

Rebuilding A Better America!

Tuesday, 17 March 2009

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Thoreau

"Starting Over... Rebuilding a Better America!"

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So what does this mean and why am I "OVER THE EDGE" about hacking at the ROOTS! of evil but also of America's challenged economy (to help the people effected most by this economic downturn) and the business of creating success on merit, quality, excellence and high ethics.

My goals each year relate always to impacting people's lives in positive ways. This year I come at this goal every way I can ... I want to put people back to work, but not just work...MEANINGFUL work! And to inspire people to live their dreams, start businesses, be creative and to use their art forms to change the world. I am but one person, however, one touch may influence someone to touch 10 more people so the upside is big.

For 2009, I am grounding myself in Compassion, Commitment, Empathy, Purpose and Intent changing the world one person and one business at a time. But you might be saying right now that is Obama's job, or we need better leadership in the country or what could I possibly do to effect putting people back to work hacking at the root of my most passionate cause? Well , I let me share a story (rather a gift) that touched me so deeply it proved that one person at a time can be most effective!

Over the Edge story of the month... Starting Over! CHANGE STARTS HERE...it starts with you, me and our community.

The Birthday Gift of A Life Time!

I may not tell this story with the most accurate of details so forgive me if a name or date is incorrect. I was so amazed at the story's evolution and so absorbed in a man standing before me not afraid to share his emotions allowing myself to take in the information being shared... to really Listen, Absorb and ground myself in the person speaking without interruption to feel this story and his words as much as hearing them. Mind you, just two weeks earlier, I'd been sitting around a boardroom table with this same man and 10 others and barely shared 2 words together so as things really unfold I am touched and impacted to believe the master plan of life purposely laid its path to unfold as things did, on my father's birthday. Now...on with the story!

My husband (Richard) and I were sitting having pre-dinner wine with friends just before the Thanksgiving holiday as their

guest in their home (we've been to this home 50 times before and the same people join us most of the time). This particular night one of the regular guests happened to bring a friend of his to join this small dinner party. The pre-dinner chit chat and laughter was just starting when someone said something about hotdogs. This guest friend perked up and said something about the best hotdogs he'd ever eaten came from a location in my home town. So I stop here to share with you my readers, that in my home town there were three (count them), three places to get hot dogs. One owned by my great aunt and uncle, another owned by my aunt (my father's sister) and another (and of course the best, most famous of them all!) owned by my father's Williams Candy Kitchen.

The new guest was trying to remember the names of the places he visited and I sat while he noted the locations of (but could not remember the names off hand) Taffy's Soda Shop, Williams Candy Kitchen and The Tip Top Cafe. He remembered the prices and started peeling off his menu selection as though he was ordering a hot dog right then and there, with slaw, chili, onions, toasted warm bun, mustard and so on and his fond memories of each meal ended at each of the shops with a 6 Cent scoop of ice cream (he emphasized the ice cream! as it was especially cheap) And I just sat and listened for a moment smiling not saying much but soaking in his words reliving my own memories of my family, the closeness of our family and the closeness of the people to our family in the community we served. At this point I share with him, that I too, am from this town and those shops were all owned by my family. And there was a sudden realization that we're this man and I were in some way connected.

The Gift of Listening

The guest sharing his story (we'll call him Rob for the sake of the story) said, "the man that owned the shop," Rob pauses thinking which man and the name of that man, made such a difference in my life, he saved my life. And I went through my list of family members trying to help Rob pin point which man he was describing and I landed on Tommy (my father). To my amazement our, now honored dinner guest, Rob, began to tear up and I knew instantly my father's impact on this person. All of the dinner guests sipping wine and standing around as you do pre-dinner chatting, sipping and nibbling were stopped in awe of the story unfolding.

This man was choking on his words and I am holding back my own emotions (for what reason I do not know). Rob is now in his early 60's and he explained he felt he was a troubled teen (my father in conversation later that week confirmed that this man ONLY THOUGHT HE WAS A TROUBLED TEEN!).

I told him Tommy was my father and these were all my family. He just stopped and stared at me in amazement like God or whatever spiritual force you may believe in, had planted me there just for this purpose on this night. He had just four days early told some friends of the memories of the man that he felt made a big difference in his life, remember and reminiscing over the hot dogs first which led to the memory of my father. He said he basically saved him from many potential ruins of teen-age challenges.

