

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES THAT CHANGED THE PLANET

WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE

By: Dana Prieto

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Printed in the United States of America

First Edition: October, 2010

All textual emphases added in Scripture quotations have been placed and noted by the author.

Dedication

Forward

Dana Prieto is a man of character, foresight, and faith. In his first book, “The Seven Principles that Changed the Planet Will Change Your Life,” Dana’s insight into success, attitude, and entrepreneurialism shouts out to the reader that challenging the status quo is all about believing in your own personal vision.

This book drives home the reality that belief in yourself, your ideas, and the willingness to act on your own vision have been tested in the crucible of real life experience since civilization began. And that taking the necessary risks *to be what you believe*, is not some management or leadership theory echoing through ivory towers. Instead, it is the bedrock of achievement and driving force behind every real-life success story.

Reading “The Seven Principles that Changed the Planet Will Change Your Life,” will remind you of the importance of both believing in yourself and being true to that belief. It is a book that we all can relate to because it’s not a business book, it’s not an inspirational book, and it’s not a text book. It is a book about life and as such, will help you at any juncture in which you may find yourself. No matter where you are on your pathway to success, it can be an asset, helping you realize your goals, your dreams, and your ambitions no matter what they are.

The world we live in continues to change daily, but the foundation of success - in life, business, or in anything else you want to do, is an unchangeable constant. Johnny & Jimmy’s story, a fascinating tale woven into the book’s bedrock plot, make that point very clear—success will *always* rest upon *the belief in oneself and the belief in one’s own vision*.

A powerful narrative, this book outlines seven principles that changed a planet and pulls no punches describing how they can also change your life by acting on them. Johnny, the books main character, challenges every reader to begin thinking critically about their approach to life and success. Have you planted your seeds in fertile soil? Are you watering them and pulling any weeds that spring

up? It shows you the critical difference between turning your vision into a cause or allowing it to stagnate and become just another wasted daydream.

Larry Bird, one of the most successful NBA superstars once observed: *“Success is about recognizing your God-given talents, working your tail off to develop them into skills, and using those skills to accomplish your goals.”* And he’s right, those talents and skills are tools that can build your dreams and goals. Every reader needs to heed Johnny’s message using the tools he provides to think critically and build success on their own unique foundation. Those that have been firmly committed to this path will recognize many of the lessons that Dana examines in this book. An extremely enjoyable read, *“The Seven Principles that Changed the Planet Will Change Your Life,”* will confirm your belief system, strengthen you to resist the many naysayers who will oppose you, and encourage you to press on to success.

If you are a defeatist or a cynic always waiting for your ship to come in without taking the kind of action necessary to turn your vision into a cause, this book just might be what you’re waiting for. If you are willing, it has the potential to ignite the fire and energy necessary to create meaningful change by taking responsibility for your own situation. Renowned Leadership Facilitator, Grant M. Bright, puts it very succinctly when he says, *“If your ship misses the harbor—it’s generally NOT the harbor’s fault.”*

Johnny and Jimmy’s story will bring you to a fork in the road just as succinctly. A divergent path that makes you realize we can assume personal responsibility or we can make excuses, but we can’t do both. It is written for those who want to avoid excuses, those driven to success who, in spite of their frustration, remain open and willing to learn. Learning and personal growth are the only realistic options that create success. I believe that personal growth is limited solely by our ability to see our own shortcomings and our willingness to take responsibility for them.

I know you will enjoy reading “The Johnny & Jimmy Story” and I believe that the lessons Dana shares will help you move to your own next level.

Dr. Rick Johnson

CEO Strategist

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Introduction

In 1993 I accepted a position with the company that promoted the internationally acclaimed speaker Jim Rohn. I was thrilled and remember thinking, “I finally found a decent job.” What I did not realize at the time was that I had found so much more—I found a life-changing experience. Jim Rohn, who was known as “America’s Foremost Business Philosopher,” became instrumental in shaping my core belief system. And even though I met Jim on just three occasions, his teachings were my lunchtime companions almost every day for nearly a decade. I would listen to his tapes over and over and over on my lunch breaks, read his books, and the books on his recommended reading list.

One thing Jim said that caught my attention was, “The Bible is such a good book because it lines people up on one of two sides. On one side you have a list of, “do what these guys did and you’ll live a long prosperous life.” On the other side is a list of, “you don’t want to do what these clods did or you’ll end up broke and without any friends, just like they did.”

That concept was really the catalyst for this book, a story about two brothers set in ancient times. One brother was successful; in fact, he was so successful that we owe civilization to him. The other brother was not successful, and if it was up to him, we’d all still be living in a hunting and gathering society.

Another thing Jim Rohn used to say was, “Success is a study of the obvious; however, it’s a refined study.” Success is doing ordinary everyday things extraordinarily well. Success comes from taking a closer look at *seemingly* mundane occurrences under a *magnifying glass*.

Why are some people successful?

What made them prosperous?

What makes those people so happy?

Why do they have such a good marriage?

It's just as important to look at the flip side and evaluate the negative:

Why are some people so poor?

What makes them so unhappy?

Why do they have such bad marriages?

It is this examination of the ordinary that has the potential to make a person's life extraordinary.

A case in point is George de Mestral, an amateur mountain climber and inventor from Switzerland. De Mestral took his dog for a walk one day and, upon his return, found himself battling loads of stubborn burrs that had attached themselves to his dog's bushy tail. It was nothing new—just another day, just another walk in the woods, just another mundane “battle of the burrs.” Right?

Wrong!

That day, George wanted to know *why* those everyday 'ol burrs clung so tight so he decided to examine them under a microscope. The result of his getting up-close-and-personal with ordinary burrs under a microscope was an *extraordinary* little surprise that we know today as *Velcro*. I am sure that the modest detour to the microscope to examine a tiny burr was worth a huge fortune to George and his descendants.

George de Mestral dared to look through the ordinary to the extraordinary that lay like a vein of gold beneath the surface of everyday life. That is what this book is about: seeing the ordinary in a way that has the potential to transform the ordinary life into the extraordinary life.

The Seven Principles that Changed the Planet Will Change Your Life

This story takes place a long long time ago—so long ago that it is believed Johnny and Jimmy, its main characters, may have been one of the first sets of twins on the earth. In fact, some people believe that Johnny and Jimmy are direct descendants of Adam and Eve, which would make them grandsons of God. Others believe that Johnny and Jimmy evolved from monkeys and they may be a monkey's uncle! Who Johnny and Jimmy descended from continues to be debated in schools, synagogues, and churches to this day. However, the focus of this story is not to debate whose descendants Johnny and Jimmy were, but instead, to show the variation in the way these two brothers thought and the lifestyles that resulted from their different ways of thinking.

