

Click any of the titles below to jump to a specific Nugget

- [10 Secrets To Success](#)
- [Get Focused!](#)
- [Get Clear!](#)
- ["Good Enough- Never is"](#)
- [10 Guidelines to Fail Forward](#)
- [Nurturing the Relationships that Matter; They All Matter](#)
- [Resolutions](#)
- [Commitment](#)
- [Focus](#)
- [Perfection](#)
- [Sales Statistics](#)
- [In the spirit of Memorial Day...](#)
- [Motivate](#)
- [Listening To Our Language](#)
- [Manifest Integrity](#)
- [Hot Tip For Managing Your Calendar](#)
- [Success Requires Hard Work...](#)
- [Success is a Journey - Not a Destination](#)
- [Preparation](#)
- [Reputation & Character](#)
- [Success vs. Failure](#)
- [Priorities and Progress](#)
- [Courage](#)
- [Survival of the Fit?](#)
- [Surround Yourself with Positive](#)
- [On Completing Tasks](#)
- [The Right Way of Doing Things](#)
- [Practice](#)
- [What It Takes To Be Number 1](#)
- [Leadership](#)
- [Becoming Real](#)
- [Overcoming Barriers](#)
- [Telling the Truth](#)
- [Make a Choice](#)
- [Judgment](#)
- [Listening](#)
- [Calmness](#)
- [Good Enough Doesn't Live Here](#)
- [Perseverance](#)
- [Problem Solving](#)
- [A Life Well Lived](#)
- [Creating Magic](#)
- [Be a Dreamer](#)
- [Good is the Enemy of Great](#)
- [Be Responsive to Change](#)
- [Character](#)
- [Don't Get Distracted by Competition](#)
- [Environment](#)
- [Imitation vs. Innovation](#)
- [Run Your Own Race](#)
- [Take Ownership](#)
- [Work Ethic](#)
- [Opportunity](#)
- [Opposition](#)
- [The Essence of Survival](#)
- [Fussiness](#)
- [Knowing What You Want](#)
- [Commitment](#)
- [Significance and Purpose](#)
- [Happiness](#)
- [Adversity](#)
- [Legacy](#)

## 10 Secrets To Success

*October 2008*

Investor's Business Daily has spent years analyzing leaders and successful people in all walks of life. Most have 10 traits that, when combined, can turn dreams into reality.

1. **How You Think Is Everything:** Always be positive. Think success, not failure. Beware of a negative environment.
2. **Decide Upon Your True Dreams And Goals:** Write down your specific goals and develop a plan to reach them.
3. **Take Action:** Goals are nothing without action. Don't be afraid to get started. Just do it.
4. **Never Stop Learning:** Go back to school or read books. Get training and acquire skills.
5. **Be Persistent And Work Hard:** Success is a marathon, not a sprint. Never give up.
6. **Learn To Analyze Details:** Get all the facts, all the input. Learn from your mistakes.
7. **Focus Your Time And Money:** Don't let other people or things distract you.
8. **Don't Be Afraid To Innovate; Be Different:** Following the herd is a sure way to mediocrity.
9. **Deal And Communicate With People Effectively:** No person is an island. Learn to understand and motivate others.
10. **Be Honest And Dependable; Take Responsibility:** Otherwise, Numbers 1-9 won't matter.

This nugget was gleaned from: Investor's Business Daily and Carol Webster, one of our readers and the owner of Cassel International, provided this nugget to us.

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## Get Focused!

*January 2009*

Focus is a habit that serves us well in our business and in our personal lives. In these trying times, it is important for us to get and stay focused.

Here are 9 tips to help us develop and reinforce this habit of focus:

1. Find your life's passion and allow it to become the guiding force behind the priorities in your life.
2. Save five minutes at the end of each day for planning. You'll begin tomorrow with a clear action plan.
3. Live your life in the moment. There may never be another moment - this time is what you have. Savor it.
4. Make a "to-do" list each day and work from it. You'll be amazed at how quickly the items are completed.
5. Tackle your most dreaded task first. Getting it out of the way will make for a much smoother day.
6. Create an environment with no distraction. Turn off everything that has a screen or a ringer and see what you can accomplish in five minutes.
7. Develop laser-like focus by answering this question and taking action: "What is the one thing that I can do to better my world?" Then do it!
8. List the distraction in your life (e.g. stained carpet, a broken hinge, a draining relationship, etc.). Eliminate these and you will be free to focus.
9. Pick a personal theme for the year and post it in a conspicuous spot. Next year, pick a new theme!

