

WHY



Fernando Rego

A special thanks to my mother. Without her, this question “Why?” would not be.

Acknowledgements

Without the help of so many people this book would still be a dream. I wish to thank the following for their support:

My parents for my life and their loving guidance;

My siblings for their positive contribution to my life;

My wife for her support, understanding, and our two wonderful sons;

My two sons for being their own individuals and tolerating my demands;

My past employers for the opportunity to learn while making a good living;

My employees for their contribution to the success of our business;

My suppliers including Allen-Edmonds, Brioni, Copley, Eton, Pantharella, Samuelsohn, Shirtfit, and Zegna for the superb quality goods that we are proud to represent and sell with confidence to our clients;

My clients who have stayed loyal to us for so many years and have contributed to our well being; and

My friends who have supported my dream of writing this book.

The following is a list of people that took the time to read the first draft, make corrections, offer suggestions, wrote me letters of support and shared in the development so sincerely: Clara Abreu, Donald Affleck, Damon Allen, Stu Auty, Paul Bates, Robert J. Bell, Robert Blakely, Daniel Botelho, Bob Brock, Bruno Bucci, Pat Bucci, W.D. Chambers, Arden Cornford, Purdy Crawford, Gordon Elliot, Duncan Glaholt, Cathy Howell, Paul Hyde, Steve Kaszas, Andrew Kennedy, Alan Kennedy, Larry Lake, Travis More, Don Norris, Ralph Nunno, Joan Pajunnen, Andrew Phillips, Joey Rego, William Simpson, Mike Tamblyn, Stephen Uzielli, Michael White and Andy Wilczynski.

And a special thanks to

Jackie Webb, who helped so much by turning my unintelligible hand writing into legible print;

My good friend, Mike Higgins, for his tremendous contribution in really making sure that all the i's were dotted and t's were crossed and much more,

Sarah Dann for putting it all together with the finishing touches; and lastly,

My client, friend, and editor, Michael Dodd, who gave of his time so unselfishly to help me of his own free will at a time when I thought that this book would have to be put on hold. Mike not only encouraged me he insisted in making the time to do it.

Without all of you this would not be possible. But, without the help of God, indeed this would not be.

Preface

I was a firm believer that everything happens for a reason and that it serves you. I believed that until September 13, 2001 when I had some doubts. After several medical exams to see why I was getting tired so easily, I was told by Dr. M. that although I looked good for a 60 year old, I must put my life in order. There is no cure for my problem and it could go in many different directions. This was 2 days after 9/11. I, of course, thought that I was not better than the innocent people that had their lives ended so harshly in the terrorist attacks. But why me? What purpose could this possibly serve me? What good could possibly come from this?

I had such a hard time growing up. We hardly had any food and barely enough clothes to be modest and now that I am comfortable with so many plans for my work and my life, this happens! I questioned my thinking about everything happens for a reason – again and again. I was devastated. My granddaughter Jordanna was 6 years old; my grandson Nolan was 15 months old, my sons, my wife, my house, my business, and my dream of writing a book after retirement – all down the drain. Why? Why? Why? But, just like the day follows night, and calm follows the storm, I realised that things do happen for a reason.

A couple of days before Christmas 2001, I went to Princess Margaret Hospital for a second opinion and the diagnosis was confirmed. However, this time Dr. B. gave me hope by saying that some people are able to tolerate this condition and die from

something else. Well, it's not a perfect solution but it's a better alternative than to put your life in order. So I started thinking "how can I maximize my time here?"

On January 2, 2002, I started planning my business succession and realized that there was another problem. This time it was my tailor Benny. There was nothing wrong with Benny. He is an excellent tailor. But he is my age, will be retiring soon and my business, without a tailor, is practically worthless. Now I was thinking positively again and this time I looked at this problem as an opportunity. I thought if I solve my problem I can solve a lot of people's problems because there are no more tailors younger than 64.

From this awful diagnosis that gave me the feeling that my end was near came the idea of creating The Fitter™. Together with my son Paul, who developed the software and the design of the mechanical device, we now have patented this great idea that shows a lot of promise for the future of my family and the better quality menswear stores.

So, yes, everything happens for a reason and it can serve you in a positive way or it can destroy you from the inside out. It can kill your dreams, it can make you give up and ultimately take your life. Why is it that life looks so good and easy for some people and so hard and ugly to others? Why? The reader will find the answer in the pages of this book and it is my greatest desire that you benefit from my experiences and take a short cut in dealing with the inevitable challenges that life presents all of us. The circle of my life is made public in the hopes of helping others to live a happier life, because it is possible once you learn what really makes you tick – in your own unique way.

Happy reading! Keep an open mind and you too will see the light at the end of the tunnel.

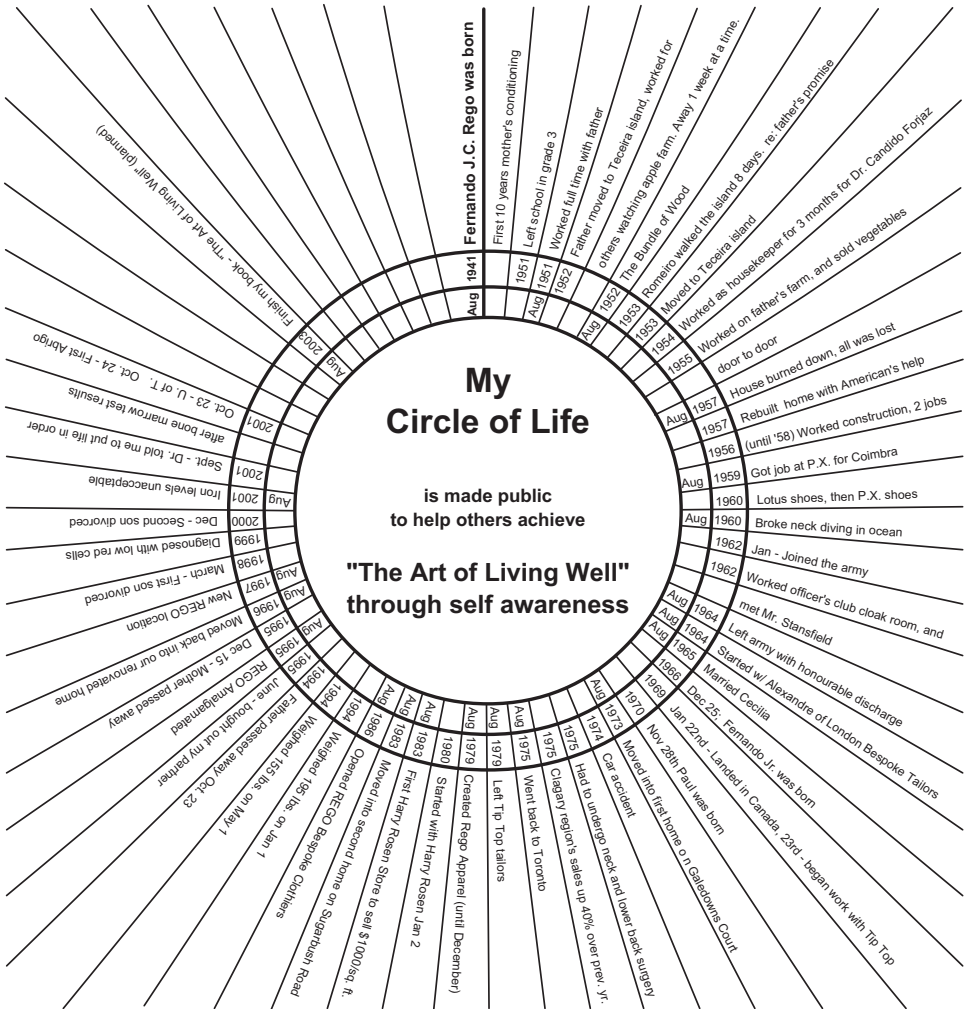
Enjoy.