He showed me a game my father use to play with him hiding coins in one hand and then tricking him and teaching him to look in places where you would not expect for things you need to find. Rob then told me about a letter he had written to dad when he was in Germany as he got older and began to really appreciate the impact my dad had made on his life and he'd invited my father to his wedding and I would later find out that evening that my mother misplaced the invitation and contact information from the invite so they never were able to connect with Rob.

The story unfolded further as he started to talk about one of my cousins and how Rob's admiration for my cousin as he went off to West Point was unbearable and his desire to follow that path broken due to his eyes not testing perfect vision. So Rob ended up in the Army at Fort Brag and there at Fort Brag he shared how he started thinking he'd not ever be deployed anywhere; until one day an immediate lock down closed off all communications to outside world as they prepared him and his group to be deployed Vietnam. He noted it happened so quickly he had no ability to call his family and say goodbye (as it might have been his last goodbye) and as he was preparing my cousin a Lieutenant (an officer at this point) happened to be at Fort Brag at this time and was walking the grounds recognizing a fellow hometown person. My cousin, the Lieutenant, walked up and shared a moment with Rob after recognizing him and my cousin was the person that delivered the message back to his family that he was headed to Vietnam.

Rob's tears were rolling down his cheeks as he told me and the other guests what the touching gifts of my father and my cousin had done for him, how it was so by chance that the Lieutenant just happened by at that moment and how he had no idea how he recognized him out of the crowd of men but he did and was kind enough to stop. Rob continued to share what my dad meant to him and how much my dad touched his life over all these years. All of this in the matter of 20 minutes of opening pre-dinner chit chat with a group of people we all knew but this one new guest and everyone was listening with such amazement to this story as it unfolded and the touching gifts of two people (my family) made in the life of this one man.

One Touch Equals Hundreds!

This person, Rob we've called him here in this article, has grown up into a wonderful and successful business man and has a wonderful family. He is compassionate, not afraid to share his emotions, he's lived a life of purpose with a desire to touch others as he has been touched and impacted in his past. Rob employees many people, he has served his country and he continues to give back to the community. He gifted me that evening; a gift I could give to my father on his birthday. As we called my father after the story was told and reconnected these two men who have not spoken in over 30 years. I got to share a gift with my father of letting him know how much he has touched, changed the lives of and impacted the people he's known and worked with over the years. My father has lived and

continues to live a purpose filled life, he believes whole heartedly that people are to be valued and treated with great

respect and he believes in mentoring teens, youth, young business owners always giving back to the community. Living a purpose to touch and positively impact people every day. So he did not just make serve hotdogs, or conduct his other businesses for just the sake of conducting business. He's been a leader in his multiple businesses and his community to the benefit of impacting people.

How can we live a life that impacts others and build out businesses to be more purposeful? It really all starts with these five components: Compassion, Commitment, Empathy, Purpose and Intent.

Six tips on impacting the lives of others in all you do:

LISTEN, truly listen to people and hear what they are not saying as much as what is said

DIALOGUE is a process of allowing all thoughts to flow without interruption. Respecting anyone who is speaking. It is a "don't tell"; but discuss, share, invite feedback, ask.. "what do you think"; way of meeting.

Commit to connecting more deeply with your customers, your family, with your community this connection will be a great multiplier if you open yourself up … and why not get closer to your clients anyway!

Share and Empathize with others

State your purpose and build your purpose into everything you do

Set Intent… make it real, establish your intent and state it, write it, commit to your intent

So happy New Year to all of my readers, I wish you all a brilliant 2009! Open yourself up to be more compassionate, more committed to a path, be more empathetic with others, know your purpose whether it is for this year as a goal of change or it is your life purpose. State it and set your intent! Know what you intend to do and do it. LIVE IT! Maybe 30 years from now, on your birthday, you will receive a phone call with one of the greatest gifts of all time… the gift of knowing you impacted lives for the better.

I am Over the Edge about Starting Over, Creating a better America. Hacking at the roots and changing the world to be a better safer place for all. Let me hear from you about what you're passionate about. Email me any thoughts and ideas for future articles anytime at teresa@cladventures.com subject: Over the Edge. Visit my blog at www.cladventures.com and checkout www.dreamsacrossamerica.com to get started living your own dreams.