*Provided by Susan Depew, On Target Marketing Coach 615-312-7238 [susan@ontargetmarketingcoach.com](mailto:susan@ontargetmarketingcoach.com)*

[www.ontargetmarketingcoach.com](http://www.ontargetmarketingcoach.com)

## Get Clear!

*April 2009*

As things get tougher, it is time to concentrate on what really matters: our faith, family, friends, health, and our freedom. It is time to get clear on what is important to you.

Here are seven suggestions to help you with that:

1. Know your values. Live each day giving them your fullest attention. Examples of values are respect, family, leadership, teaching and service.
2. Ask the tough question: "Who have I hurt along the way in my life?" Find them now and ask for forgiveness, even if they are in the wrong.
3. Ask yourself the tougher question: "If I die tomorrow, what will I regret doing?" Stop whatever it may be, now!
4. Ask yourself the toughest question: "If I die tomorrow, what will I regret not doing?" Start doing it, now!
5. Learn to see the big picture. Remember the phrase, *You can't see the forest for the trees*. If you begin to look at the trees, the forest will become clearer.
6. Examine your life for the amount of emotional baggage you carry. If you could weigh it, how much would it weigh? Unburden yourself from that load.
7. Transform your regrets. By viewing past mistakes as a learning experience, you can eliminate guilt and reap the rewards of a hard-earned education.

*Provided by Susan Depue, On Target Marketing Coach 615-312-7238 [susan@ontargetmarketingcoach.com](mailto:susan@ontargetmarketingcoach.com)*

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## "Good Enough- Never is"

January 2010

My grandfather always told me- anything worth doing was worth doing well. How often do we allow mediocrity to creep into our work place and personal life? How often do you accept "good enough". I want to share some important advice my grandfather gave to me

growing up....**Good Better Best, Never Let It Rest Until Good Becomes Better, & Better Becomes Best**

So ask yourself- did you bring your "A" Game today? Are you striving for excellence or just

"good enough"? In today's competitive market - just good enough will not bring you the desired outcomes.

My grandfather passed away almost 20 years ago, but his words of wisdom stick with me. I

wear his class ring as a reminder "Good Enough, does not live with me"!

-Amy Schmidt

## 10 Guidelines to Fail Forward

May 2010

### 1. **Appreciate the value of failure.**

Very few unacquainted with failure will ever know the true joy of success. Don't be afraid of defeat. Remind yourself that you're one step closer to your potential and your dream. You are learning to fail forward.

### 2. **Don't take failure personally.**

Accept your limitations as well as your strengths. So you messed up. Try again. Making mistakes is like breathing; it's something you'll keep doing as long as you're alive. Even more so if you are up to something big. It's not personal. Learn to live with it and move on.

### 3. **Let failure redirect you.**

Mistakes need to direct you. You may need to change your direction. You may need to take a detour or a rest. Look at the lesson in this.

### 4. **Keep a sense of humor.**

When all else fails, laugh. It's easier to laugh when everything is going great; but it's important to laugh when everything is going wrong.

### 5. **Ask why, not who.**

Don't look for someone to blame. Look for ways to improve yourself, your process, your service, and your product.

### 6. **Make failure a learning experience.**

If you're not continually learning, you're going to make the same mistakes over and over again. if you fall down as long as you learn something as you get up.

### 7. **Don't let failure keep you down.**

Henry Ford said, "Failure is the opportunity to begin again more intelligently."

### 8. **Use failure as a gauge for growth.**

Most successes failed an average of seven times before they succeeded. Success is coming in fourth, exhausted, but excited because you came in fifth the last time. It's making progress. That's what it means to fail forward and avoid an unnecessary detour.

### 9. **See the big picture.**

Perspective is necessary. Failure is not final – unless you quit. We all make mistakes. We can all come back.

### 10. **Don't give up!**

Failure is a sign that you should explore other opportunities. Success comes as the result of good, old fashioned tenacity.

*By Ellen Silverman If you enjoyed this nugget, you will enjoy the book, Your Road Map for Success, by John C. Maxwell, Thomas Nelson, 2002. It is full of stories, quotes, and reminders that success is a journey.*

## Nurturing the Relationships that Matter; They All Matter

July 2010

It is important to build relationships with the right people and companies regardless of their buying time. If a potential client doesn't buy today we unfortunately drop them like a hot potato rather than continue to nurture that relationship into fruition.