Fernando Rego

Contents

Chapter 1	Why Am I Writing This Book	page 1
Chapter 2	The First Decade	page 10
Chapter 3	The Next Ten Years	page 17
Chapter 4	Tell Me Who Your Friends Are and I Will Tell You What You Will Become	page 30
Chapter 5	The Courtship and Coming to Canada	page 44
Chapter 6	The Opening of Rego Bespoke Clothiers	page 64
	- A Few Stories About My Clients	page 71
	- Basic Knowledge to be a Good Salesperson	page 80
	- Client Testimonials	page 88
	- Lessons Learned	page 96
	- Thoughts Upon Completion	page 148
	The Penny Story	page 154
	Circles of Life	page 156
	Bibliography	page 158
	Tapes	page 159

Note: The six chapters of the book represent the six decades of my life. (F.R.)



December 2001

The Circle of Life that supports the stories you are about to read.



Chapter 1

Why I am writing this book

Over the past few years, as I considered writing this book, I researched book writing; I read a lot of selfhelp books and some motivational books. I decided that if I was to write a book, I wanted it to be different. I did not want this book to be the usual kind of self-help or motivational book that you find so often in the bookstore. I want this book to be part autobiography and part motivation I will be sharing stories with you, about experiences in my life, and I will be explaining some of the lessons learned from those experiences. I hope you enjoy reading about these experiences as much as I have enjoyed writing about them. I also hope you will use this book as a reference to understand the lessons I have learned so that you will consider how you might apply those lessons to your own situation.

In 1990, I realized that my business was not doing well. In fact, it was failing very quickly. Around that time, I saw an advertisement for a weekend seminar entitled “There is a Mission in Commission and Goal Achievers.” I thought that any one giving up his or her weekend to learn how to sell retail might be someone I would like to meet. Perhaps I would be able to interest them in helping me with my business.

My plan was to attend the seminar, meet some of the presenters as well as some of the attendees and perhaps hire three people who would be willing to learn my method of direct selling and help my business survive and grow. I arrived at the seminar early and registered. I was quite enthusiastic and I felt for sure that I would find a real diamond in the rough. I listened to the motivational speakers at the various sessions. I met a number of the attendees during the breaks and in the breakout sessions. However, I was disappointed. I soon realized that most of the people attending this seminar were people who attended many of these kinds of seminars. They were professional seminar goers. These people attended the seminars so that they could get pumped up and carry on until the next seminar was available. I felt that these people were not really serious about learning to change and better themselves because if they were serious, they would have learned and applied the lessons. So my hopes of hiring someone from this seminar perished.

I did, however, get an idea from the seminar. I thought that if I put my mind to it, I too could become a motivational speaker. That idea really appealed to me because although my business was not doing well at that moment, I had been successful when I was with Alexander of London, Tip-Top Tailors and again at Harry Rosen. I felt that I had led an interesting life and had many experiences that I could draw upon to share with others. After I left the seminar, I started the very next day to gather facts that I might use to help guide me into making a decision on motivational speaking. I knew that first, I needed to develop a plan that I could implement that would not hurt my business any further and would not damage my relationship with my family. I knew that if my idea was to be successful, I would need the help and support of my wife and my sons.

I was not yet 50 years old. I had a business that needed my attention. My wife helped me with the business by performing some of the clerical duties. My first son, Fernando Jr., had joined me and for the previous 3 years had been learning the business at my side. My second son, Paul, was still in college. I felt that with my current responsibilities, I would not be able to really work on my motivational speaking before age 65. That was OK, after all I had a lot to learn and practice before I could be effective in front of an audience.

So it began! I asked myself, why do I want to do this really, what's in it for me? I knew that immigrating to Canada was a good thing and I had been successful working for others. So, I felt that society had been good to me and my family and I wanted to give something back to society. But what could I possibly give back. My business was in trouble, I had no money, and I had little formal education. I thought that perhaps I was just dreaming. Who would want to hear what I have to say. I was able to successfully fight off the negative thoughts. I really felt that giving back to society was right for me and I believed that I could make a difference if I tried really hard and I wanted it badly enough.

As I was putting my plan together, I researched successful people and others who had gone on to do motivational speaking and seminars. I learned that formal education was not a necessary condition for success. Passion for the audience, passion for the subject, great experiences and a desire to share these experiences were common. So I convinced myself that my education or lack of education would not hinder me and, in fact, it might even help me to get my message of hope across to people. I felt that being of humble beginnings and achieving at least a comfortable living would encourage my audience to listen to me and to try and help themselves.

Again, I asked myself the question "Why do you want to do this?" People often get into another line to help their existing business, but that wasn't my motivation. Members of my future audience might very well want or need bespoke clothing and they might actually come to the store. But realistically, what I wanted to talk about was not related to my business, so I couldn't expect to generate business from my motivational speaking. I felt that with the costs that were involved in preparing a speaking engagement or seminar I would not be able to generate a positive cash flow. And furthermore, it wasn't likely to support my current business or my family. In fact, it seemed that it would take me away from my business. I decided that I could prepare for the future but I wouldn't be able to work on my motivational speaking right now.

I felt that because I was born poor and raised in the Azores, my audience would empathize with me. They would understand my background and where

I came from. I had a lot of experiences growing up that could be used to motivate people. When I was eleven, I spent the whole day gathering wood for my mother. My mother, brothers, and sisters thought I was lost or worse, but I learned a lot about myself and about perseverance from that experience. At age 12, my family moved to Terceira Island and I left all of my friends. A move like that can be devastating to anyone let alone a child. At that time, our house was destroyed by fire. Fortunately no one was injured, but we lost everything. When I was 19, I dove into the ocean while swimming with my friends and broke my neck. God looked kindly upon me that day. I did not die and I was not paralyzed. I arrived in Canada at age 28 with a wife who did not speak English, a 2-year old son and only \$72 in my pocket. I just know there is a reason that I was given these opportunities to grow and that I can relate these experiences to my audience.

Finally, if I am honest with myself, I admit that I want to be recognized. But not because I will gain riches that I can take to the bank. I want to meet people. I want to help people see that there is a better life waiting for them. It is the riches that I will gain in knowing that I have helped others, that I have made society a better place and that those I have helped can go out and do the same for someone else. I will be recognised because people will remember me and my stories. I will be happy because people will think kindly about me and what I have given back to society.

Another question was nagging me in the back of my mind. Is it really worth the effort? My answers did not convince even me that I really knew why I wanted to do this motivational speaking. I even started to entertain an idea about writing a book. I still needed to turn my business around and support my family. So while I focussed on recreating my business, I decided to continue with my research and read books on self-esteem and the workings of the mind. Subconsciously, I continued to work on the question about why I wanted to do the motivational speaking and book writing, while in my heart I knew that I really wanted to do something to help others help themselves.

During my research, I read many books on motivation and the workings of the mind and how we become the people we are. As I was trying to determine

the underlying reason for being the way I am, suddenly a light dawned in my mind. I realized that my mother was the single biggest influence in my life. When I was 4 or 5 years old, she would ask me to do chores like this: “Oh this boy is such a good boy, he gives me anything I want,” and I would reply “What do you want mom?” She would ask me to do a chore or go to the store. When I would return she would thank me, hug me, and reinforce how good I was. It was the way she treated me and talked to me. She would make me feel good about myself and make me feel good about helping her with the chores. I thought about all the chores I did for my family. I helped out around the house gathering firewood, picking tea, and selling tomatoes door-to-door. I came to the conclusion that indeed it was my mother’s influence that made me want to help my family and it was her influence that gave me the desire to help others still today. My nature is directly attributed to my upbringing.