Before we start our story about Johnny and Jimmy, it's important to understand their background and way of life. The two brothers were part of a hunting-gathering society and lived in a nomadic tribe somewhere in the Middle East. They had base camps located near water, and the men of the tribe would venture out on hunting trips that would last two to three days, sometimes longer, hunting with spears, and bows and arrows with flint tips. The women of the tribe skinned, cleaned, and cooked the animals brought home by the men. They would also tan the animal hides and then spend the evening hours making tents and clothes out of those skins. In addition to all this, these industrious women also gathered plants, vegetables, seeds, and nuts that grew in the area.

Once they had gathered all the food they could from an area, the tribe would have to move their base camp a few days downriver to a new location in order to make it easier for the women to gather food. This way, the women would not have venture too far from camp because they had to be nearby when the hunters got home in order to prepare the animals. Some of the men would always stay behind at the camp to protect their belongings while the others were away hunting. In those days, it was all too common for rival tribes to raid the camps and steal food or run off with the women.

Consequently, a contingent was always left to guard the base camp and protect their belongings, for the necessities of life did not come easy.

Maybe you are yearning for an uncomplicated way of life and the tribal routine tugs at your heart. Or perhaps you're just a high-tech kind of guy or gal, glad to have been born when you were. As intriguing or distasteful as this lifestyle may seem, I'm just reporting the facts about hunting-gathering societies. I'll let you decide whether or not there's a place for you in Johnny and Jimmy's world.

The story of Johnny and Jimmy begins as the two brothers were wandering the wilderness on an extended hunt, with little food to show for their efforts. The twins had split up, as was their custom on a hunt, and as Jimmy worked his way down through the tree-laden bluff he had been exploring, he broke into a clearing to find his weary brother sitting on a log, resting.

He knew the answer, but asked anyway, wiping the sweat from his furrowed brow: "Have you seen any deer?" "No, I was just sitting here thinking that we will have to break camp soon and move on down river, perhaps three or even four days journey. I know the women may not be happy with this but that's the way it has to be."

Expecting a somewhat animated response, Jimmy was surprised to instead see his brother pull a handful of seeds from a leather pouch hanging from the sash tied around his waist and say, "I want to show you something I have been thinking about." "What's the big deal?" Jimmy asked, with a puzzled grunt. "They're just seeds. Let's eat them. I'm hungry!" "No, no—look!" Taking his spear, Johnny dug a little channel in the ground, carefully laid the seeds in it, and covered them up. "What on earth are you doing?" Jimmy shouted, shaking his head in amazement. "Now we'll have to go to the river and wash them if we don't want a mouthful of dirt when we eat them."

Johnny went on to explain why he believed that if they planted some of the seeds, they would be able to stay in one area and not have to move on. After Johnny had poured his heart out, describing what he had observed in nature and outlining his innovative new plan, Jimmy shook his head and murmured, “Johnny, why must you always be dreaming of a better life? Just accept things the way they are.” Johnny was not to be discouraged that easily and told his doubting brother that he had tried planting seeds on a small patch of land last spring and it had worked—they grew. “Jimmy, listen,” Johnny continued, “we do not have to just let the seeds fall where they may. We can set aside specific plots of land and plant the things we enjoy eating in separate spots, and then watch over them. I believe it’s possible to not have to move our tents every time the food runs out in an area. Imagine being able to build permanent dwellings that provide better shelter against the storms. We can grow our own food supply. I have a name for this idea; I call it “farming”! And I’m telling you, it will work!” Grunting loudly, Jimmy hung his head, looked up, and smiled sarcastically, “The gods must have taken a few shortcuts when they created you because all you do is waste time dreaming silly dreams.”

Jimmy got up, grabbed his bow, and left, with Johnny following close behind. As they caught up with the rest of their hunting party, Jimmy begged his seemingly eccentric brother, “Please tell no one of this crazy idea of yours. If word of this gets around, we may be forbidden to hunt with the tribe and would have to stay back at camp and do women’s work. Do you want that, Johnny? Listen, Johnny, we all understand that the seeds grow into plants. They fall from the plants and they float down river and grow; that’s the way it has been since the beginning of time. Why must you *always* try to change things? Don’t make trouble for us. Just leave well enough alone.”

Johnny would not give up that easily! He believed in his “farming” idea. He knew that if they could find a way to grow food in one place, they would not have to follow the river any longer. He worked on his idea in the evenings, when the women were sewing garments and the other men were

dancing around their primordial campfires. Johnny continued trying to get Jimmy involved with his farming venture, but getting him to catch a vision for it was like trying to get him to catch the wind. Jimmy would simply shake his head and proclaim loud enough for everyone to hear, "My brother, you must have the brain of a monkey." Word was spreading among the tribesmen and Jimmy wasted no time subtly distancing himself from what he thought was his oddball twin, often joking about Johnny with his friends while they were drawing pictures on the cave wall. (I've heard they called those drawings "television," though I don't know why.)

Johnny was driven by the idea of a better life, a life where those he cared about did not have to break their backs packing up their belongings and moving to resettle every couple of months. And even though he became something of the "village idiot" to the tribe as he invested his heart and soul in his dream, he kept his focus and refused to be discouraged. But it hurt to be taunted by his brother, his friends, and his fellow tribesmen, becoming the joke of the clan at times. It grew so bad that every now and then he would take refuge in a cave, only to discover graffiti about him on the walls, causing him to wonder if it was worth it. Should he continue this quest or just give up the idea altogether? In his thinking, it wasn't *that* extreme. The way others were reacting, you'd think he was trying to prove that the world was not flat.

He took a very systematic approach to his idea, and started out carving sticks to use for plows; he also began gathering extra seeds. It didn't take too long at first, but soon enough Johnny had to test the plan. He located an open field not too far from where the tribe was staying and planted the seeds he had gathered. Johnny found out about weeds the hard way, because they sprang up quickly and choked his plants.

He then decided to tear up the ground and turn it over in an effort to plant his seeds in soil that had no weeds in it. However, as luck would have it, the tribe had to move on and when he got back to

check the plants, they had died because there had not been enough rain. Undeterred, he planted yet again but was forced to make the trek back to his field every couple days when he could get some time away from his hunting duties, and haul water from a nearby stream to nourish the seedlings. Johnny would try to arrange for his hunting trips to be as close to his young crop as possible to make it easier to water the plants. And even though he had turned over the soil, hoping to avoid weeds, he noticed that they were starting to spring up around his plants so he would have to take the extra time to pull them out. Watering his plants and pulling weeds, when added to his hunting and basic survival duties, began to be burdensome.

When Johnny finally had a crop growing, a hailstorm came and wiped it out. It seemed as though the gods were against him; there was not enough rain, too much rain, hailstorms, or some other natural phenomenon pummeling his crop. On top of that, Johnny's tribe was now camped a full two-day walk from where he had his little field of plants, adding tremendous strain to the effort. He was also getting a lot of pressure from his wives to quit because he had been going at it a long time with minimal results, and the workload was affecting his hunting and other important duties.