### 5 Tips to Nurture Relationships

1. Companies don't buy the people do. Give a human touch. Make a phone call, send a card or take just a few moments to send an email to see how they are.
2. Be an advisor not a salesperson. A trusted advisor will always be more welcome than a hard-core salesperson.
3. Is your customer here today and gone tomorrow? A new way of thinking: A customer is for life. Are you willing to invest what it takes to get their business?
4. It isn't just the first impression that counts. It's every impression that you make. Be consistent always.
5. Be personable. Your clients should want to talk to you - if they don't you might be trying too hard to get the sale rather than develop the relationship.
6. Nurturing relationships reminds me of dating. If we take our "dates" for granted eventually they will replace us with someone who doesn't. Evaluate your courting relationship with your clients. If you were getting the treatment you are giving would you continue? If so, keep doing what you are doing - if not it's time to make changes today.

- Laura Lake

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## Resolutions

January 2011

As I worked on my 2011 resolutions, I found the following

*"He has achieved success who has lived well, laughed often and loved much; who has gained the respect of intelligent men and the love of little children; who has filled his niche and accomplished his task; who has left the world better than he found it, whether by an improved poppy, a perfect poem, or a rescued soul; who has never lacked appreciation of earth's beauty or failed to express it; who has always looked for the best in others and given them the best he had; whose life was an inspiration; whose memory a benediction."*

-Bessie Anderson Stanley

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## Commitment

February 2011

Are you truly committed or are you going through the motions?

*"Once a man has made a commitment to a way of life, he puts the greatest strength in the world behind him. It's something we call heart power. Once a man has made this commitment, nothing will stop him short of success."*

*"The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor."*

*"I would say that the quality of each man's life is the full measure of that man's commitment of excellence and victory - whether it be football, whether it be business, whether it be politics or government or what have you."*

-Vince Lombardi

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*"It's not the load that breaks you down, it's the way you carry it."*

- Lena Horne

In the past year, it seems as though many of us are being asked to do more with less. Provide more patient care, with less funding. Complete more work in less hours. Sometimes it may feel as though we reach the snapping point. This quote helped me to focus less on the load, but evaluate how I carry it. I plan to focus more on the good and positive.

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## Focus

*March 2011*

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## Perfection

*April 2011*

*"Perfection is not attainable. But if we chase perfection, we can catch excellence."*

- Vince Lombardi

How much time do you spend chasing perfection? Or do you settle for good enough? When was the last time someone found fault with you for wanting something to be "perfect"? (not often- I bet) Look back to times of criticism of your performance and ask yourself if you truly contributed your best effort. You may be surprised that the criticism was just.

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## Sales Statistics

*May 2011*

- 48% of sales people never follow up with a prospect
- 25% of sales people make a second contact and stop
- 12% of sales people only make three contacts and stop
- Only 10% of sales people make more than three contacts
- 2% of sales are made on the first contact
- 3% of sales are made on the second contact
- 5% of sales are made on the third contact
- 10% of sales are made on the fourth contact
- 80% of sales are made on the fifth to twelfth contact

So- how is your follow up? Is it follow-up or gave up?

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## In the spirit of Memorial Day...

*June 2011*

*"A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself."*

*- Joseph Campbell*

Working with seniors we have the opportunity to be a hero for someone, or to praise those that have already become heroes. Relish in the service you provide to the greatest generation and strive to be the hero for those you serve.

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## Motivate

*July 2011*

*"Coaches who can outline plays on a black board are a dime a dozen. The ones who win get inside their player and motivate."*

*- Vince Lombardi*

How are we getting inside the hearts and minds of those we serve and those we serve with? Learn more about what motivates those around you.

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## Listening To Our Language

*August 2011*

*- by Stephen Covey taken from "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" Habit 1- Be Proactive*

<b>Reactive Language</b>	<b>Proactive Language</b>
<i>There's nothing I can do.</i>	<i>Let's Look at our alternatives.</i>
<i>That's just the way I am.</i>	<i>I can choose a different approach.</i>
<i>He makes me so mad.</i>	<i>I control my own feelings.</i>
<i>They won't allow that.</i>	<i>I can present the idea.</i>
<i>I can't.</i>	<i>I choose.</i>
<i>I must.</i>	<i>I prefer.</i>
<i>If only.</i>	<i>I will.</i>

*"A serious problem with reactive language is that it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy."*

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## Manifest Integrity

*September 2011*

*One of the most important ways to manifest integrity is to be loyal to those who are not present. When you defend those who are absent, you retain the trust of those present.*

*- by Stephen Covey*

This goes beyond simply not saying something about another that you wouldn't say directly to the person. It is to NOT speak negatively about those not present.