I feel best when I am of service to others. I decided then that I wanted to motivate people and to write a book about my experiences. I would be able to write a book about my experiences, help people and give back to society. I had an idea and a plan. I had lots of years to work on developing my skills. I knew I would learn and develop my skills as a motivational speaker. I would start to collect ideas for my book and I would look forward to my retirement when I could devote all my time to motivational speaking and book writing. Now, I would devote my energy to developing my business.

I believe that everything happens for a reason and it serves you. Something happened to me that prompted me to push things forward. During the nineties, my business responded quite nicely. However, in the year 2000, I started to feel unwell. It was a real struggle to get up in the morning. I didn’t have the energy to work all day. This was very strange for me because I always had more energy than almost anyone around me. I felt weak and it was an effort to put one foot in front of the other. I went to see my doctor. After a number of preliminary tests, it was determined that I had a low red blood cell count. I was sent to a specialist to see if the cause could be determined. I went through one series of tests after another and still, the cause was not found. Finally, in August 2001, I was sent for a bone marrow test. On September 13, 2001 – 2 days after 9-11, I received the results of the tests. The diagnosis was leukemia.

I was told by Dr. M, the specialist, “I am afraid I must tell you to put your life in order.” My red blood cell count had continued to drop. My red blood cell count was below 110, it should be 160 and the cells were raindrop shaped. The doctors did not know what course of action to take. There was no cure short of a bone marrow transplant and at age 60 a bone marrow transplant is rarely performed.

For a couple of months, I really wondered what purpose this diagnosis would serve me or any other person. I was confused and I did not know if I was coming or going. My life was in order but I was not ready to leave. I had too many things to accomplish. I decided to take some of my own advice, the advice that I claim to have to give to others. I sat down and had a talk with myself, “You must get through this setback; don’t you see this is a great chapter for your book? You must fight and your message will be more meaningful! You must win this battle if you are to accomplish your ultimate goal.”

It was at this time that I drew my circle of life. I knew then that my life on this earth has a special purpose and that is, to help others deal with life’s challenges and turn problems into opportunities. I decided to get a second opinion on my diagnosis. It was confirmed, at Princess Margaret Hospital, by Dr B, on December 23, 2001. Dr B told me that there is no cure for this form of leukemia and sometimes, for some miraculous reason, a small percentage of people live with this condition and die from something else. I said to myself “Bingo, that’s me! I belong to that small percentage.” I know that one day I will die. So the purpose of my diagnosis was discovered. I must push with my book because I don’t really know when that day will come. Maybe I won’t see 65. So let me get started.

On January 2, 2002, I came to the store with a focus. I first had to do something other than selling. My focus was to develop a plan so that I could pass my business on to Fernando Jr and Paul. I went directly upstairs and started on my plan. All was going well until I realized that there was a threat to my plan. My tailor, Benny, was my age. Benny had let me know on previous occasions that when I retire, he would also retire. The problem wasn’t that Benny was going to retire or that I was going to retire. The problem was that

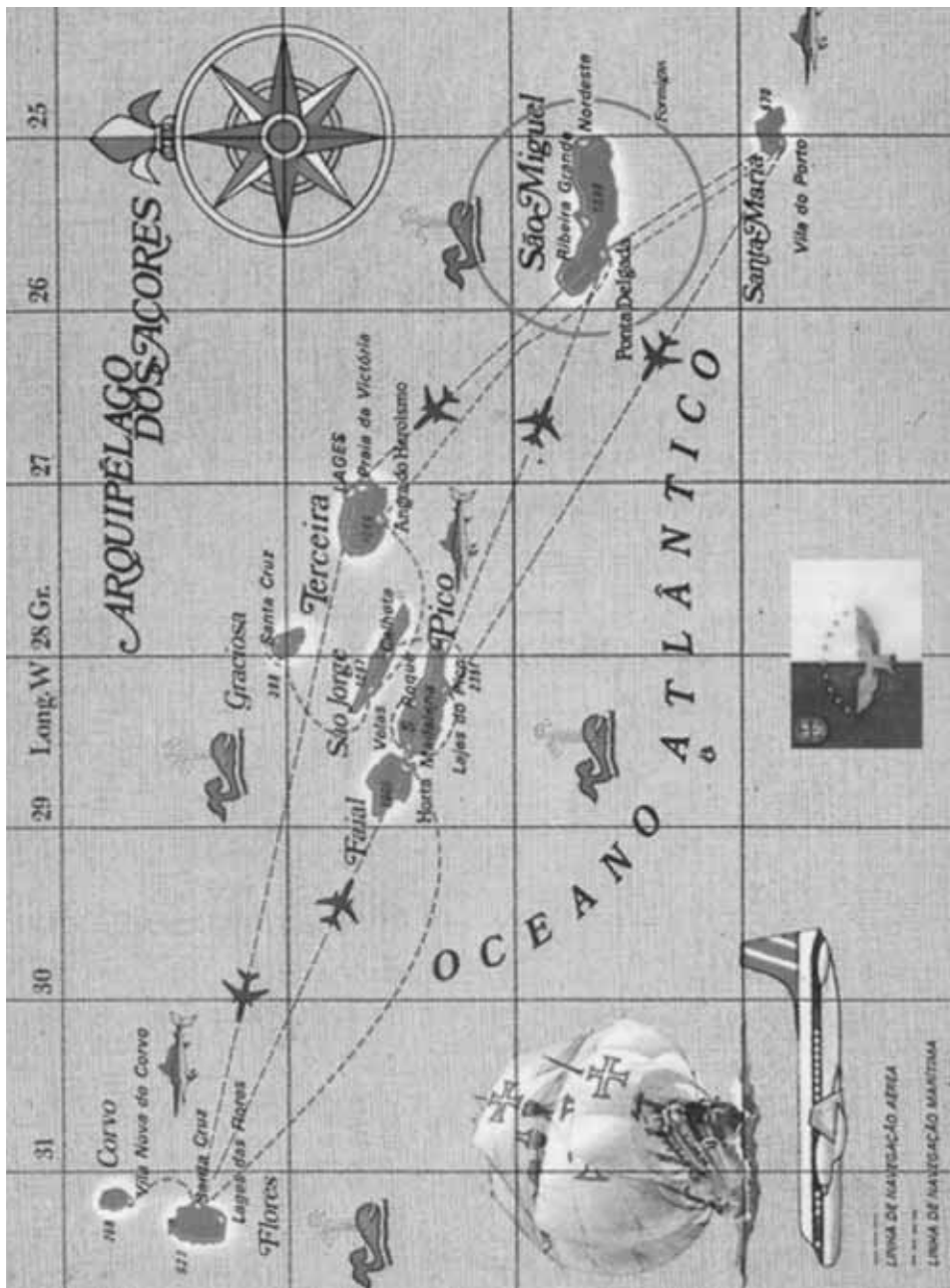
I could be replaced but Benny could not. There are no young people coming up in the tailoring trade. I concluded that I was not really passing much on to my sons without a tailor to help them.

I believe that where there is a problem, there is an opportunity. I felt that if I could solve this problem, I would certainly be able to help other people solve their problems and so my invention was born. So, here I am with health issues, a business that has been struggling and a problem in that there may not be a future for the business and therefore, nothing to pass on to my family. I asked myself, "So what do I need to do? I am dealing with my health issues and I need to decide how to add value to my business that can be passed on to Fernando Jr and Paul."