Johnny hated the idea of quitting so he decided to give it one last attempt. This time he fashioned a canopy from woven palm leaves suspended by poles and ropes over his plants. He was hoping to protect the plants in the event of another hailstorm. Johnny found that the canopy also kept the sun from drying the land out too fast, a great help since he could only get free to water the crops every third day. Finally, Johnny had a crop that was large enough to feed his and a couple of other families.

Johnny used the excess crops to barter for some help. He traded some to a family of another hunter and in return asked him to bring extra meat for Johnny's family. He also traded some to another man named Ubadiah. Ubadiah was not a good hunter but was excellent at crafting utensils from wood;

in fact he would often stay home from the hunts to craft spears and arrows for the other hunters. The other hunters would always see to it that Ubadiyah was given part of the meat they brought home because his spears and arrows were highly prized.

Johnny took Ubadiyah to see his “field of dreams” and showed him his crops. Ubadiyah said “Johnny, I know just what you need.” Then Ubadiyah fashioned a primitive plow out of wood that greatly sped up the work of plowing the fields. Johnny was also able to use this plow to keep the weeds down in the fields. Ubadiyah helped Johnny figure out a way to irrigate the fields by digging a small trench from the river and through the rows of crops. With Ubadiyah’s help, Johnny was able to quadruple the size of his crop production.

When harvest time came, Johnny realized that it would take more than him and Ubadiyah to gather the crop, so Johnny spoke up at one of the hunter’s meetings and asked for the tribe to come to see what he and Ubadiyah had done. Bursting with curiosity and perhaps even a bit of admiration for the young man who stayed true to his vision and would not bow to public opinion, the entire tribe came out. Upon arriving, they were astonished by all the food. His kinsmen, wide-eyed with wonder, began cheering at the realization that they would not have to break camp for a long time with all the provisions that Johnny’s harvest could yield. Standing up, Johnny addressed the crowd with a humility and eloquence far beyond his years. “No, no,” he proclaimed, “Listen: we will never have to break camp *again*, but instead we can build permanent dwellings.” As the men talked over this idea, one tribesman said, “I have always thought that I could breed and raise birds in a pen rather than hunting them.” Another man added, “I have always thought about building a permanent tent out of logs and mud. In fact, I actually have drawings of this idea on the back of an animal skin in my tent.”

It wasn’t long before a civilization had sprung up around Johnny’s farm. Some learned to raise livestock while others hunted, and still other men worked on the communal farm, as did some of the

women. The men who became good at building permanent dwellings worked on people's homes in exchange for food.

Because of his wisdom and foresight, Johnny was elected king of the tribe. Jimmy, on the other hand, became bitter and was heard more than once lamenting harshly, "It's not fair that Johnny should enjoy such esteem and wealth. After all, what did he do but plant a few seeds?" Rumor has it that Jimmy started the first labor union and later launched a revolt in the tribe—but that is a discussion for another book and another story.

Principle One

The Miracle of the Seed

Our story started out with Johnny looking at seeds and wondering, “Could there be more here than meets the eye? Could these seeds possibly hold a clue to a better life for me and my family?”

Thinking back to grade school, we all learned that Ben Franklin did not invent electricity. Instead, he discovered how to harness a power that was already there by unearthing the existing principles or laws that govern the way electricity works. In much the same way, Johnny did not invent farming. Agricultural principles and laws were already in force and had been governing the planet from its beginning—just like electricity. This principle of farming, or *seed time and harvest* as it is sometimes called, was there all the while and yet until Johnny came along, no one had discovered it.

When a seed is planted in the soil, it grows. End of story. Whether that seed is scattered by birds, falls from the plant, is carried on the wind, or swept downstream by the rain and deposited in the soil—the seed grows. Johnny’s mind was open enough to look at this process of seed time and harvest in a new way. Drawn to innovation, he was willing to think bigger than the way things were and ponder what they could be. He had a dream for the future that caused him to see the world around him differently than his brother Jimmy.

When lightning struck Ben Franklin’s kite, it ignited new ideas on how to harness this energy that we now know as electricity. Studying how seeds grow sparked a similar burst of inspiration in Johnny. As he sat there on that log looking at the seed, the insight hit him, “I don’t have to let the seeds fall *where they may*,” he realized. “I can expand or maybe even enhance what nature does and plant those seeds where I want in a way that better serves our needs. And if I’m correct and they grow, we

won't have to live in tents and move constantly anymore. Instead, we'll be able to build permanent dwellings."

The miracle was in the seed! Johnny didn't have to figure out how to make the seed grow; all he had to do was to sow it where he wanted his garden to be and let the seed do what it does: grow into plants. Trying to figure out *how* to make the seed grow would have kept the poor guy up at night; however, he knew he could handle *just planting the seed*. An ancient script known as the *Book of Beginnings* records a great phrase: "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."¹

It seems as though everything on this fertile planet started out as a seed; the trees, the flowers, even the wooden chair you may be sitting on, all started out as a seed. In fact you and I started out as seeds—our fathers planted their seed into our mothers and nine months later you and I were the harvest. Whatever seed you sow or plant on earth will grow (provided the right conditions are met to nurture it) and can be harvested at a later time or season.

While this may seem like basic stuff, a more in-depth look at this principal of seed time and harvest is exactly what made Johnny wealthy: he was willing to look at this in a different light. Jimmy, on the other hand, couldn't be bothered with looking at seeds any differently than what he saw at face value; the seeds fell to the ground, floated down the river, lodged somewhere, and grew. That's all Jimmy felt he needed to know. For as long as he knew, his people had traveled, following the river and searching for a fresh source of food. It was a smooth operation, so why "mess with success?"

The principles of farming that make up the law of seed time and harvest (also known as sowing and reaping) work in every area of life: relationships, businesses, careers—all start out in seed form as

¹ Genesis 8:22 NASB

ideas. Then those ideas are planted, watered, weeded, and they grow. It doesn't matter whether the idea is positive or negative, good or bad; it only matters that the idea or seed is planted, watered, and nourished. On the negative side, for example, we have Adolf Hitler with his grotesque idea of the superior Aryan race. Hitler planted that idea and it began to grow into the monster that brought death and destruction to millions. On the positive side, we have Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who planted an idea that brought love to the most unloved members of a society and soothed the untold suffering of humankind. Her idea is still growing, reproducing, and benefitting this world long after her death while Hitler's continues to reap destruction through Neo-Nazism.