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## Hot Tip For Managing Your Calendar

*October 2011*

Having a hard time managing all of the events and networking opportunities you attend? Well, there may be an easier way to populate and update your calendar using the resources already posted on Retirement Connection's website - here's how:

1. Go to the [Networking Page](#).
2. Click on the button for the [Events Calendar](#) at the top of that page.
3. Once the calendar opens, on the bottom right, click the button for "**Google Calendar**".
4. This will add this calendar and all supporting info to your calendar page if you use Google Calendar.
5. You can then also sync Google Calendar with Outlook, smart phones and other applications.

What's so great about this- as meeting locations or topics change- your calendar is automatically updated as we receive the updated the details. We also provide a web link to more information for your calendar. The networking calendar remains independent from your personal entries for quick viewing.

We are happy to assist you in setting this up- Call Amy

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## Success Requires Hard Work...

*November 2011*

*"Hard work beats talent, when talent doesn't work hard."*

- Tim Notke

*"Genius is seldom recognized for what it is: a great capacity for hard work."*

- Henry Ford

*"Hard work spotlights the character of people: some turn up their sleeves, some turn up their noses, and some don't turn up at all."*

- Sam Ewig

*"Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work." - Thomas Edison*

*"Success is your dreams with work clothes on."*

- Anonymous

*"It's called WORK for a reason- no one starts at the top unless you're digging a ditch".*

- William B. Shaw (my grandfather)

He often had a simple but inspirational message- but mostly he led by example. He passed away more than 20 years ago, but remains my measure for work ethic.

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## Success is a Journey - Not a Destination

*December 2011*

*"I've missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed."*

- Michael Jordan

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As I set my personal and professional Resolutions/Goals (whatever you happen to call them) for the upcoming year, I am also taking the time to reflect back on some of the "not so wonderful" moments. Some of my most important lessons were found in what seemed as failure. My biggest successes were born from having to redirect after adversity. Remember- it doesn't matter how many times you get knocked down, just how many times you get up.

## Preparation

*January 2012*

*"Luck is when preparation meets opportunity."*

*-Seneca*

In setting your goals and resolutions, have you *prepared* for the upcoming new year? Have you done all you can so that when the opportunity comes your way you will be lucky? Start today! Prepare for the things you can.

## Reputation & Character

*February 2012*

*"Reputation is what people think you are. Character is who you really are. Take care of your character and your reputation will take care of itself."*

*-Anonymous*

I remember asking my grandfather for advice growing up and he replied *"Do you want to be liked or do you want to be respected."* I asked "can't I be both". His answer-*"Not always!"*

This was a hard lesson to learn, because most of us prefer to make the easy choice- to be liked. When your character and values are tested, being respected is more challenging.

## Success vs. Failure

*March 2012*

*"In order to succeed, your desire for success should be greater than your fear of failure"*

*"Decide that you want it more than you are afraid of it."*

*-Bill Cosby*

When we started Retirement Connection almost four years ago it was a tough economic climate to begin a new business. Many asked me how they could trust that I would be around down the road. I found myself with one reply- "I don't know how to lose". This doesn't mean it has always been without struggle and constant adjustment. But - My desire is still greater than my fear.

## Priorities and Progress

*April 2012*

*"No matter what you've done for yourself or for humanity, if you can't look back on having given love and attention to your own family, what have you really accomplished?"*

*-Lee Iacocca*

While building a new business the past few years, I have sometimes forgotten why I wanted to work for myself after all. I wanted more time with my family and to make a difference in my community. I am still a work in progress and struggle to make my schedule reflect my priorities, but getting better!

## Courage

May 2012

*"Find the Courage to hold on to your beliefs, even if the world around you chooses to believe differently. Have the Courage to change those beliefs that no longer fit the person you have become. In doing so, you truly become yourself."*

-Chinese Proverb

Personally, I don't seem to struggle as much in speaking my mind- even when others disagree (surprise). I do find, however, that once I have been very, very outspoken it is harder to back away from the statement. I am working to be more moderate in my language and allow for more insight as the topic develops. Maybe first- I need to understand that having a belief is different that jumping up and down and shouting said belief.

## Survival of the Fit?

June 2012

*"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change."*

-Charles Darwin

At Retirement Connection we constantly adjust as the market changes. We add content to the guide, improve the comparison grids, update the website, add news and event postings, and now we also coordinate hospital resource fairs. Truly, we do the work so that you can do what matters. We are proud to help you make the difference you do in your community and hope you'll continue to rely on us for support to help you achieve your goals. Thank you for all your suggestions the past 4 years.

