored his Uniqueness. I had it now. I wrote in my journal a summary of what I thought were the basics of being humane:

*SELF-RESPONSIBILITY - It is my duty and obligation to myself and to the Collective Whole be it company, family, or world - to discover, to develop, and to contribute my own Uniqueness. If my life isn't working, I have no one to blame external to me. For I create the whole of my own reality; so I can choose to be victim or victorious in my life. The difference is in accepting my power in my life. It's the inherent duty of each of us to encourage each other fully to do the same.*

*BOUNDARIES - Understanding the concept of boundaries means knowing and respecting each person as a Unique being, aware that we are all simultaneously interdependent upon each another. Boundaries demand becoming fully autonomous, the willingness to be authentic with mySelf moment to moment, to know mySelf so well that I understand where my boundaries are and why, and then willingly demonstrate and communicate them to others clearly. Boundaries also mean fully encouraging others to be*

*authentic with themselves to know themselves and to tell the truth about their boundaries.*

*AUTHENTICITY - Authenticity in simplest terms is telling the truth to me about mySelf. Authenticity means what I say to myself and others is worthy of trust or belief and it reflects Self-love. Achieving authenticity takes a decision and willingness to spend time alone with mySelf, undistracted, in order to find my own truths about my feelings, my values, my beliefs, my boundaries, and my life. When I am telling only the bare, unadulterated truth to mySelf, only then am I able to communicate my absolute, authentic truth to others. This communication from mySelf becomes the basis for all my relationships. When the basis of all relationships is real, authentic, and true, then structures built upon this base is capable of weathering any storm because it is secure in Truth.*

*ACCEPTANCE - This has been my biggest challenge. First there is acceptance of mySelf, not simply tolerating, but truly accepting me as I am - strengths and weaknesses equally - without judgment and unconditionally. The closer I come to absolute self-acceptance, the more I feel unconditional love for mySelf. Then I am able to value mySelf and honor my unique gifts to the world as valuable, as well. When I do this for me, my basket becomes so full, that those qualities automatically flood to those around me and to situations I cannot change. When I accept, I am willing to let go of my internal resistance which blocks me from seeing the infinite possibilities and perspectives that really exist. Walls to knowing mySelf and to understanding others crumble, solutions abound, and harmony is revealed. Peace of mind is available to everyone when we learn acceptance.*

*PURITY OF MOTIVE - The acid test: to be honest with myself about why I want something to happen. When I come from my ego, most certainly my motive will be self-serving and not to the highest good of all concerned. If, however, I am centered and in intimate communication with my own Intuition, my Soul, then my motives will be pure and support the highest good of all because they will be centered in love. To have no hidden reasons, no deceptions (especially self-deceptions), half truths, or omissions of the truth is being fully authentic. It is humane to clearly, purposefully, and forthrightly communicate my real motives and intentions to others, thus allowing them to make fully informed decisions based on the Truth I speak, as I know it. The challenging part is being honest and authentic with mySelf about what my motives really are before I am able to communicate the Truth to others.*

*FORGIVENESS - Forgiveness isn't about pardoning someone else for some transgression. It is first and foremost pardoning my self for any real or imagined error. The implication is not to make me or anyone else wrong, but instead to know that we are all doing the best we can at the time, given what we know and the circumstances. And to remember we are each a work-in-progress, learning by our outcomes and through our pain along the way. As I allow myself this state of grace, it becomes infinitely easier to extend it to others. For-Giving: giving that state of grace to myself from mySelf, and then to others.*

*HUMILITY and EQUALITY - Since each individual makes a unique contribution to the whole in contributing his Unique gift, he is then teacher to all the rest and all the rest are his students. This makes us interdependent, as each has an equally important piece of the collective puzzle. Knowing and understanding this shows us that our survival is inextricably linked and*

*dependent upon each other. We are none of us, then, any more or any less important than any other but equally important and irreplaceable. Thus, the synergy of the whole is only as powerful and as rich as the weakest contributor. There is, therefore, no competition for anyone.*

*COMPASSION - Compassion is the capacity to stand in the space of someone's passion and remain grounded and centered within your Self. Compassion is not sympathy, but rather understanding that we are each a Work-in-Process of growing, learning, and becoming. As such, our pain, our "mistakes", and our stumblings are ways in which we teach ourselves the necessary lessons from which we rise higher in our Consciousness. We are each equally as likely to experience a similar trial or experience or to make the same decision as long as we are actively living. Compassion honors both the lesson and the student and gently reminds the student amidst the storm of the opportunity to grow, change, evolve, and heal.*