There is an immutable law on planet Earth, "*What you sow you reap,*" and in due season the seed you sow will grow and bear fruit provided it is nourished. Consider, in the spring time, the seed is watered and then nourished throughout the summer, then comes autumn when it is harvested. As winter arrives, nature decrees there shall be no planting and no growing. This is the way it's been down through the ages, as long as man has recorded history.

I cannot know what "season" this book finds you in. You could be in the springtime ready to plant the seeds of a new business idea. Perhaps it is your summertime and you are pulling weeds, working hard to make sure your business or relationship ideas are getting enough water and nutrients. You could also be enjoying the autumn, reaping a rich harvest in a season where your ideas have paid off well and yielded a fantastic crop. Maybe you're in the middle of a long cold winter and it seems nothing will grow, no matter what you do.

Regardless of what season you are currently in, the wisdom of the ant always seems to be appropriate. If you have been on a picnic or dropped a piece of food outside, you have seen the wisdom of the ant in action. No matter when—spring, summer, or fall—the ant says to himself, "Winter is coming, winter is coming," and works diligently to store up food underground for this inevitable, frigid

season of want. But during the wintertime, if you put your ear next to an ant mound I am sure you can hear the ants chanting, “Springtime is coming, springtime is coming.” Regardless of what season you find yourself in, the principles of sowing and reaping, seed time and harvest, can be put to work for you to grow whatever crop you are looking for, including a better financial future, a better career, or better relationships.

Because of the “miracle of the seed,” every little acorn has the potential to become a whole forest of mighty oak trees. In every boy there is a man, in every girl there is a woman, in every person there are the seeds of greatness waiting to germinate.

Unfortunately, the graveyard is one of the wealthiest places in the world. Why? Because those graves are filled with the seeds of better government, cures for diseases, all kinds of business ideas, and creative ways to work out love relationships so they endure a lifetime. The caskets are closed and all those amazing ideas are forever buried in the graves of the people who just never planted them—people whose ideas and inspirations never saw the light of day or even had the chance to be forgotten.

Every day another person is lowered into the ground with a few mementos of their brief stay on earth, accompanied only by the potential they never reached.

I would like my gravestone to say, *“ALL USED UP—HE REACHED HIS FULL POTENTIAL.”*

Mankind is the only form of life on planet Earth that does not have to live up to its full potential. We never hear stories about an oak tree that got mixed up with a weeping willow and only grew to half its size. The reason is that an oak tree and everything else, except humans, grows to its fullest potential. Given its unique set of circumstances, the soil conditions, the amount of rain, and temperature will all factor into an oak tree’s growing to its fullest potential. The tree has no choice.

Similarly, the animal kingdom is ruled by instinct, only humans have the power of choice. Each individual chooses whether or not to plant the seeds of his or her potential. It's the little choices we make along the way in life that will determine what our life will be like. By choosing what seeds to sow today, we can determine what our life will become over the next twelve months, five years, and decade. Because of the power of choice, our lives can be subject to design rather than mere happenstance. Just like Johnny, it all comes down to the choice of the seeds we sow.

Buried within the human spirit are the seeds of greatness—the potential to have more, do more, and most importantly become more. Planting those seeds is up to us, not to fate or circumstances. The only thing it takes to *start* a new life, a new career, a higher income, or better relationships *is to plant* the right seeds. That being the case, the question we must ask ourselves is what seeds am I planting? In the next chapters, we will look at planting, watering, and nourishing the right seeds to assure a great harvest.

Principle Two

Vision: If You Can See Beyond Today the Hard Work of Planting is Easy

On any day in any city, thousands of people have driven past the same empty field on their way to work for years, never thinking anything of it. After all it's just a field or a vacant lot. Or is it? One day someone drives by that same field and says, "I see a hotel there." That person sets up a company, attracts investors, buys the field, builds a hotel, and makes a fortune.

What is the difference between the person who built the hotel and the people who drove by every day? The person who built the hotel could see into the future! Not because he or she had some sort of psychic ability. People like this know that *they* create their own future and craft their tomorrow by the *choices* they make *today*. Armed with knowledge of real estate and hotel building, this person could see a profitable hotel in that empty field. Such people can take that seed thought of "I think I see a hotel there," nourish those seeds with a little knowledge, and a profitable hotel becomes the harvest. I am sure that the person who built the hotel had opportunity to pull many weeds along the way—weeds that tried to encroach on their garden... I mean, hotel.

In our story Johnny had the ability to see beyond what everyone else saw with their natural eyes. Johnny could see the proverbial forest *while in the middle* of all the trees. He could see beyond his hunting and gathering (paycheck to paycheck) existence to a world that was completely different for himself and his family. Johnny didn't set out to change the whole planet; he just wanted to change his circumstances. He wanted to stop living "paycheck to paycheck," gathering just enough provisions to eat for a few days. Johnny felt there had to be something better than living out of a tent. There must be a better life than packing up all his belongings and always being at the mercy of conditions that were beyond his control.

Johnny first wanted to see if seeds would grow if *he planted* them, or determine if they would only grow *if they fell from a plant*? After he discovered that seeds did grow once he planted them, the next question was whether he could plant enough for his family to eat and live on. I am sure his first summer found him asking, “Where in the world did all these weeds come from and how do I get rid of them?” The next question Johnny asked was, “Could enough be planted for the entire clan to eat?” After that, the questions grew like seeds: “Could they build permanent dwellings to stay in?” And so it began. Civilization was now formed and life on planet Earth would never be the same. And it all started with the question, “Can I find a way to live life above and beyond the circumstances that befall me?”

An ancient proverb explains that “Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint.”² In other words if people do not have a dream of a better future planted firmly in their minds, they will not pay the price to achieve that dream. Jim Rohn once said, “If the future is clear, then the price is easy.” Conversely, if the future is cloudy or unclear, then the price of diligent work to plant, weed, and nourish your seeds of business ideas or relationship ideas seems like way too steep a price to pay.

Vision is the motivating “why to!”—the thing that gets you up in the morning, the thing that drives you to find the answer to a problem. Johnny’s “why to” was *I don’t want to follow these animals and crops around the rest of my life!* The best way I know to describe “why to” is this:

A mother tells her young boy to comb his hair. He replies, “Ah mom do I have to? What difference does it make if I comb my hair? None of my friends care.” This scenario is repeated day in and day out for a few years. Then one day the mother notices her son in the mirror combing his hair and using hair spray, trying to get it just right. The mother asks him, “What are you doing?” And he replies “There is a dance tonight at school and my friend and I are going and...” You know the story: he has

² Proverbs 29:18 ASV

discovered girls and he now has a “why to” to comb his hair. If you have a strong enough “why to,” the “how to” and related work becomes easy.