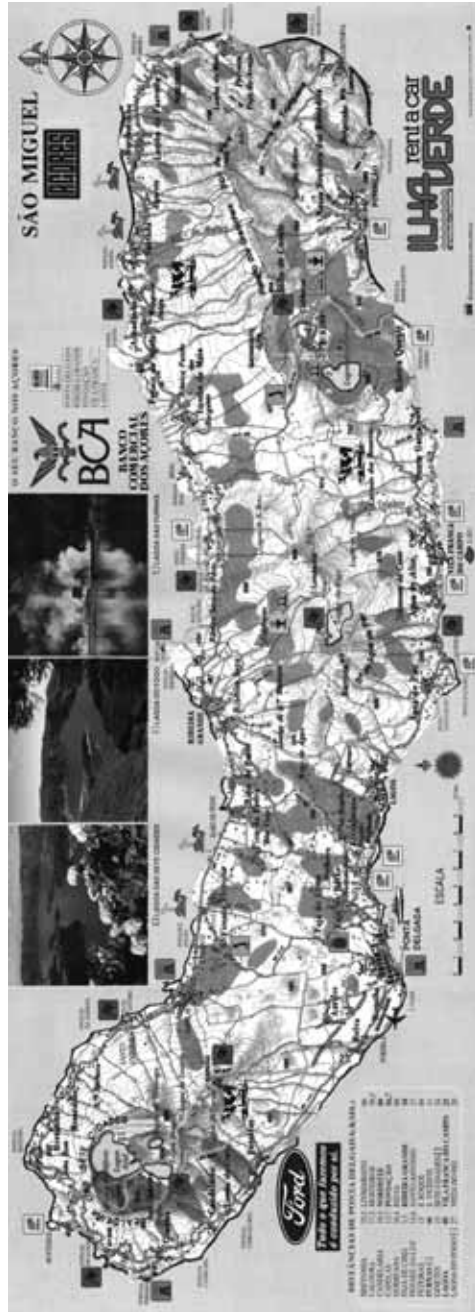
During the next few months, I developed a device called The Fitter™, to measure people for bespoke clothing. My son, Paul, developed the software to capture the information so the measurements could be passed on to a manufacturer. The Fitter™ was launched in the spring of 2003. This is a great example of how life doesn't always happen quite the way you plan but you must persevere. It is that perseverance and making progress that has got me to this point. My invention is a reality. We have successfully sold units to Saks Fifth Avenue and Holt Renfrew. We have confirmation from Holt Renfrew that they will be putting The Fitter™ in more of their stores. There is a lot of publicity planned for this launch at Holt Renfrew and I will be featured in Trunk Shows as the inventor of this great idea.

Today is December 19, 2004 and I am getting ready to send my resume to Oprah to see if she is interested in helping me with my book and my plan to be a motivational speaker. I believe that being on her show will increase my credibility with my audience. I believe that my audience would be convinced that they too can achieve anything they want in life. But first they must learn who they are and determine what it is they want from life and the price they are willing to pay for it so that they may get the success they want. Each person must discover their own three D's: discipline, desire, and a defined purpose.

The Azores



São Miguel





Chapter 2

The First Decade

My name is Fernando Janeiro Caetano do Rego. I am 63 years old. And, as I write this, my first book, I have come to realize that I lived many years without knowing exactly what made me tick.

I was born into a family of 9 on August 24, 1941 on the island of São Miguel in the Azores. I have since come to realise that I was indeed blessed to have been born into this world to a good mother and father and that I was able to share my life with six equally good siblings.

Growing up in the Azores was difficult. We were poor farmers. I don't think it hurt me one bit growing up poor. In fact, I think it helped me to become the person I am proud to be. And especially now that I want to help people help themselves, I know there will be plenty of examples that I can share with you. My hope is that you, the reader, will realize that life really is simple. We are the ones who, for many reasons, make it difficult. I will record the events of my first decade by referring to the different houses we rented.

I was born in the middle of the pack, the fourth of seven children. By the time I was 4 or 5 life was really difficult for my parents. It was especially difficult for my mother because she had the responsibility of paying the bills. My father would rise early to go to work on the farm and he would return well after dark. I remember that on Mondays, my mother would have to pay the miller who milled the flour that she used to make bread, the fisherman, and the goat cheese lady. Very often my mother would run out of money before all the bills had been paid. So she wouldn't have to hear the people knocking on the door looking for their money, she would leave the house and go to the far end of the yard. It was sad to see my mother this way because she was embarrassed that she wasn't able to pay all the bills.

Even though my mother was sad and embarrassed that she couldn't pay the bills, she always treated her kids well. When I was about 5 years old, I loved to do chores for my mother. My godparents lived across the road and I would do chores for them, as well. They would recognize my efforts by giving me bread and cheese. Oh how I loved to do those chores because there was compensation at the end to kill my hunger. I would do my chores at home even though there was no bread and cheese at the end. Remember, we were poor and often didn't have enough food or money to pay the people for the food. But I got compensation from my mother nonetheless. My mother always gave me a smile, a hug or a kiss, and a loving gesture. It was great to get that wonderful recognition. And you know I realized that you don't always have to be paid for a job. I learned from my mother that there are often rewards that far outreach payment for a job well done. Rewards can come in love, understanding, and in knowing that your parents care about you. My mother taught me that showing genuine gratitude, a smile, a hug, a kiss or a gesture is often all we really need. I learned from my mother that it is so important to be recognised for a job well done, and it is this lesson that I have used through my life.

Wheat was a popular crop to sow because you could get at least two crops a year. In January, you prepare the land, which is really hard work. Only the men can do this, not the children. The soil had to be turned over. This was done with a hoe that was about 25 centimetres square with a 60 centimetre

long wooden handle. The men worked in rows about 60 centimetres wide and they turned the soil over. Working along the length of the field, the men would first scrape the grass that had grown since the field was last used, from the row. Then the men would dig the soil and cover the grass. They would continue this task day after day until the whole field was turned over.

In February or March, the field would be ready and the wheat would be sown. A man would spread the wheat, and cows carrying a wooden crate, we called a grade, would go over the soil pulling the grade and cover the wheat. Another way the field could be sown was with a tiley. It was a box that was dragged across the field to make a small row in the prepared soil. It also had grooves in the bottom of it so, as it was dragged across the field, it dropped just the right amount of wheat in the row in the soil that it made. Two men would normally pull the tiley and one man would guide it to make sure that the rows were about 10 cms apart.

Now comes the job for the young kids. We would walk behind this tiley with our bare feet, since we did not normally have shoes. We would make a V-shape with our feet and walk dragging our feet to cover the wheat with the soil. It may not snow in the Azores but January, February, and March are very unpleasant months for weather. It can be damp and bitterly cold. After about an hour of this work, your feet would go numb. It is painful and we would cry. Sometimes the men would say to us "Do you want to pull the tiley instead?" Of course, we could not. And so we covered the wheat.

Between the times you sow the wheat and it starts to grow, you have to protect it from the birds. There is a species called Pardal or Canario da terra. They come by the 100's or 1000's and they eat the wheat. So the small kids are left on the land, sun up to sun down, to protect the fields. We had to make noise with old cans or broken hoes. Sometimes we could actually make a tune out of this banging to scare away the birds. The birds had nothing else to eat that early in the year, so the wheat was their food. Our job was to scare them away. Believe me, this was hard work. Rain or shine, you had to be there because if you were not and the birds ate the seeds your father worked so hard to plant, he would know that you did not do your job. This was about a 2-week ordeal. Then in April the wheat started to make beautiful rows. The kids with

small hoes about 5 centimetres wide would go between the rows and remove the grass that tried to grow with the wheat and compete for the soil. We would do this 2 or 3 times before it was time to harvest the wheat. Harvest time was normally in June. It was hot and the men would use a sickle to cut the wheat about 10 centimetres above the ground. Can you imagine how hard it was for the men to do this? They would be bent over, grab a hand full of stocks and cut them off with the sickle. They would leave the cut stocks on the ground, and the children would bundle them into piles and carry the sheaves to where the wagons would be loaded. The wagons would take the wheat to the engine as we called it. The engine, actually a thrasher, was used to separate the wheat kernels from the stocks.