*RESTRAINT - Restraint is the ability to halt oneself from retaliation for either real or imagined transgressions. Retaliation, of course, implies aggression across another's sacred boundary, which is never justified and only serves to escalate hate, never nurturing love. And since we are all members of the family of man, and since we are all mirrors for each other of parts of ourselves, if I am aggressive against another, crossing their boundaries, I only succeed in destroying a part of mySelf in the process. Because I have committed my share of transgressions on others, restraint is critical as I model what I want others to do or be with me. It is more useful to me to seek the Higher perspective and to model compassion and grace by exercising restraint.*

*COURAGE - Courage is having the willingness to act or speak while not abandoning my ability to think independently in the face of seemingly horrible consequences or knowledge, insurmountable odds, or certain rejection. To be humane takes courage, to know mySelf takes courage, to know my boundaries as well as others' takes courage, to take my own responsibility and to become autonomous takes courage, to be humble in the presence of others takes courage, to communicate forthrightly my motives and keep them pure takes courage, to exercise restraint takes courage, to extend to others forgiveness and compassion takes courage, to do all these things for mySelf, first, takes the greatest courage.*

*WILL/INTENTION - The one, single mental faculty that only I have control over is my own free will to make choices, to make decisions, to take actions congruent with supporting my Higher Purpose in life or not. Indeed, the very decision to hook up my own will to support creating my own reality and the quality of it is the first act of will. The second act is directing my intentions to support my highest vision of mySelf.*

When I stopped writing, I realized hours had flown by as the afternoon shadows stretched long onto the beach. I reread what I'd written and paused to digest what I'd uncovered - humaneness.

*Humaneness was a way of behaving with each other and with ourselves that encourages us to find, develop, and contribute our own Unique Purpose in the world.*

I now understood the purpose of the Restaurant experience in my life.

“If humaneness is a way for an individual to deal with other individuals that worked in my little Restaurant, it will work wherever there are people interdependent upon each other, like in families, social clubs, corporations, government, and the world.” I was talking to no one, yet I was talking to everyone.

“If everyone guided his or her behavior each day using the basics of humaneness in every interface, I wonder how productive and peaceful we might be then.”

I had unlocked the mystery of the Restaurant’s purpose. The key - humaneness - that helped me be a successful manager was the same key that unlocked my own life.

Suddenly and most certainly I knew my future stretched brightly in front of me. It was true that out of the death of my marriage and my old former self had been the beginning of the Restaurant, the fulfillment of its purpose: the birth of the new me. Now out of the death of the Restaurant rose the birth of my new life and the fulfillment of my purpose: to embrace the natural cycles of death and rebirth within life; to remember who I really am so I can make my contribution fully to the world; and to teach, by example, a new definition of humaneness, which as it turns out is simply another word for Love.

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Stop! Time to go to <http://www.messengerminibooks.com> or go to <http://www.appliedspirituality.com> and do Module #11: The Principles of Humaneness: Applied Spirituality™ In Every Interaction, In Every Moment



## *Afterword*

### *Humaneness Redefined*

In 1988 at the seasoned age of 38 and after years of owning and operating my own businesses, I returned to college finally completing a business degree at an Ivy League school. There I reflected on the irony: why America, which taught the world about economic prosperity through free enterprise following World War II, now, was seemingly unable to compete in the world market. As a businesswoman, I understood the relationship between good management fundamentals and the principles of the capitalistic system. However as an employee working for minimum wage first in a corporate nursery chain and later in the hotel business, I had the opportunity to observe theory in practice from a unique, schooled perspective. I noticed how often lofty management principles evaporated with implementation at the line level. In fact I observed management policies and theory, lacking something and eroding the spirit of those charged with the production of the product and the delivery of the service at the lower levels. The workers' estrangement from management's mission statement appeared to be so pervasive that vast numbers didn't believe their contribution really mattered, which manifested in dangerously poor production levels and critically uninspired service. This phenomenon exists in all types of businesses, affects all cultures of people, and pervades all socioeconomic levels.

What became apparent to me was our inability to understand our interdependence and our failure to realize how important our individual contribution is to the big picture - to the whole. And when one cannot fathom his/her existence as purposeful and that every single action has consequences for everyone else - either positive or negative - one operates independently and without *connection*. When one becomes many operating in this perceived vacuum, negative synergistic effects appear: poor business performances, rioting in South Central Los Angeles, group think showing up as gangs at the street level and the economic crisis at higher levels, and the sickness of our global environment.

However, the Truth is we are inextricably interdependent on each other, and we need each other - every single one of us. Not only do we need each person, but also we need each and everyone performing his/her unique contribution fully and responsibly. Humaneness, a way of behaving with ourselves and with each other, is how we can and will realize the contributions of each person and accomplish healing successfully and harmoniously - one by one.