Johnny did not know how to start a civilization. There were no libraries around with books on how to start a farming community or build a civilization. But because Johnny’s “why to” was so strong, it kept him going day by day, week by week, month by month, and year by year. He far exceeded his first goal of having a garden big enough for him and his family to eat from. Johnny was now at the “how to” run a civilization stage. Because Johnny had started the first farming civilization, if he had written a book on how to start a civilization I am sure it would well worth reading.

The libraries and bookstores are full of “how to” books such as:

How to Start a Business

How to Raise Kids

How to Have a Good Marriage

How to Lead a Group of People

All we need is a strong enough “why to” to go to the library or book store, get the book, and read it. The next step, of course, is to apply the knowledge from the how to book. In the next chapter we will see how our own personal philosophy will determine how well the knowledge from the “how to” book will work for us.

Principle Three

Personal Philosophy: The Wind in Your Sails

In the beginning Johnny had to work harder on himself than he did on his farming idea. Johnny had to overcome all those intimidating thoughts that, “No one has ever done it this way before... If we were meant to farm we would have been born farmers... What makes you think you can change the way things have always been done?” All the self-doubt and fear of what his brother Jimmy and the rest of the clan would say must have tormented his mind as he began thinking about planting those seeds and starting his first farm—knowing he had to go it alone.

In 1954, Roger Bannister became the fastest person to ever run a mile by breaking the four-minute-mile barrier. Prior to Roger’s record, it was considered impossible to run a mile in under four minutes. After all, no one ever had done it before. One month later, John Landy beat Bannister’s time by 1.5 seconds. Since that time countless athletes have beat the four-minute mile. Why didn’t other runners beat this time before Bannister? The reason is that no one thought it was possible. After Bannister, every runner knew it was possible and so they strived to attain it. Bannister, however, had to believe when there was no apparent reason for believing.

In order to achieve the seemingly impossible, it takes a “personal philosophy” that says “I believe it can be done! And if it can be done, then I can do it!” A personal philosophy is like setting the sail on a boat: even if the wind is blowing contrary to where you are trying to go, if the sail is set right, you can actually sail against the wind.

Johnny experienced plenty of “contrary winds”: hail, too much rain, too little rain, and his negative brother were all “contrary winds” that he had to contend against. Rain, hail, and wind are all a part of living on the planet we call Earth. If Johnny had thrown his hands up in the air and said, “That’s it,

the gods must be against me; I will never be able to plant these seeds and change the way I live,” then planet Earth would indeed be a different place today. There would be no civilizations that sprang up around farming communities. And if Johnny had cursed the rain and the hail, he would have been cursing the only thing he had to work with. Instead, Johnny learned to work with life on the planet as it is—as imperfect as circumstances seem to be.

People have told me, “You just don’t understand; I have negative relatives; my wife left me; my parents did not send me to college,” and on and on their list of contrary winds goes. I just introduce them to reality and say, “Welcome to planet Earth; make yourself at home.”

It’s not what happens to you that will make the difference in how things turn out in your life, because whatever happens, happens to us all in one form or another. *What matters the most is what we do with what happens.* The contrary winds are of no particular significance if your sail is set right.

The winds seemed to be blowing contrary for Roger Crawford, whose dream was to play professional tennis. You see, Roger was born with four impaired limbs. However, his personal philosophy was one that said in effect, *I believe it can be done and if it can be done I believe I can do it.* As a result Roger became the first and only athlete with four impaired limbs to compete in an NCAA Division One college sport, and to be certified by the United States Professional Tennis Association. Roger worked with the way things *are* on the planet, and as a result Roger now speaks to audiences all over the world about how to overcome obstacles.

Our personal philosophy or our core belief system is what will dictate how life works out for us. Watching the World Trade Center buildings fall on 9/11, one person laments, “How terrible the terrorists are.” Another person watching this same event says, “Those no good Americans; they deserve it!” The difference in the way these two people see this same event is dictated by their core belief system or their personal philosophy.

In much the same way, how things work out for us in life depends on our personal philosophy. How we see ourselves will determine how we see others. If we hold the view that leads us to say, "That person should not have so much wealth; it's unfair that I have so little! I am going to go steal some of their wealth," we will soon find ourselves behind cell doors all because of a personal philosophy. Similarly, our personal philosophy often keeps us locked up in imaginary prison cells. Those imaginary prison cells can be things such as my negative relatives, I don't have a college degree, I am not smart enough, I'm handicapped, if only somebody would give me a chance,_____. (Fill in the blank with your own reasons why you don't have better relationships, are not making more money, or cannot live out your dreams)!

It's interesting to note that only humans can adopt a personal philosophy. Have you ever tried reasoning with a dog? Or have you ever discussed philosophical ideas with a cat? If you give a dog some land that is nothing but a patch of weeds and then come back in a decade, the land will still be a patch of weeds (but you better watch where you step). However, if you give a human the same land and come back just a few years later, they will have built a civilization. That's because humans have the power to reason and adapt the way they think to leverage their circumstances to their advantage. Humans can use their minds to process ideas and change their core belief system, thereby changing their destiny. The key factor in what will determine our future is our philosophy (our belief system). If we learn to set a good sail, the winds will *always* take us to our dreams.

To change our future, we start right now by changing our philosophy. It's our personal philosophy that will determine whether we will go the extra mile and take on the extra disciplines that will turn our lives around. If our belief system says there's just no use in trying, then we won't read the books to better our relationships, we won't burn the midnight oil, or we won't go for the advancement at work. If that is you, then get used to the middle because you will be doomed to a life of mediocrity.

We can always have more and do more *if we are willing to become more*. If we are willing to change the way we think about ourselves, others, and life on the planet; if we are willing to change our philosophy, then the sky is the limit. If our philosophy says prices are just too high, then we need a new philosophy. May I suggest that prices are *not* too high—if you have enough money! So the right philosophy says I need to go to work on making more money.

When developing a personal philosophy, you can't just trust your own experiences because your own experiences can be tainted. If a woman was molested when she was young, her philosophy could easily become, "All men are bad and ultimately mean me harm." But we know that's not right; that philosophy was tainted by a horrific experience which left her understandably jaded. One person says, "Hey my philosophy is I get them before they get me!" What's interesting about this guy is that he only finds friends who are always out to get him. The obvious reason for this is that no one else wants to hang around him! So this guy can't trust his own philosophy and he can't trust those around him because they all have the same rotten belief system.

Friends, movies, television, the lyrics of songs, the internet, and sermons are all trying to influence our personal philosophy—some for good, some for bad. We have to sort it out and honestly ask ourselves, "What will I adopt as part of my personal philosophy and what will I throw out?" As I said in the introduction of this book, I like what Jim Rohn said about the stories in the Bible as being a way of helping develop a personal philosophy. The Bible lines up people on one of two sides. On side A, Do what these guys did and you will enjoy a good, long, wealthy, healthy life, and have good relationships. On the B side of the list is, Don't do what these clods did or you'll end up in the trash pile of life. In developing our personal philosophy we have to study the ideas and then ask which side will this thought process put me on—A or B?