A couple of days after the field was cut, and the wheat was gathered and taken to the engine, the children would go over the land again and pick any stocks that were left behind. Sometimes in a 5-acre piece of land you might collect enough wheat that was left behind to help feed your family for a month. Remember what I said about our feet in February? Well in June, the weather was hot. The cut stocks of wheat would dry out in the sun and when we walked through the fields looking for the wheat, the stocks would scrape and cut our ankles. The bottoms of our feet were tough but our ankles and the bottom of our legs would get cut. You bleed from these cuts and you can imagine the suffering. But nobody complained. Life was hard for the poor. The rich people could get the poor people to wash their pigsties and their floors, and work their farms picking their fruits and crops. And the poor were happy to have work to do that paid them for their efforts.

Of course we did more than work; we also played games. Our favourite pastime was to play a game we called ranch. We would stick four little sticks on the underside of a fava bean and make cows and bulls. We made believe that we were ranchers and we would trade our fava-cows and fava-bulls with one another. At the end of the game we would open the fava beans and eat them.

When you use your imagination, you strengthen your brain and it serves you throughout your life. If all is made available to you as a child, you don't learn how to do without. That can be disastrous in real life because as we all know

we don't always get what we want when we want it. Sometimes it takes time before you really get what you want. Later in the day, when the sun was starting to set, we knew that we would need to go home for dinner. Dinnertime was a time for family and even if we had extra food, our mother would not have given us any. Dinner would be served only after my father and my older brothers had come home.

A favourite dinner my mother made was to fry three or four eggs with lots of red pepper. The whole family would sit at the table and we would all eat the eggs and red pepper with some of my mother's most delicious corn bread. We would always have a big pot of tea served with milk. We didn't drink our tea with sugar. We had no sugar because it was expensive. Sugar was only used on those special occasions like Christmas. If there were any leftovers, my father and brothers would take them for their lunch the next day. My mother always struggled trying to feed us. She was always the last one to eat and she never complained.

When you eat as a family, you learn a lot about each other and you learn to share. Even if you want it for yourself you will let others have it because it is good to share. In time, others will recognize your goodness or kindness. Eating together, especially as a family, is a beautiful event. A family can become closer and the family members will gravitate to one another for support in time of need. You never really feel alone. Another favourite dinner during winter was couves with pork bellies. Pork was kept in salt so it would keep for the winter. We did not have refrigerators. Food was scarce when the fishermen would not go fishing because the ocean was what we called brave which was common in the wintertime. The ocean was very rough and a storm could strike anytime. Couves were boiled with the pork bellies and potatoes. This was a good warm dinner. We would eat lots of bread with the couves, pork, and potatoes in our house. My father always cultivated the yard and any piece of land he could get his hands on. Oh, what a hard worker he was!

At age seven, I went to school. I really enjoyed going to school because of all the wonderful things I could learn. At age ten, however, I had to leave school to go to work with my father on the rented farms that he worked with his hands, planting and cultivating. There were no tractors on the farm. All the

work was done by hand. I didn't leave school because I wanted to. I really enjoyed school but I had no choice. In fact, Professor Luis asked my father to let me stay in school. My father told the professor that he could not afford to pay another boy to do my work and that it was time for me to start helping support the family.

At age eight, I went for my first communion. However, during the weeks before, I learned another of life's lessons. My cousin Fernando Brinco and I made a significant discovery. We discovered eggs in his grandmother's chicken coup. We also learned that if we gathered the eggs we could trade them for bread or cheese or even a drink. Oh it felt so good to be an egg trader. Fernando's grandmother, however, soon noticed that whenever we were around, she had fewer eggs to use or sell. His grandmother kept an eye on us and we were not able to gather her eggs for our trading. So we went around to my grandmother's place. She also had chickens and she made our collecting even easier. She was collecting eggs in a container so she could bake breads and cakes for the feast that celebrated our first communion. She had filled one container and was starting another. Fernando and I would take the eggs from the full container. This was so much easier than crawling through the chicken coup looking for eggs. When my dear grandmother went to start her baking, she noticed that she was missing some eggs. It didn't take her long to figure it out because I had been there quite regularly in the last couple of weeks. That is how she knew it was me who was responsible for the missing eggs.

Well, she sat me down and asked what I had done with the eggs. I told her how Fernando and I had gathered eggs from his grandmother to trade for bread and cheese and how when she banished us from her chicken coup, that we then took the eggs from her containers. She asked if I knew what my father would do if she told him what I had done. Of course, I knew very well what my father would say and do. She told me that she wouldn't tell my father if I went and confessed to the priest. Oh what a relief it was not to have to face the ire of my father. I did confess. I told the priest what I had done. Until I had to explain what my cousin and I did to the priest, I hadn't realized how much I was hurting my grandmother or Fernando's grandmother for that matter. My grandmother would not be able to make the cakes she was planning without

taking food away from her family or she would not be able to sell the eggs to earn money. It was at this point in my life that I learned that my actions had consequences that affected more people than just me.

During the celebration, I got the impression that my father did find out what Fernando and I had done. You know, nothing is ever a secret in a small town. My father never exactly let on that he knew, but he did find an opportunity to give me some advice. He told me that if I ever want to do something and I don't want other people to find out about it, then don't do it. There is probably something wrong with what I am doing and sooner or later those people will know what I did. I think my grandmother and my father knew I had learned my lesson. And I did, until I was 15. I will tell you about that in another story.



Chapter 3

The Next Ten Years

After the summer of 1951, I didn't go to school. I went to work on the farms with my father. Life was not getting any easier for my mother and father. Even with my help, my father needed to make more money. I had heard talk in the family that my godfather was going to help my father move to Terceira Island to get a job. My godfather knew someone who might be able to help my father get a job on the American military base there. My brothers knew of the plan but they didn't talk about it openly. Moving from island to island in the Azores was not generally accepted. In order to move from one island to another, you needed to have a job and you had to show that you could support yourself and your family. It was a lot like immigrating to another country. The governors of the islands did not want a new comer to be a drain on their very minimal resources.

One day, two of my brothers and I were working in the fields. I thought it was strange that my father was not with us, but it was not totally unexpected. Often my father would go to another part of the field to do a different job for the farmer. My brothers and I were working when they stopped to watch a

twin-engine plane taking off. It was the plane that often flew between São Miguel and Terceira carrying vegetables from our island to the military base. My brothers knew that today the cargo on the plane was different; it carried its regular load of vegetables along with our father. I only learned about this, being the day my father left São Miguel, after the plane was well out of sight. I thought I would never see my father again. I really loved him. He was a good father. He was tough and strict but he was fair.

Now that my father was gone our family had to give up some of the land that we rented because my brothers and I weren't able to work the fields ourselves. My brothers were able to get work with other farmers but I was too young to do that kind of work. I would have to find something else to do to help out. I found a job with a farmer who had orchards on a tea plantation. My job was to watch the apples on the tea plantation. This is priceless. Here I am ten and a half years old watching the apples so the tea pickers would not steal any. What that meant was that I had to work seven days a week. Not only did I have to work seven days a week, I also had to be the first one there and the last one to leave. I would get there early in the morning while it was still dark and I would leave in the evening when it was dark again. One morning I was so tired that I felt I just had to lay down. I thought that if I just closed my eyes for an instant I would feel more awake and ready to go to work. I fell asleep in the middle of the road. I was awakened by the rumble of the milk wagon coming towards me.

I worked like this for a couple of months. To me at ten and a half years old, it seemed like an eternity. When the apples were all picked, there was no more need for me to guard the apples. I needed to look for other work and found it as a tea picker. The job was at another tea plantation, in the Vila do Nordeste, which was not near my home. I would leave my home on Monday morning and come back on Saturday night. On Monday we would meet in town and 12 people would be packed in a Land Rover for the 1-hour trip. We were packed in that Land Rover like fruit in a basket. On Saturday we would be packed into the Land Rover again and we would go home for Sunday.