Through the years we've heard the word humane used countless times, mostly in conjunction with the idea of kindness, or compassion. Humane treatment usually implies an extraordinary act beyond what the subject receiving the humane treatment was thought to deserve. Humane treatment also carries the connotation that the one dispensing

humaneness did so because of some super-human - even divine - ability, obviously far beyond what we would expect from ordinary human nature. A response out of human nature, though, usually generates some act of revenge or retaliation, understandably resulting from a justifiable judgment of the guilty party. And so the premise has been for years that humaneness was an extraordinary act achieved only by those who could somehow vigilantly struggle against their base human nature. The premise of the evilness of human nature explained, excused and even promoted evil actions.

Western religions took the forefront in promoting this ideology. The Old Testament instilled fear in us with the concept of an angry and wrathful God who destroyed the sinful world once, save the good Noah et al, and implied the threat that He could and would do it again if irritated enough. Adam and Eve were banished from Eden because of their sinful nature and thus, we inherited original sin, cleansed only through the atonement by baptism. With this premise as our backdrop three things happened:

- it placed all power outside the individual and with the external, wrathful God;
- instilled fear which set up a macabre contest, pitting us against each other in a race for heaven;
- and erected a new barrier, religious beliefs, providing us a bizarre new reason to fight with each other - over God.

I have always thought of human nature as noble with God directing it. My lack of formal religious training was a blessing, I think. Raised in the Christian-based Serbian Orthodox Church where Divine Liturgy was performed only in Serbian, which I did not understand, I was unfettered by negative ideas about human nature and without any fear of the Lord. In church each Sunday, as a child left to the teachings of my own Intuition, I came to know God as the most warm, kind and totally loving Being - my friend, constant companion, ever-present personal ally and resource.

I first learned of the holocaust around the age of 10 when I read the Diary of Ann Frank and saw the play at the local high school. Ann Frank said a line I'll never forget, "...all in all I still believe that people are really good at heart." I was impressed and thought it natural for her to look squarely at the inhumaneness inflicted upon her and still see the good in human beings. And so the foundations of my belief that human nature was fundamentally good and God on our side were affirmed.

As life went on, though, I witnessed firsthand the various acts of inhumaneness born of the fear and hatred of our differences: prejudice, bigotry, discrimination, war, and myriad addictions and abuses. I was challenged continually to reconcile my premise that people were really good at heart with overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Even the supposedly "good folks" didn't act consistently kindly or compassionately: A regular church-goer hid under the white hood of the Klan.

A usually honest businessman kept two sets of books for his business. A priest, complying with church doctrine, refused to marry loving couples because they were of different faiths. A respected member of the community and a charity leader walked past a beggar on the street without as much as a glance. The same society which passed laws against murder demanded the death penalty to kill criminals. And the same people who went to war countless times to defend our civil liberties, denied the same to selected others because of race, creed, sex or age or any other perceived quality that they judged to be different, therefore inferior to themselves. Unwilling to give up my Truth, I confronted the haunting question: if people are really good at heart, why doesn't it look like that so much of the time? I finally figured it out.

We operate out of fear of being judged with such grave consequences, we, in turn, judge others in our endless quest to find favour with God. We constantly must prove that we are "right" and they are "wrong," our belief more righteous, our assessment better, and our way, more correct than any other. Our proclivity to judge each other over these perceived differences results in the malignant "them" vs. "us" attitude found in nearly everything: management vs. labor, haves vs. have-nots, etc. It not only separates us from each other, but also distances us from our own *divine nature*. With this divisive attitude, we are systematically destroying ourselves. It is fundamental in the fighting between the Protestants and the Catholics, the Serbs and the Croats in Yugoslavia, and the Palestinians and the

Jews in the Middle East. More the horror, we carry our habit of judgment and our determination to be right into absolutely every aspect of our lives: our work, our social clubs, and our personal relationships and teach them to our children. What we desperately need is *refocusing* away from our obvious differences and towards our commonalties - how we are all the same - and therefore, One.

Mercifully, scriptures also say that we are created in His Image, providing us our common ground. From that one statement, we can change the basic premise about human nature, to assume that as humans created in His image, we are of infinitely Good character. Then humaneness becomes our natural way of behaving, because of our Divine origins. When we do this, the reasons to differentiate and separate ourselves from each other by focusing on all our differences disappear, exposing our vulnerable interdependence on each other based on the God inherent in all of us equally - even in the seemingly unlovable-looking ones as Anne Frank did.