In creating our personal philosophy we sometimes need to look no further than our own day. Most people are just trying to get through the day, anxious to get home and empty their minds of all that happened during it. What I am suggesting is: *Don't be one of them*. Instead, ask yourself, "What can I get from the day?" Looking over the events of the day ask, "What do I need to change? What idea, understanding, or knowledge can I add to my way of thinking that will better help me set my sail to achieve my dreams?" In Principle Four, we'll take a look at how Johnny's ability to change or adapt his philosophy, his perception of reality, and change himself is what ultimately enabled him to change the world.

Principle Four

The Magic of Change

Johnny told his brother , “We are not geese. We don’t have to fly south every winter. We can change.” Jimmy, on the other hand, was *hoping* that life would change. He was hoping there would be better hunting and more fruitful gathering over the next season.

As we discussed earlier, only humans have the power of choice. Only humans can choose to look beyond the events that have happened over the last five, ten, or twenty-five years and start heading in a whole new direction. Like Jimmy, we often resist change and just *hope* that things will change around us. Prices, taxes, and pay scales can all stay the same; however, when we change, they all magically seem to change for us. Just as the master teacher Jesus explained to His followers one day, “Unless a seed falls to the earth and dies it can never become a great harvest” .(3) The moral of the story is that unless the seed changes, it can never become what it was destined to become. Unless an acorn changes, it will never become the forest it was meant to be. Inside an acorn is the potential to become a forest and inside every person there is the potential for greatness: great wealth, great relationships, great businesses, etc... If we remain the same we can never reach our fullest potential. Just like the acorn we must change or forever remain the same. If you don’t like the way things are, change them. After all, you are not a goose.

There’s an easy answer to wanting more money, more time, or better relationships. The answer is simply to become more. Again, paraphrasing a story from an ancient script, a woman comes to Jesus and asks the question “Hey Jesus, when you set up your kingdom, can my sons be your top-level assistants?” Notice the master teacher’s response to this women was not, “You terrible horrible person for wanting more!” No, his response was, “If you want more you have to be willing to serve more” (4). In

other words, if you want to have more, you have to change the way you do things. In business terms, to make more money and grow your business, you'll have to change the way you do marketing; change the way you think. You'll have to change so you can reach more people. The same is true of relationships. If we want more out of our relationships, we have to be willing to change the way we communicate and change the way we think about the relationship.

Ancient script tells us the story about a king named Solomon. The story goes like this: Solomon asked for more wisdom. Solomon was asking for more knowledge, more understanding, and more insight; in other words, Solomon was willing to change. The ancient script goes on to report that Solomon became the wealthiest person on the planet (5).

What if Solomon had asked for money instead of wisdom? I think that is where that old phrase comes into play, "A fool and his money are soon parted." A book was published a number of years ago that traced the lives of people who had either won or inherited one million dollars. Within a year, most of those people were in worse shape than they were before they received the million dollars! How could this be? Well, perhaps because if you give someone a million dollars who is not a millionaire on the inside, he or she will soon lose all the money, as well as friends and family. Solomon did not ask that the planet be changed; he asked that he could change so he would be a better steward of the planet.

If we are asking the wind, the rain, the hail, and the seasons to change, then we are asking the wrong things to change. For over 6,000 years of recorded history, these things have not changed. The only thing left to change is us.

Principle Five

The Miracle of Labor

As Johnny found out, turning seeds into a great harvest takes an intense amount of labor. Not only is there the preparing of the soil and the planting of the seeds; there is also the watering, fertilizing, and then come... the weeds! Ask any mother why she would go through all the intense work involved in nine months of carrying a baby, multiplied by hours of severe labor, and that mother will go get her baby and show you: *this* is why! And then she'll say, "Isn't this the cutest baby you ever saw?" In fact, you don't even have to ask her the question and she will still bring her baby to you, or bring pictures, for you to see the fruit of her labor and tell you *all* about how special her child is. There's something about the birth of this new person, with all the possibilities and hopes for this baby's future that makes all the labor worth it.

Ancient script says that on the seventh day God rested. The resting came *after* spending six days of hard labor putting together the planet we call Earth. Apparently, if you are going to create something of great value, it takes labor. The greater the value, the greater the labor it will take. The saying, "no pain, no gain" not only works at the gym, it also works in business and relationships. In other words, "Without effort there can be no achievement." If you go to the closest football field and carry the ball across the goal line, no one cares because without the opposing team, , there is no game, no effort, and no reward. Not only will labor create new life when it comes to having a baby, labor will create new life in your health, your business, your relationships, and your finances.

Now, back to our story about Johnny and Jimmy. Johnny found out that just preparing the soil and planting the seeds was not enough, because weeds would soon take over the garden. Without

tending to the garden and being on guard against those pesky weeds, all Johnny would have at harvest time was a great place for weeds to grow.

Ideas are very much like those seeds that Johnny planted. Consider:

Ideas about how to produce a greater income.

Ideas about how to have a better relationship.

Ideas about how to start a new business.

Ideas for a new career.

Ideas about how to take your business to the next level.

Just like organic seeds, it will take more than merely planting and starting the idea. You will have to guard those ideas lest the “weeds” start growing and choke out your new business or your relationships. You must stand guard and watch for those weeds to sprout up and then pull them out. If you don’t stand guard against the weeds, you’ll have nothing to show at harvest time. All this guarding and weeding is labor intensive, though the alternative to not standing guard is wasted labor in planting because there will be little or no harvest. When it comes to growing a business or making a relationship stronger, intrusive weeds can come in many different forms.

A New Testament story tells of a farmer who went out to plant seeds. It explains that the farmer planted seeds just about everywhere. However, because some seed fell on ground with too many stones,, the seeds would not grow because the roots could not go deep enough. Some of this farmer’s seeds were eaten up by birds. Some of the seeds fell into ground where thorn bushes were growing and they took up the nutrients and crowded out the seeds from growing properly (6)

I think the moral of the story is never to quit planting seeds (never quit coming up with ideas), partly because you never know which seeds are going to grow, but also because of the information you gather while laboring to plant the seeds. In the case of both this ancient farmer and Johnny, they found out they had to cover the seeds with hay to keep the birds from eating the seeds. They both also found there was some ground that was better than others to plant seeds in. Sometimes you only get this kind of knowledge from information gained through labor. . Most of the time someone else has already discovered this information, and so the labor comes in the form of acquiring that knowledge. I think that's why listening to CDs, reading books, and going to school, as well as other ways of learning, are so important. No matter what you are trying to do—start a new relationship, better a current relationship, start a new business, go to the next level with an existing business, or even discover your purpose for being on the planet someone has already written a book, recorded a CD, or is teaching a class that can help you get there quicker. If I wanted to start a civilization and Johnny had written a book, it would certainly be a worthwhile read.