## Surround Yourself with Positive

July 2012

*"Understand that you will be like those with whom your surround yourself. Your environment is stronger than you are".*

-Chinese Proverb

It is often easier to get pulled into the negative, rather than to walk away or seek a positive. We hear gossip and frustration several times a day. Do you choose to participate in the negative, walk away, or find the silver lining? I want to find the silver lining- but often still having to work at it.

## On Completing Tasks

August 2012

*"I long to accomplish a great and noble task; but it is my chief duty to accomplish small tasks as if they were great and noble."*

-Helen Keller

My grandfather taught me that "anything worth doing, is worth doing well". I now take great pride in small things that maybe

others don't always see or care about; but I personally take satisfaction in knowing the attention to detail that I have given. That is my gift to him and his legacy to me. -Amy

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## The Right Way of Doing Things

*September 2012*

*"It takes less time to do a thing right than to explain why you did it wrong."  
- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

Often in business we see people take short cuts or justify their negative behavior. I think there are two ways to interpret this quote. One- you save time by not having to redo the work or continue to patch a problem, because you took the time to get it right the first time. Two- if integrity and ethics guide our decisions the justification will not be needed. -Amy

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## Practice

*October 2012*

*"Practice isn't the thing you do when you're good. It's the thing you do that makes you good."  
-Malcolm Gladwell, "Outliers-The Story of Success"*

A friend recently gave me the book, "Outliers", mentioned above. I learned the biggest difference between success and failure is the determination to keep going. There is no such thing as an overnight success- you just do not hear about the years it took before success occurred. (just a note- WD40 stands for Water Displacement 40th formula, but you never would have heard of this product if the company stopped after 39 failed attempts.) -Amy

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## What It Takes To Be Number 1

*November 2012*

*"Winning is not a sometime thing; it's an all-time thing. You don't win once in a while, you don't do things right once in a while, you do them right all the time. Winning is habit. Unfortunately, so is losing."*

*"A man who's late for meetings or for the bus won't run his pass routes right. He'll be sloppy"  
-Vince Lombardi*

These are two of my favorite quotes because they remind me to be consistent and diligent. We all want to bask in the glory of success. But the success did not happen in a vacuum; it is the daily focus on the details that brings victory. Being on time, being prepared, being present everyday- these things bring the game day win. -Amy

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## Leadership

*December 2012*

*"Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without the strategy."  
- Norman Schwarzkopf*

You can change a poor strategy and adjust course pretty quickly if needed. Poor character is not as easily adjusted. It took years of influence, thoughts, actions and habits to build that character. -Amy

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## Becoming Real

January 2013

*"It doesn't happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in your joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."*

-Velveteen Rabbit"

This is one of my favorite quotes of all time and was one of the readings at our wedding. I love the ideal that to be "real" it takes much time and you have been worn out. The word "real" can mean so many different things when you take it out of the context of stuffed animals and into our daily lives.

-Amy

## Overcoming Barriers

February 2013

*"The brick walls are there for a reason. The brick walls are not there to keep us out. The brick walls are there to give us a chance to show how badly we want something. Because the brick walls are there to stop the people who don't want it badly enough. They're there to stop the other people."*

-Randy Pausch, *The Last Lecture*

Do you see a barrier as a stop sign or a new challenge?

The only barriers that really exist are the ones we place on ourselves. Overcoming any obstacle takes work, but usually it is just the determination to move forward one brick at a time because you choose not to quit. -Amy

## Overcoming Obstacles

March 2013

*"The brick walls are there for a reason. The brick walls are not there to keep us out. The brick walls are there to give us a chance to show how badly we want something. Because the brick walls are there to stop the people who don't want it badly enough. They're there to stop the other people."*

-Randy Pausch, *The Last Lecture*

When faced with obstacles, it can be hard to see an opportunity and not just a barrier. Take the opportunity to push yourself and see what you are made of and how much you can achieve when you dig deep. Sometimes these great obstacles will become your greatest accomplishments. - Amy

## Telling The Truth

April 2013

*There are only two mistakes one can make along the road to truth; not going all the way, and not starting*

- Buddha

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In a meeting with all seemingly agreeable perspectives, it can be challenging to share a dissenting opinion. It is then rewarding when you find others felt the same way- but were not ready not to speak up, but happy you did. Then it gets tougher, because now there is less control of where the conversation moves. It was easier and cleaner when everyone seemed to agree; but will there be as much discovery? Choose discovery, listen to all opinions, and be willing to change yours.