We were paid about 3 escudos (10 cents) per day and we worked 6 days a week, sun up to sun down. There were no regular work hours; the sun was

our clock. We slept in a place called a granell. A granell is a room with 4 walls and a single door. The farmers would use the granell to store their crops like corn, wheat, tea, or whatever, after the harvest. During tea picking time, straw was put on the ground and the workers would sleep there. One night one of the men tried to molest me. I woke up. I did not tell anyone what had happened. I was a child, but I was doing adult work to help support my family while my father was in Terceira. It was so dark and I didn't really know who it was. After that night, I had a hard time sleeping there. I would work all day and I slept with one eye open at night. This lasted about one month, but this too seemed like an eternity.

When the tea picking season finished, I still needed to find more work to help my family. Everyday, I would go to town and look to be called for work. In the Ribeira Seca, which is the name of my birthplace, there is an area where four streets cross. It is called Canto da fonte (the Corner of the Fountain). This is where people looking for work go to see if there is work and it is where people looking for help, go to see if there is anyone that suits their needs. If you are not picked before 6:30 a.m. in the summer, then you know there is no work for you that day. If you are hired they want you all day – sun up to sun down.

It was here that I would find work and be hired to do what other boys often did. Remember, I said earlier that there were no tractors. All the work was done by hand and often boys were used to carry dirt from fertile parts of the fields to spread it on parts of the fields where the soil was not so good. This was hard work. I could make money to help my family but I was sad when there was no work. And so it happened one day in August 1952, it was drizzling and there was no work for me. I came home and saw my mother getting ready to bake the bread. She had the flour in the alguidar, a clay container typical of the Azores. So I had my breakfast of milk with corn bread. It was a filling meal.

When I finished I went to the back yard to pick some firewood for my mother so she could heat up the oven to bake the bread. I noticed that there was very little wood left. My father had been gone for a while and he was the one who replenished this from the farms where he worked. He would bring some

wood home every day and my mother never ran out. With my father working these past couple of months in Terceira, my brothers and I had not taken on the responsibility of bringing wood home. Now my mother was about to run out.

I decided on my own to get some more firewood. I had been with my father many times when he went to gather wood. I knew that we could get some firewood in a forest about a 2-hour walk from where we lived. The wood was free but you had to walk there, gather it and bring it home. I found a burlap sack. I put some rope and a machete into the sack, and without telling my mother I took off to get her some firewood. It was a drizzly day, and I knew that a 2-hour walk there, a 2-hour walk back and about an hour to gather the wood, I should be back by mid-afternoon at the latest. All was well; I got to the Mato do Miguel and started gathering firewood. I gathered the dry branches because they are easy to burn and they would quickly heat up the stone oven.

I gathered wood and I bundled it up with the rope just like my father and I had done many times before. Now I tried to hoist the stack of wood on my shoulders just like I had seen my father do. The pile of wood I had gathered was so big that I couldn't lift it like I had seen my father do so many times. The pile was too big. I couldn't lift it but I didn't want to leave any of it behind. There was no one around to help me. I noticed a hole in the ground where a tree had once stood. It is not uncommon for trees to fall and for the people to take them away for firewood. I thought I might be able to use this hole to my advantage. I rolled this bundle of wood to the edge of the hole and I crawled into the hole. I rolled the bundle onto my back and I crawled out of this hole.

I trudged onwards with my bounty. I really don't know how long it was before my neck, my arms, my back, my legs and my feet hurt. Everything hurt. There wasn't a part of me that didn't ache. The bundle was getting really heavy now. I was afraid to take a rest and sit down. I knew if I sat down, I wouldn't be able to help myself unless I could find another hole. I had to keep going until I found another hole or a way of getting the bundle onto my back. I eventually came across a ditch. I rested there for a while. I did this many times along the way. I was really hungry now. I needed to eat some food. While I had seen other

kids beg for food, I had never done it before; but I was so hungry I decided to ask for food. For the first, last and only time in my life, I begged. I went to a house and a kind old lady gave me some yellow corn bread and a clay container with water. The house is still there. It is a bit out of the way from Ribeira Seca. It is a tea processing plant called Cha' da barrosa. I enjoyed that meal so much. I will never ever forget that meal and it gave me the strength I needed. I went back to the ditch and I crawled under my bundle of sticks. I struggled out of the ditch and managed to start walking home once again. My next resting place was the Canto do Mafoma and from there I went all the way home.

As I got close to my house I dropped the bundle on the ground and asked, yelled I guess, for help. I was exhausted and I knew that I could finally get some help. My sister, Joanna who is nine years older than me came out to help me. She wasn't able to lift the bundle and we took it apart. It took her four trips to carry it into the house. When I came in my mother was in tears. She had been worried about me. When she saw what I had done she hugged me and said "Do you know what day this is?" I replied "No", surprised that this day should have any significance. My mother told me that it was my eleventh birthday. That day alone, the pain and the success, has helped me through my entire life. Whenever I have had some difficult moments all I need to do is remember the bundle of wood and how I managed to somehow put it on my back and carry it home. I learned that when you do something because you want to do it, nothing can stop you.

One morning my brothers, sisters and I woke up to my mother's cries about Augustinho, my youngest brother. He was sick. He was complaining of pain and he had a fever. Augustinho was about 2 years old but he was so smart, he could say the Lord's Prayer. He was so good looking. He had long curly hair and all the neighbours referred to him as Little Jesus. We all adored him. At night we would play games with him like trying to trick him into picking who he liked the most. He knew how to please everyone.

My older brothers went to work and my mother and I took Augustinho to the villa to see the doctor. It was a long walk and my mother and I took turns carrying him. We waited all day for the doctor to see him. The doctor examined

him and he told us that my baby brother was going to die. The doctor said there was nothing he could do for him. We had little choice. My mother and I carried Augustinho home and the next morning he died. I will never forget the pain of all that was going on. My father was away in Terceira. My older brother Manuel played the part of my father. He made all the arrangements for the funeral. We buried Augustinho the next day. I can still see that sad picture of my family when the priest came to the house to accompany us to the cemetery.

As always, life goes on for the living. My father had found a steady job on the military base and he asked Manuel to come and help him prepare a place for the rest of us to come to Terceira. My father had to sneak on to Terceira but once you were living there, you could send for your family. Officially the government could not keep a family apart.

When I was about 7 or 8, my father had to have stomach surgery to remove ulcers. It was common for people to die from this operation so my father promised God that if he survived and did well he would go around the island of São Miguel in a romaria, a religious pilgrimage that still takes place to this day during lent. It takes 8 days to walk around São Miguel in the romaria. A group of 30 or 40 men will be organized by the church. One person is named the master “O Mestre” and one person, normally the youngest, carries the cross. The youngest walks in front and O Mestre walks behind the group to ensure that all the brothers are accounted for. The group is called, in Portuguese, a rancho. The men in the group are called romeiros and each romeiro refers to the others as brothers. The mission is to stop at every church to pray to God and to stop at each cemetery to pray for the souls of those who have died. Some of the men do the romaria every year out of devotion and some do the romaria as a form of penance for some miracle that they feel they received.

With my father working on Terceira, we knew that he was not going to be able to walk in the romaria. It was a concern because it was our belief that if you don't pay your promise you could be cursed. I don't know if I volunteered to take my father's place but I was the one who was chosen to represent my father. I had no shoes. I was 11 years old and in February walking barefoot all day was not going to be easy. My mother and I improvised. Out of an old

car tire we cut two pieces of tire tread the size of my feet. At the front we made a loop with a wire to go over my toes and at the back we took some burlap to make a back that could attach to my ankles. These were to be my sandals for this 8-day trip around São Miguel. We had no money and I knew that I would have to eat on the romaria. When I went to say goodbye to my godmother a very nice thing happened; she gave me some food for the journey. Again when I went to say goodbye to my grandmother she also gave me some food. When I returned home, both my godmother and my grandmother had given me bread and chourico, a home-made sausage, and some cheese. Not only was there enough food for me to take, there was some left over for my brothers and sisters.