The sun's rays can be intensified by using a magnifying glass to the point of starting a fire from them. . In much the same way, developing your skills can intensely magnify your labor or productivity. For instance, if a person can type thirty words per minute, they can earn a certain wage as a support staff; however, if they can type eighty words per minute, they can earn a much higher wage. The difference in the typing speed can be as simple as taking a night school class or investing in a computer program for typing. Consider this: if you dig a ditch with a shovel, you can earn a certain wage; if you learn to use a backhoe, you can earn a much higher wage. If you learn to run a company that sells backhoes, you can earn a fortune. It is the acquired skills that bring the increase in wages.

It is possible to chop down a tree with a hammer. It will take about thirty days. You can also chop down a tree with an ax; it will take about thirty minutes. However, you can chop down a tree with

a chain saw and it will take less than three minutes. All three ways to chop down the tree are a form of labor; the only difference is the tool used to cut it down. If your livelihood depends on cutting down trees, you'd best trade the hammer in for the chain saw. The choice of tools (skills) is what makes the difference between success and failure, no matter what the endeavor.

Communication skills: to better work with employees and coworkers.

Interaction skills: to build better relationships with family and friends.

Business skills: to take your business or career to the next level.

Financial skills: to better use your currently available resources, as well as plan for the future.

And most importantly, Life skills: to build a better you.

When you invest labor into improving yourself, miraculously everything around you will improve. .

Principle Six

Stick to it Mentality

Being part of the human race, I am sure Johnny had to have thought, “You know, I am working hard all day trying to hunt and gather food to eat, not to mention the tent has a rip in it. Maybe this farming idea just isn’t worth it.”

You might be saying the same thing as Johnny : “Hey, I am working hard all day and when you add up travel time, picking up and dropping off the kids, and running errands, when do you expect me to put these principles to work?” I guarantee it will take discipline and focus to go after the new life. The only alternative is to leave things the way they are, let life happen to you, and see where fate takes you. Discipline will keep the sail set in the right direction, even amidst turbulent situations. And with the sail set right, you will eventually end up where *you, not fate*, decide to go. Self-discipline, or a stick-to-it attitude, is how you keep the sail set, even when you don’t feel like it.

Johnny started his new life with just a few minutes a day at first. In the beginning, all he did was fashion a crude farming apparatus and experiment with planting seeds. As time went by he had to invest more than fifteen minutes a day. Then later, there came a season when he really had to burn the midnight oil.

As you begin to apply these principles, there will be seasons where it seems as though you are working two full-time jobs (and one of them is usually without immediate pay). And what can make it worse is that the “hailstorms” of life may prevent you from having any significant harvest in the near future. It’s a lot easier to pour on the hard work when it appears there will be immediate results. When there are no results or only limited fruit for your labor, that’s when turning up the focus and self-

discipline are paramount. Staying on course during these dispiriting times will take focused determination and that time-tested grin-and-bear-it mindset.

What's interesting to note is even though these periods of intense effort are often necessary, in general, small amounts of steady effort over the long haul will *always* outperform short bursts of intense effort. The Japanese have a belief system called *Kaizen*. Basically, it is that little improvements each day add up to HUGE improvements over time. Thus, the Kaizen philosophy calls for incremental improvements on a daily basis.

For instance, if you can only touch your toes three times today, you can stretch to four tomorrow and five the next day. By consistently making these little improvements, you could conceivably touch your toes one hundred times or more by the end of the year! To put it in a business context, increasing sales by only one percent per month would result in more than twelve percent growth by the end of the year.

The problem with small incremental growth is that the progress seems insignificant at the time. Because little increments are easy to do, they can be just as easy *not to do*. If you start a new health regimen and say you are going to exercise for fifteen minutes a day, this is easily do-able, right?— except on the day you are pressed for time and tired, so you say, “I’ll just catch up tomorrow and do a half an hour!” You know the story—soon a week has gone by and you haven’t exercised. And before you know it, it’s been two weeks.

Or how about this scenario: You read the book on how to communicate better with your spouse or kids and you decide that you are going to adopt this new way of communicating. However, you are really angry with them today, so you hold off on that new communication style for another day, But just like the exercise program, before you know it a month has gone by and you have not only failed to start implementing the better communication method, you have forgotten what the book even said. So the

stick-to-it attitude of self-discipline is as necessary in the tough times as it is in the easier times. It will take discipline to go after the increase in skills instead of just doing the day's normal activities and saying, "That's enough for one day. I can increase my skills tomorrow, or the next day, or next month!"

So when faced with a difficult task, the focus should be on, "What do I get to become from this?" rather than focusing on the obstacle. What new skill-set, what new critical thinking skills, communication skills, etc... can you gain from this experience? Since the ultimate value in life is what *you* become, just like Solomon in our ancient story we must ask, "What can I change about *me* today?" and remember, it only has to be a little change today.

Johnny said to Jimmy, "Watch the ant; it has no boss yet it works hard all summer gathering provisions." I am sure the ant would much rather be playing with the grasshopper all summer, but the grasshopper *dies* in the winter while the ant is eating all the food it worked to store up. The ant has self-discipline; it stays focused all summer, and little by little gathers enough to last all winter. Jim Rohn said, "We have a choice of two prices; we can pay the price of the self-discipline now or the price of regret later. One costs pennies; the other, dollars." By adding self-discipline in the form of little amounts of time spent improving our communication skills, reading the books that help refine our personal philosophy, or taking the classes to add business skills, I guarantee that a higher income, better relationships, and a happier life are waiting just ahead. .

Principle Seven

Leadership

Johnny started out with a vision that was pretty simple; all he wanted was to find a way where he would not have to be ruled by outside circumstances. He sought to control of his own destiny. In the beginning it only took Johnny to work on his idea. Sure, he would have loved for his brother to have been involved but he could do it on his own and he did. As Johnny worked on his idea, his vision soon grew beyond himself. Johnny began to dream that the others in his clan would no longer have to live hand-to-mouth. However, for this to be achieved, others would have to become involved because Johnny's vision was now bigger than just himself. Before long, Johnny found what he needed most were leadership and communication skills in order to get his ideas across to the rest of the clan. Employers, employees, and parents alike will find themselves in exactly the same place as Johnny; needing to gain wisdom in the areas of communication and leadership.