- Amy

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## Integrity & Honesty

*May 2013*

*"Integrity is telling myself the truth. And honesty is telling the truth to other people."*

- Spencer Johnson

Sometimes we all try to "justify" what we have done, said, or even thought. Being honest with yourself can be more difficult than being honest with others, because we know when we are not looking at the whole picture.

- Amy

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## Accomplishment

*June 2013*

*"It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit."*

- Harry S. Truman

I don't have a commentary this month; I believe the quote speaks for itself.

- Amy

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## Make a Choice

*July 2013*

*"For every minute you are angry you lose sixty seconds of happiness."*

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

We forget that we have a choice in how we respond to an event? We can choose to be angry, let something just roll off our backs, or choose to focus on a positive. The anger keeps us from moving on, and we are not paying attention when the good stuff happens. We have a choice- which did you make?

- Amy

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## Judgment

*August 2013*

*"We tend to judge others by their behaviors and ourselves by our intentions."*

- Albert F. Schlieder

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We often excuse our own bad behavior because that is not how we "intended" to come across. We may be more forgiving if we remember that others may have "intended" a different outcome as well. Or better yet- try not to judge others, but instead take that effort to look more introspectively at ourselves.

- Amy

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## Listening

*September 2013*

*"Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood"*

- Stephen R. Covey

We often listen with our own experiences in mind and with the intent to reply. Sometimes the planned reply gets in the way of truly listening. I personally, interrupt to often and I am working to listen without feeling a need to reply.

(as I said- I am working on it- not yet mastering it).

- Amy

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## Calmness

*October 2013*

*"In all activity practice Calmness." To remain calm amidst the chaos of life requires a tremendous amount of focused energy. Be calmly active and actively calm."*

- Chinese Proverb

After just going to print for the Salem edition, prepping for Southern Oregon and beginning the wrap up for Portland/Vancouver- all while planning 6 hospital vendor fairs and 3 release parties...Chaos is an understatement of our present office dynamic. There is a lot of energy running amuck, which doesn't always translate to productivity. Focusing that energy is where the magic happens.

- Amy

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## Good Enough Doesn't Live Here

*November 2013*

*"If you don't have time to do it right, when will you have time to do it over?"*

- John Wooden

When things get hectic we all have a tendency to comply with "good enough". Resist that urge and take the few extra minutes to make the adjustments needed to move from good to great. That is where the magic happens. Doing it well once really does take less time (in the long run).

- Amy

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## Perseverance

*December 2013*

*"Your persistence is your measure of your faith in yourself"*

- Brian Tracey

I have failed often when starting most of my endeavors, but I choose to push through. I have had to adjust course, adapt my approach, or overcome an obstacle. I was willing to fail at the method, but not willing to fail at the goal. Adapt, adjust or overcome, but still persist; if you don't have faith in yourself to accomplish the goal- why should others have faith in you?

- Amy

## Problem Solving

*January 2014*

*"The way to remove darkness from a room is simply to turn on a light. In the same way- to rid yourself of any difficulty, concentrate on the solution rather than the problem."*

- Chinese Proverb

When we get busy or overwhelmed, it's easier to focus on the daunting tasks and lack of time- not knowing where to begin. I find it helps me to pick one thing, complete the one thing and just move to the next. Don't focus on what is not complete, but relish in the joy of those accomplished. Just keep plugging along.

- Amy

## A Life Well Lived

*February 2014*

*"At the end of the day, I will ask myself- did I love enough, did I laugh enough, did I make a difference?"*

- Unknown

Last month we lost a great friend and colleague when Jim Miller of Golden Harvest Music passed away. I continue to be touched as his name reappears in so many conversations that are not remotely related to his direct business. His contributions continue to unfold and be seen- this was a life well lived! At the end of the day- he loved enough, laughed enough and definitely made a difference. I hope to do the same.

- Amy

## Creating Magic

*March 2014*

*"It's not the magic that makes it work; it's the way we work that makes it magic."*

*From the Book "Creating Magic" by Lee Cockerell*

I have loved this book, written by a former Disney Executive, and continue to reread it. I am learning that great leadership isn't

about mastering impossibly complex management theories. We can become better leaders by infusing quality, character, courage, enthusiasm, and integrity into our workplace and into our lives. It doesn't happen all at once and takes a great deal of consistent effort and WORK, but gradually the Magic begins to happen.