If we can suspend the old premise for a moment and accept we are of Divine origin and nature, we can acknowledge that we often don't act that way. Then we see our first task on earth is to rediscover our long-forgotten, deeply buried Divinity within - our Innate Uniqueness or Purpose - spoken to each of us via our Intuition and Spirit. Simultaneously it is also our job to encourage our fellow humans do so along with us. Then, following our discovery, we are charged to take action

by making our contribution fully and completely. Humaneness is the way of behaving and interacting, first with ourselves and then with each other, that supports and encourages us to discover, develop and make our full individual and unique *Divine Contribution of Self* to humanity, while enabling us to live together in harmony in the process. This new definition of humaneness still contains the expected compassion and forgiveness, but additionally includes the tools necessary to accomplish our own assignment in a joyfully fulfilling life and to support that effort in others: acceptance, restraint, purity of motive, courage, humility, equality and the unexpected self-responsibility, autonomy and boundaries.

By utilizing the principles of humaneness, we transform our lives with our discovery of our own Unique Self. As transformation occurs individually, then via the concept of synergy, families, companies, nations, indeed, the world can and will be transformed, as well.

One thing is unarguable: there exists no external god (drugs, alcohol, food, or money), boss, president, law, policy or bureaucracies that can save us, fix things, or make it all OK in either our individual lives or at the global level.

The answers are contained in the God within us and nowhere else. When we seek our answers externally - in someone or something else, we surrender our freedom in exchange for their assumption of our responsibility. The price is and has

been too great. There is a Buddhist saying “that evil exists because good men allow it.” Witness the unwieldy and arrogant power of government as one-by-one, and then collectively, we wrongly gave up our power, assuming “they” had the answers, by abandoning our responsibility of casting an intelligent vote. In the same way, when we depend upon another in any personal relationship for our answers, we pay dearly: the price is the Wisdom contained within our very Souls. Discovering our Divine Uniqueness (our purpose) and making our Contribution means accepting the irrefutable Truth that only we have our answers, and therefore there is no one else to blame.

When we accept the responsibility for our lives in this higher way, it follows naturally that we realize the awesome personal power this decision unleashes in our lives. When we understand our Purpose, we immediately understand our interdependence and the critical importance our contribution plays in the world. We know we are sufficient to any task. We no longer need to seek an external savior because we can trust the Savior inherent in our Divine human nature to point our way, individually and then, of course, collectively.

You don’t need to agree with my line of thinking to espouse the concept of humaneness. I simply wanted to share with you my observations.

However, the principles of humaneness are strangely familiar, even obvious and simple, aren’t they? Universally we

seem to already know them from somewhere. The principles of humaneness are familiar to us, because they are written in every Soul.

Humaneness is what we all have in common as human beings, and transcends any contrived barriers be they race, religion, or political persuasion. We do have a common place to meet and begin again; a common base on which to honor each other; and a common way to behave with each other.

We have everything we need for productive corporations, happy families, nurturing communities, and global peace and prosperity contained within each and every person.

Mankind is sufficient to any task if we remember our Divine nature and practice humaneness with each other and ourselves.

Each one of us is a perfectly contained Godkit. No exceptions.

To Anne Frank I would say, “People are really God at heart.”

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Stop! Time to go to <http://www.messengerminibooks.com> or go to <http://www.appliedspirituality.com> and do module #12: Understanding the You of you is God, Itself.

## *Acknowledgements and Gratitudes*

To Ken Blanchard for encouraging me to string my stories together and create a book. Thank you, Ken.

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## ***What's Next: Four Opportunities to Master Applied Spirituality™***

If you are inspired by my story and feel you would like to know more about Applied Spirituality™ and how it can and will change your life, I suggest:

- ***The Earthling's Quick Start Guide: Master Operating Your Unit on Earth*** (A Short Refresher Course in Applied Spirituality™) A tiny but powerful minibook in either print, PDF or mp3 which comes complete with interactive online course. This is the place for anyone to begin whether you have dabbled in spirituality not at all, a little or even a lot. This book picks up where the Secret left off and way more. Available at <http://www.appliedspirituality.com>. Once you have completed the basic online course, you can then participate in the live and interactive teleconference class:

- ***The Basic Course in Applied Spirituality Teleconference Class***

This course cycles every 8 weeks. It is taught on Sunday and Thursday evenings and meets for two hours each time, four hours a week. On Sundays you will receive course content to apply in the next 4 days. On Thursday we meet to discuss the experiences of applying the content in an open and interactive environment. You may start the course anytime within the 8-week cycle and as AS policy, you may take the class over as many times as you like and as often as you wish for no additional fees. Should you miss a class, it is always available

the next day for you to download and listen to at your convenience.  
Available at <http://www.appliedspirituality.com>