The next morning we romerios left on the romaria. During the day we travelled to the churches and cemeteries and prayed. When it was getting dark we would go to the church in the town where we had stopped and hoped that some of the local town's people would take us into their homes for the night. Being the youngest, I was always picked first. Although these people were poor, tradition dictated that they would feed us a warm meal and give us hot water to wash our feet and offer their best bed.

On this romaria, I learned to speak in public. Being the youngest I was often asked to offer the prayers out loud in front of the brothers in the Rancho. I lost any fear that I had of speaking publicly. It also felt great that I had done something on behalf of my father and that was important and satisfying to me. My father did so much for us. He worked hard to give us food and a place to live. He even had to live on a different island. I also learned that when you do something in good faith the outcome is positive. I also learned how to focus my thoughts so I could endure the cold and the long walks without rest. This has helped me through life. And above all I made my mother happy.

My father owed my godfather some money. In order for my father to repay the debt, I was required to do chores for my godfather. One of the chores I was required to do was to wash out the pigsty. I would have to do this early in the morning. There was no hose to do this. I would first use a shovel to clean up the straw and the manure. Then I would use a broom to sweep the pigsty. Finally with the broom and a bucket of water and I would wash the

cemented area where the pigs were kept. Looking back now I realize I was taking a chance being around these big pigs. They could have really hurt me and I was alone with them that early in the morning.

You might wonder why we were in such a financial crunch. My father was the eldest in his family of nine. When he married my mother, he was allowed to rent a portion of land from his father's landlord. My father's land was of good quality and it was very well looked after. All was going well. In 1938, Shell Oil made a contract with the Portuguese government to take men from the Azores to work in Curacao in the oil refineries for a period of four years. My father was selected to go. He thought this would be an opportunity to earn some real money. My father asked his brother, Joe, to look after his land with the understanding that Joe would give it back to my father when he returned from Curacao.

My father's stay in Curacao was cut short. The men were sent back to the Azores by the end of 1940 because Curacao was a potential problem place due to the war. When my father returned, his brother refused to give him back his land. My father didn't have much choice but to look for other land. My father found other land but the rent was higher. He took some of the money he earned in Curacao to buy some cattle that he could feed and then resell. He found out the land he was renting at a higher price was not very good and he didn't have enough food to feed the cattle that he sold; he never got paid for them. The war made living very difficult. Then I was born in August 1941. One more mouth to feed so it got a lot worse before it got better. My father had his good name and he kept it that way. That is something that my father gave me and so far I think he would be proud of what I have done to preserve his good name. I know that there were a lot of people worse off than us. My father was a hard worker and he kept our family together as a unit. It is unity that makes for strong families.

Early in 1953, we all came to Terceira Island to join my father. At first I thought it might be hard to leave my friends behind but it didn't take me long to feel at home in Terceira. My father had rented four acres of land and he and my older brother, Manuel, had built a place with a kitchen and a couple of rooms for all of us. We soon expanded it into a five-room house with cardboard trim. The cardboard pieces were from the boxes that my father would bring home from the base. I would go at lunchtime and pick up

loads of lumber and other things my father would gather from a scrap yard on the base.

I was too young to go to work on the base with my father and brother, so I worked in the yard at home. My father would cultivate the yard with couves, onions, and peppers. He even planted banana trees and orange trees and there was lots of work for me. When I turned 13, my father felt it was time for me to take on more responsibility. On Monday morning, before going to the base, my father would give me a list of work that needed to be done. It was enough work to last 3 weeks and he would say “when you finish doing all of this then you can go out to play”. So I knew that play was not in the cards for me until Sunday. But I didn’t mind because now we had a good life. We had food, we ate wheat bread, not corn bread, and my mother didn’t have to hide in the back yard from the moleiro or the cheese lady or the fisherman.

Here on Terceira, the fisherman we bought our fish from was called Amadeus. He was a nice old man. He would bring us fish during the week and on Sunday he would come to get paid. He would get his money and take some of the bread that my mother would bake. She was a great baker. Amadeus would get paid for his fish and mom would give him some bread, potatoes and couves. This man was poor and he was also taking care of his grandchildren. My mother felt sorry for Amadeus and wanted to help him. My father did not know about my mother helping Amadeus but I did. I used to help him carry the food to his wagon. It felt so good that we could help someone. “Kill his hunger” mom would always say; “it is better to give than receive”. I know that feeling quite well. I guess that is why I really want to give of my experiences to help others help themselves.

So with all that work cultivating the four acres, we now had things to sell like pepper plants, onion plants, tomato plants, and later on we had tomatoes, peppers, and couves for sale. In order to sell our produce I became a door-to-door salesman. I would load up two baskets and by using a piece of wood I would put one basket on each end with me in the middle and away I would go. I would not return home until all was sold. I learned to negotiate according to the market demands. I think sometimes the ladies bought my produce because they liked me. It felt great that I was contributing to the well being

of the family. I had the responsibility of maintaining the crops while my father was away at work and put food on our table in addition to selling our produce to bring in additional money for other things that we needed.

Professor Terra was a Portuguese teacher who was paid by the Americans to teach the employees on the base to read and write. My father was going to his classes but he said he was too old to learn. I guess he might have felt guilty that he took me out of school with only grade 3. He asked the professor if he would teach his kids instead and he agreed. So I went to Professor Terra's school and he taught me sufficient so that I could pass Grade 4 with the kids that were going to school all day. I was a lot older than most of the children in Grade 4 but it was important for me to complete the grade before I was 15. If I did not, I would be considered an adult and my diploma would not be as important if I wanted to continue with school later on.

My father felt embarrassed that he had to use an X to sign for his cheque on payday. So one day, after dinner, I sat with my father to teach him how to sign his name. I held his hand to give him the feel of copying the letters of his name. He did, and of course the letters did not look very good. I told him to look at a doctor's signature; it is hard to read, so you just pretend to write like a doctor and no one will know the difference. And so on payday, my father was able to proudly sign his name and I was proud of him.

Professor Terra took a liking to me and he recommended to my father that I should go to work at the home of Doctor Candido Forjaz in exchange for a higher education, all of which Professor Terra arranged for me. Doctor Forjaz was a former governor of Terceira and my father agreed that would be a good idea. So it was arranged that I would leave our home on Monday and return on Saturday afternoon. My education consisted of washing the floors, going to market to pick up vegetables, meat, fish and serving dinner to their family. All of this was for no pay. I was supposed to be getting an education. They had a daughter my age and once in a while she would teach me to type. That was the education I got in exchange for all the work I did. Talk about exploiting people.

For about 3 months, I did this work for the doctor. One day his wife, the lady of the house, told me to tell my mother to buy me new clothes because what

I was wearing was too small. I told my mother. She told my father. My father asked me what kind of an education I was getting. I told my father and he asked if I wanted to continue there. I hated doing what I did but I would not complain. When my father asked me, I was relieved and we agreed that I did not have to go back any more. I was really happy about that. I felt like a slave but in those days you did what you were told and you kept quiet about it hoping that things would change. And they did. Sooner or later all things come to an end.

By now, I really didn't want to go back to working on the farm selling tomatoes so I looked for a job in construction. You had to be 16 to work in construction. I was only 15 but I said that I was 16. The contractor could see that I was eager to work and so I got the job. I was so proud to be working for a salary. Now my goal was to make as much money as my brothers but I was working construction and my brothers, Joe and Manuel, were already working for the Americans. Joe was learning to be a welder and Manuel was the foreman on the same job. But for now all I could do was work a construction job. However, that soon changed. A professional mosaic layer, Master Maia, came from mainland Portugal to work on a project. There were going to be pictures of castles and flowers and other art, a specialty job for a master. The master needed a helper and so I was invited to be his assistant. My job was to help him sort out the mosaic and prepare it in advance so that the job of laying the mosaic was easier. I quickly learned how to lay out the mosaic and eventually we needed an assistant to prepare the cement. While we were looking for an assistant, Master Maia taught me to mix the lime, sand and cement. I made a deal with master Maia. I would stay after hours to prepare the mosaic and during the day I would prepare the cement. I served Master Maia , and for a while, I received two pay cheques. I was bringing home more money than my brother Joe. That felt really good. I continued to work those two jobs until the project was completed. When this job was completed, I was 17 years old and while I was waiting to turn 18, so I could work for the Americans, I started my own contracting company.