Earlier we looked at the ancient story of Solomon, who asked for wisdom and became the wealthiest person on the planet. What I think is interesting to note in this story is that he asked for wisdom to lead people, *and then* he became the wealthiest person on the planet. Apparently becoming the wealthiest person on the planet will take learning how to lead people. I think it's also interesting to notice that Solomon did *not* say, "These people are impossible; how do you expect me to lead idiots like this?" Instead, Solomon asked that *he* be changed so that *he* might *better lead* these people. I have said it before but it bears repeating: when *you* change, the whole world around you seems to change, and that goes for spouses, children, coworkers, employees, and board members. They *all* seem to change when *you* change.

There are countless philosophies on leadership. In fact, a search on the internet shows *141 million sites* championing some sort of leadership theory. There are thousands and thousands of books, CDs, and DVDs devoted to the subject of leadership, but I think leadership can be summed up by three characteristics: *who you are, what you say, and what you do*.

It doesn't matter whether you are Johnny trying to lead people into a new way of thinking, a parent trying to lead your children, or the president of a large corporation trying to rally the employees to a new level of success. Ultimately, *who you are, what you say, and what you do* will determine your effectiveness as a leader.

Who You Are

Why most of the clan eventually followed Johnny had to do with who he was—all that he had become while working on his ideas. Jesus (leader extraordinaire) simply said “Follow me,” and the amazing thing was that people did! That had to have something to do with who Jesus was—His depth of character. If you don't believe this, try walking down the street and telling the people you encounter, “Hey, follow me!” and see what happens. I suppose that having the title “King of kings and Lord of lords” helps when it comes to getting people to follow you. However, even if you give yourself a fancy title, that is still no guarantee that people will follow you. A good test of your effectiveness as a leader is to simply turn around and if no one is following you, then you are not a leader.

The most important factor in getting people to follow you is who you are. People will overlook a lot of mistakes in what you say and even in what you do *if* they believe in you and your vision for the future. As mentioned in Principle Three, your vision for the future is shaped by your core beliefs or personal philosophy. Whether you are a parent wanting your children to follow you or a business leader trying to get employees to give a 100-percent effort, the answer is the same: become a person of value! If you are a dishonest thief and want to become a leader, the only followers you will attract are other

dishonest thieves. The reason is that unlike magnets, with people, like always attracts like. Consequently, to attract people of value and character, you must *be* a person of value and character.

What You Say

Johnny eventually had to communicate his ideas in words to the rest of the clan. He could show them his farm but they might think, “Oh, this is a good place to camp and gather food and hunt for a while.” In order for the clan to *see what Johnny saw*, he would have to paint a picture for them of how their lives could be totally different in the future. If Johnny had simply said, “Hey, I have this idea called farming; is there anybody who wants to join me?” he would have been lucky to have a few people who said, “Sure; seems easier than what we have now!” and followed him. However, the minute any adversity struck, such as hailstorms or a lack of rain, these people would have left and said, “Hey, I think hunting and gathering was easier; I sure hope we can find the clan.”

No, Johnny would have to learn to communicate in a way that painted a picture so clear that no matter what obstacles lay ahead, people would say, “Me too; I want in on that vision and I am willing to go the extra mile to see this idea work.” There’s an old story about two ancient leaders that goes something like this: when one leader spoke the people said, “Hey, he gave a great speech!” When the other leader spoke, people said, “Let us march.” Why did they want to march into war for the second leader? Apparently, he had touched them so deeply with his words that they were willing to risk their lives for the cause.

If you are a parent trying to get ideas across to your kids, or a salesperson, or you just want your ideas to be received by others, then the goal for effective communication is for the hearer to say, “Me too; I want in on that!” The worst thing you can hear is, “So what? Who cares?” If you are the Sunday school teacher and you have effectively communicated to the kids, then you will hear, “Hey, me too; I want to live a life of honesty and integrity!” If you are the coach of a Little League team and your ideas

have been received by the kids, they will say, “Hey, me too; I want to practice hard and give my all in the game for this team!” And by the way, a volunteer position is a great place to test your leadership and communication skills because there is no paycheck to hold over their heads. If you coach the Little League team and all the kids want to join another team, then you’d best sharpen your communication skills. By just talking to the kids, you might be able to hold the team together; however, by skillfully communicating you can work miracles. You could win the championship and have a movie made about you.

What if you meant to say to the little kid on the team, “Hey, your game was a little off today; is anything bothering you?” but instead you said, “Wow, you played lousy today”? If that is the level of your communication skill, is it any wonder the kids want to join the other team? Can you see why the employees keep quitting and going to work for the competition?

To work miracles, a leader must carefully choose his words so that the listener will say, “Count me in... I’ll change my ways; I’ll burn the midnight oil and go the extra mile.” A leader’s job is to see beyond the task at hand and into the potential waiting within those you lead.

What You Do

What you do is so closely tied to who you are and what you say that it is very difficult to separate them. Who you are and what you say will eventually wind up being what you do. For instance, if every time a woman has a disagreement with her spouse, she says “Well, I might just leave you,” then eventually she probably will leave. Or how about this scenario: it’s the end of the month and the sales numbers are down, so the sales manager yells to the sales team, “Somebody’s head is going to roll!” That sales manager will eventually fire people for all the wrong reasons and the next thing you know he’ll be throwing his arms up in the air saying, “Where are all the good employees? Aren’t there any

good employees left in this town?” In reality there are plenty of good employees in the town. They just don’t want to work for him!

Years ago I read a book entitled *Never Work for a Jerk*, by Patricia King, and after reading just the first chapter, I realized the guy I worked for fit the book’s description perfectly! So I made it a goal to escape and I never looked back. People will forgive you for what you say. They’ll even forgive you for shortcomings in who you are, but they will never forgive you for what you do, *especially* if you “do them wrong.”

I love the way that CEO strategist Rick Johnson says it: “Don’t be a boss that is a B.O.S.S. (Boisterous, Omnipotent, Self-indulgent, Sociopath).” I think part of what Rick is getting at is that some leaders will borrow from their job title to bolster their lack of confidence or self-esteem. Subordinates will always be planning their escape from these B.O.S.S.’s because no one wants to work for this type of person for long.

Psychologists undergo personal psychoanalysis as a part of their training so that *what they say and do* in treating a patient is not skewed by their personal inadequacies. In much the same way, anyone who desires to become a leader should undergo a personal philosophy analysis before they lead others. Leaders should always be looking to mine the gold out of the people they lead. B.O.S.S.’s complain about the dirt they have to sift through, while leaders could care less about the dirt—*they are looking for gold!* The difference in the way the way B.O.S.S.’ and the true leaders approach what they do is due to the difference in their personal philosophies. When Solomon asked for wisdom to lead people, he was asking for a paradigm shift in his own personal philosophy. Solomon realized that it was his lack of skills that was holding him back from leading the nation. Solomon knew that what he was doing wasn’t working. As ancient script records, eventually Solomon got the skills, because when he turned

around a whole nation was following him and leaders of other nations were coming to meet him to ask his advice on how to lead their nations.