-Amy

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## Chasing Perfection

April 2014

Repeat from [April 2011](#)

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## Be a Dreamer

May 2014

*"All successful men and women are big dreamers. They imagine what their future could be, ideal in every respect, and then they work every day toward their distant vision, that goal or purpose."*

- Brian Tracy

Success is not simply given to us and will not suddenly sneak up on us. It starts out as a dream that we combine with a plan of action. If you can dream of your success, then it's likely to happen.

(-commentary this month from Meghan, not Amy)

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## Good is the Enemy of Great

June 2014

*- and that is one of the key reasons why we have so little that becomes great.*

*- Jim Collins (from the book, Good to Great)*

I see people and business settle for "doing a good job", when a great job was very possible and achievable. It is hard to push forth with the extra effort when good seems to be an acceptable standard. Push yourself to find greatness. Greatness in performance, in resources, in technology, in communication, in follow through. Don't settle on being good when great is possible.

- Amy

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## Be Responsive to Change

July 2014

*"It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change."*

*- Charles Darwin*

In today's social media and web filled world, the business climate seems to change faster than ever before. It becomes increasingly important to stay abreast of emerging technology, business protocols and best practices. Be willing to learn new things, and be willing to change what you thought you already mastered.

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- Amy

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## Character

*August 2014*

*"Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without the strategy."*

- Norman Schwarzkopf

Strategy can be learned, or you can seek the counsel of others. Your character has been developed over years of thoughts, actions, and habits. Your character shines through when no one is looking, and when times are stressful it will be put to the test. Will yours pass the test?

- Amy

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## Don't Get Distracted by Competition

*September 2014*

*"The competitor to be feared is one who never bothers about you at all, but goes on making his own business better all the time."*

- Henry Ford

How much time do you spend fussing about competition? Any time is too much! That's time that could be spent focusing on your mission and your benefits and your growth. Know your competition, but don't obsess or distract yourself. They may actually be a great referral source.

- Amy

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## Environment

*October 2014*

*"Understand that you will be like those with whom you surround yourself. Your environment is stronger than you are."*

- Chinese Proverb

What do you want? Do your choices support your wants and goals? If not- make a change today. Call a good influence and schedule time to meet. Be around those that are kinder, smarter, more patient, more flexible. Surround yourself with examples that you want to emulate.

- Amy

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## Imitation vs. Innovation

*November 2014*

*"Imitation is a kind of artless flattery."*

- Eustace Budgell, 1714

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*"Imitation is the sincerest of flattery."*

- Charles Caleb Colton, 1820

When I was in high school, my grandfather shared with me- "those that copy others, do so because they lack innovation or the confidence to carry it through". I am thankful for my family whose support has always increased my confidence, and I am proud to have built Retirement Connection by focusing on innovative ideas without having to imitate the hard work of others. It was not easy to start a business in 2008 in a down economy, but now it makes it all more precious to do so with our integrity intact.

- Amy

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## Run Your Own Race

*December 2014*

*"Don't be preoccupied with what the competition may be doing. Just like a marathon, some people start fast and fade or start slowly and pick up the pace later. Keep focused on what you're doing, and you won't have to worry about over- or underestimating your peers. Besides, great teammates root for their co-workers, knowing that there's plenty of opportunity to go around if people pull together to grow the business."*

-Marty Fukuda, entrepreneur

This is a good reminder for me. In high school and college sports, I excelled in team sports, but struggled more individually. I needed the comparison to others for motivation. As I have "matured", I often remind myself that we are all at different points in our race.

- Amy

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## Take Ownership

*January 2015*

*"A man can fail many times, but he isn't a failure until he begins to blame somebody else. "*

- John Burroughs

We try very hard on our team to manage those above, beneath and beside us. When we fail, we will each own it (even if we are not the cause). When it goes well- the team did it. When it goes badly- the person taking the call owns it. Blaming another person never makes it better.

- Amy

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## Work Ethic

*February 2015*

*"Yesterday's home runs don't win today's games."*

- Babe Ruth

As we grow our new guide in Southern Oregon and start working with our new team in Puget Sound we must continue to focus on the basics that helped get us here- customer service and networking. Being somewhat successful once, by no means guarantees

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our future success in any market. We still need to attend batting practice every week, even though we have previously hit a home run. The game changes and so do the pitchers.