- ***The Course in Remembering Who You Really Are***

This course is all about you and Remembering Who You Really Are. It is a course in self esteem, self valuing and self worth. This course has no prerequisites but is essential for you to be able to allow your Good to come into your life experience. Anyone can take this course; and you can jump in at any point. It meets via teleconference every Monday evening for 52 weeks, then recycles back through. The class meets for two hours. The first hour is content and the last hour is open discussion of application of that week's content or other comments and questions. As with all Applied Spirituality™ Courses, once you are a student, you are always a student. You can take this course for as long as you like and as often as you wish even if it is to simply enjoy the community. Available at <http://www.appliedspirituality.com>

***Other Special Course Offerings:***

From time to time special subjects will be presented to students of Applied Spirituality™ who have completed both the Earthling's Quick Start Guide and at least one complete 8-week cycle of the Basic Course in Applied Spirituality™. Such subjects may include but are not limited to topics such as health conditions, relationships, money and abundance, the environment, and more.

To watch for these special courses, go to  
<http://www.appliedspirituality.com>

## *About the Author*

Kathy Kirk has led both an ‘ordinary’ and an ‘extraordinary’ life. At first glance, her background as an entrepreneur and mother living in the Midwest may sound like someone you know. Yet during the past 25 years she has been developing and evolving teachings and principles to help all people live life to the fullest. In every activity, her focus has been observing the human Spirit and its interface, application and effectiveness in the individual Life on Earth.

Applied Spirituality™ was born from research, observation, personal experiences, meditation and Kathy’s own spiritual journey. She has exhaustively observed the world’s various religions and studied myriad spiritual teachers. What she was looking for was not unique to one religion, however, but a simple, effective teaching that could be applied by all, regardless of religion. She studied spiritual teachers such as Deepak Chopra, Joel Goldsmith, Abraham, the Urantia Book and many others. For seven years in her jeep, Kathy traveled extensively the United States to observe people and conceive the idea and principles of Applied Spirituality. She meditated and reflected on all that she had learned and found the words to explain Applied Spirituality to the world.

Her first book, *The Earthling’s Quick Start Guide: Master Operating Your Unit On Earth* is Introduction to Applied Spirituality™

written for all people to learn and apply to their own lives. The book functions as a user's manual and comes with a complete online, interactive course. Kathy's second book, *Well Done* chronicles owning and operating her successful restaurant, Chelsea Garden, in Solana Beach, CA. It is as a story of an ordinary life transformed using the principles of Applied Spirituality™. The forward of *Well Done* is written by Dr. Ken Blanchard. Both books and online courses can be found on her website at [www.appliedspirituality.com](http://www.appliedspirituality.com).

Kathy is a Contributing Editor for Womensradio.com and a regular contributing writer to kineticmag.com; her two blogs, *A New View* at <http://www.appliedspirituality.com/blog> and *A New View of Things* for the Cleveland Plain Dealers at <http://blog.cleveland.com/newview>

Kathy is an accomplished speaker and has her CTM (Competent Toastmaster), ATM (Able Toastmaster) Bronze and Silver Certificates of Achievement with Toastmasters International. She has conducted workshops and seminars on Applied Spirituality™ with civic groups, private groups, colleges, businesses, nonprofits, and government. Kathy is available for public speaking events and also gives seminars, teleconference classes and individual coaching. Kathy can be reached at [www.appliedspirituality.com](http://www.appliedspirituality.com), via email at [support@appliedspirituality.com](mailto:support@appliedspirituality.com) or by phone at 619-445-0972.

# Applied Spirituality/Business

*"Sit back, relax, and learn the best way to manage, parent, coach and relate the humane way... And when you do, watch your organization excel beyond your wildest dreams."*

from the foreword by Ken Blanchard

*"The story as a whole has such a feeling of substance, and I loved the journal entries of . . . lessons learned at the end of each chapter. Important and meaty stuff."*

Renee Broadwell, San Diego, CA

Having lived the first 30 years of her life the way 'they' told her, a Young Woman determines to rebuild her life using her own Internal Guidance System. Armed only with a suitcase, her dream for a Good Life, and her will, she opens a closed restaurant. Through the process, she remembers Who She Really Is. Part fact, part business and, all Inspiration, this book is for anyone who desires a brand new, authentic life and successful organizations of any type in the process.



Kathy Kirk is the creator of Applied Spirituality™. She teaches classes, seminars and workshops as well as being a provocative and compelling speaker. She is the author of two books, *Well Done* and *The Earthling's Quick Start*

*Guide: Master Operating Your Unit On Earth.*

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