- Amy

## Opportunity

*March 2015*

*"Do one thing every day that scares you."*

- Eleanor Roosevelt

Every time we hire a new person, add a new feature to the website, promote a new event, or open a new market - I am always afraid. Afraid of failure; afraid I will disappoint others; afraid of the financial implications and more. But in the long run I need to remember that I did my due diligence, made an informed decision and remember I can adjust course as needed. My advise to you- feel the fear and do it anyway. Use the fear to motivate yourself.

- Amy

## Opposition

*April 2015*

*"Don't be afraid of opposition. Remember, a kite rises against, not with, the wind."*

- Hamilton Wright Mabie

Sometimes competition doesn't always feel warm and fuzzy. But in reality- competition drives improvement and innovation. Our competition makes us stronger and better by forcing us to provide improved service and products.

- Amy

## The Essence of Survival

*May 2015*

*"Every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up. It knows it must run faster than the fastest lion or it will be killed...every morning a lion wakes up. It knows it must outrun the slowest gazelle or it will starve to death. It doesn't matter whether you are a lion or a gazelle...when the sun comes up, you'd better be running."*

- Successories

Every day I wake up, hoping to be the Lion. Sometimes I am, but not always. My days are more successful when I am proactive in managing my schedule and look a bit into the week or month, instead of reactionary when my schedule begins to get the best of me. I hope on the days when I am the gazelle- that I go quickly and peacefully.

- Amy

## Fussiness

*June 2015*

*The less specific you are about what you order. The more likely you are to get what you asked for.*

*- our waiter "Jerry" from a family dinner*

*Is it because you are too picky and looking for something to be wrong OR because you are easy going and easy to appease? Traveling in the third world, you would walk in and ask "do you have food?" Here we enter a 5 star restaurant and need to edit, add and remove ingredients from the creation of a professional after we chose to enter their domain.*

*- Amy and mostly Lyman*

## Knowing What You Want

*July 2015*

*"Never trade what you want in the moment for what you want the most"*

*- unknown*

*Sometimes I lose sight of long term goals and benefits, because I get distracted by short term gains or struggles. I may not stick with the diet because I wanted the chocolate; or I get frustrated with an individual and may lose sight of the larger relationship with the overall company. Stay focused on the bigger picture and your long term goals- it matters more to win the war, not the battle.*

*- Amy*

## Commitment

*August 2015*

*"If you're interested, you'll do what's convenient; If you're committed, you'll do whatever it takes."*

*- John Assaraf*

*Are you doing what's convenient, or whatever it takes? A person with a strong will is someone who can dig deep down and do whatever it takes to get things into motion. In order to grow and expand you must always step out of your comfort zone and into uncertainty. Take action and be committed in all you do.*

*- Amy*

## Significance and Purpose

*September 2015*

*Your Gifts are not about you, Your Leadership is not about you, Your Purpose is not about you. A life of significance is about serving those who need your gifts, your leadership and your purpose."*

*- K Hall*

*Do you give freely of your talents and your time, or do you sit on the sidelines? Or do you only share your talents with those who*

can help you in return? To be significant and relevant, share your talents and grace with all those you can - especially those you find challenging (they probably need it most) .

- Amy

## Happiness

*October 2015*

*'Happiness is not the absence of problems; it's the ability to deal with them.'*

- Steve Maraboli

*Sometimes the things that cause us the most strain, often become the most beloved parts of our life. As a parent, this could not be more true. The inaugural edition of Puget Sound was truly a labor of love, but offered many challenges since we did not yet have a full time person on staff to focus exclusively on the new guide. BUT- the Puget Sound edition broke every goal we had for our growth, made us appreciate our current staff more, and helped us find our newest team member, Dale. We could not be more happy, proud, or grateful.*

- Amy

## Adversity

*November 2015*

*"A successful man is one who can lay a firm foundation with the bricks others have thrown at him."*

- David Brinkley

*Some of my best ideas and closest relationships have come from adversity. It is in managing those "bricks" that shows what we are capable of. Sometimes the best solution follows a big challenge. Embrace the struggles thrown your way, because it can be the beginning of your next big idea!*

- Amy

## Legacy

*December 2015*

*"The best way to be missed when you're gone is to stand for something when you're here."*

- Seth Godin

*The past year I have lost several friends and I miss them and their insight. But- I am often surprised at how everyone appears to move on. I often wonder if I will make a big enough difference and will I be missed for more than a brief fleeting moment. My grandfather passed away more than 20 years ago and I still reference him and look to our time together for advice. He made a difference. What will you be remembered for?*

- Amy