My sister Joana worked as a housekeeper for American families and when they would go out on weekends Joana would baby-sit. I would often come and keep her company and walk her home afterwards. I got to know the people

she worked for along with their neighbours. So when my work was finished in construction it did not take me long to find work around the houses of the Americans. They lived in wooden houses that were put together just to accommodate the large group of families that were brought to the Azores. These cottage-like houses started to rot under the windows and the roofs so they needed repairs. I would measure for the needed materials, the owner would pay for them, I would contract local carpenters and painters and see the job was well done. I made really good money but my heart was set on getting a real job on the base as soon as I was 18.

And I did! I wanted to work for the Americans but first I had to work for a Portuguese jeweller that had a shop in the post-exchange (PX). I was not happy about this but that's what the personnel officer determined I should do. You see I had no choice. So I took the job until I could move into the PX working for the Americans. Everything happens for a reason and it serves you. Working with the jeweller I learned a lot about watches and the names of the different movements. This helped me later in coming to Canada. I will tell you more about that later.

While my father was alone on Terceira, he would ask a lady to write letters home for him and to read the letters that we sent to him. We felt indebted to these people. One day her husband asked my father if he would let him build a house next to ours. My father said "Yes" and even told him to build it against our house so he wouldn't have to build one wall. He did so. All was well until one bright sunny summer day his wife started a fire to cook lunch. She came next door to ask my mother for some potatoes and couves. They chatted for a while. She had left the door open and the wind blew into the open fire. Before they noticed the other neighbours yelling fire, it was too late. No one got hurt but we were left with nothing. All that could be found in the burned houses was a single shoe. All we had was the clothing on our backs. We were on the street again. This time we were all grown up but we stuck together. The Americans offered help. The Portuguese military were there as well, but it was the Americans that helped us. They allowed us to go to the salvage yard and take as many truckloads as we needed for \$1.00 per load. We were able to rebuild our house and we made it much better this time. Sometimes out of a disaster something good can be achieved. It all depends

on your outlook. We moved into the house of a young man that had eyes for my sister, Helena, and later married her. We lived there until our new house was built. We made a kitchen in blocks and cement and all the rooms were well furnished with wooden floors. Not like the first house where the dirt was wetted down and we stepped on boards until it hardened like clay.

It was about this time that I learned English. I learned my English in 3 months and that was enough for me to pass tests A and B, which is what was required to work on the base for the Americans. With this knowledge I was now able to wink at the American girls and that was awesome.



Chapter 4

Tell me who your friends are and I will tell you who you will become

You will remember my adventure with my cousin Fernando Brinco, his grandmother's chicken coop and my grandmother's eggs. Well, there is one other occasion in which I again misbehaved and learned a valuable lesson.

It was the winter of 1957; I was working a construction job before I became Master Maia's assistant. The American weather station reported a bad weather front coming through the island. The company that I worked for had a load of cement on the docks (Porto de Pipas) and we had 8 hours before the storm was forecast to hit the island to protect the cement from the rain. The cement came in wooden barrels and it was not well protected. If the rain got into the cement it would harden and become a useless rock. The foreman came around looking for volunteers to go to the docks and load up this cement into the military trucks that would bring it to safety from the storm we called a temporal. In the Azores, we don't get a hurricane; we get a temporal. The wind and the water can be very scary during a bad temporal.

I volunteered. At this stage in my life, I could move mountains. I was pretty strong, and of course being young, I was always trying to show off my

strength. This was a good opportunity to show off, especially because I was the youngest in the group. We loaded up these 100-kilo barrels by rolling them on steel rails into the trucks and away they went. When we finished the last truck, we noticed that right next to us was a huge pallet of Amstel beer cases. One of the older guys told me to put a case in our truck. You will notice, he didn't use the word steal, so I did it. What I did not know was that the Guarda Republicana was watching us through binoculars from the top of the cliff. They saw me take the beer and put it in the truck. Remember my father's advice of not doing something if you don't want people to find out? Well this was the last time in my life. I have had other temptations and many opportunities and plenty of bad advice from other people but that lesson lasted me a lifetime.

You have to understand that this was Portugal, a country being run by the dictator Salazar. I was born and left the Azores under his regime. Stealing a case of beer from the docks under the supervision of the Guarda was a big offence. You could land in jail and you may very well be labelled a thief. When the truck came to pass through the gates, it was stopped. One of the guards came out to the truck, grabbed me by the arm and took me inside the guardhouse. He demanded that I go and get the beer case. I went to the truck, got the beer and gave it to the guard. He instructed the driver to go on without me.

I was really afraid. I realized that what I had done was wrong. I was afraid my life was ruined. I got on my knees and cried so hard that this guard felt sorry for me. I told him that if my father found out what I had done he would kill me. He let me go with a warning that he would be watching me very closely. This time I never forgot the lesson. I was afraid my father would be disappointed in me because I would have soiled his good name. Since that time I have handled a lot of money and property that was not mine and I have always respected it as belonging to someone else. I have always kept this lesson in mind and if I thought I would be ashamed of what I was doing or I didn't want others to find out about it, I did not do it.

When I turned 18 I went into the base looking for work at the billeting. This was a department of the American Air Force that housed the transient military

personnel at which I applied for a job as an attendant, similar to a hotel desk clerk. After an interview with an American lieutenant and a Portuguese administrator I was offered a job. I took the job requisition and went to the 5020. This was how this office was known. For many years, it had been run by Captain Abel Mendes. This fellow had an empire of his own. He had the last say in who worked where.

A friend of his, by the name of Coimbra, was in the Portuguese Pide. The Pide was similar to the Gestapo in Germany during the '30's and '40's. Coimbra was looking for a young person to work in his jewellery and watch making shop in the PX and so the job for the billet was given to someone else and I was told I could take the job with Coimbra or nothing.

The job with the Americans in the billeting was going to yield me 2000 escudos a month compared with the Coimbra job, which was only going to pay 1000 escudos a month. When you live under a dictatorship and you have no friends in high places, you learn to be obedient or you suffer the injustice. I am sure that there are many worse things that people have to go through in life, but today, when I see young people refusing to take certain jobs and are not willing to give their best, I can't help but feel sorry for them because they have no idea of what life is really all about. Everything happens for a reason and it serves you. Taking this job actually helped me later on and I will tell you about it when I share my experiences about immigrating to Canada. But for now, let me share this with you.

The jewellery shop was in the PX. I worked there for about a year. My job was to be an interpreter for watch repairs and to sell the odd souvenir in Portuguese or English, whatever was necessary to make the sale. The PX commanding officer was Major Solomon. Major Solomon would walk about the PX and he soon noticed me and asked me if I would like to work for him. He could see that I had more potential than working for Coimbra.

I confided in Major Solomon and explained that Coimbra was a friend of Captain Mendes and how it could be fatal for me to cross those two. He told me to leave it with him. He told me that President Eisenhower was coming

through the base next week and he wanted to select me to be one of the people to wait on the president. I was so happy. Not only did I attend President Eisenhower's reception, I was one of the selected few to be in the PX with the president and his entourage. I was so proud. The next week there was an official request for me to move from Coinbra's jewellery shop to Lotus Shoes, an English company that was going to close. I was to learn how to sell shoes so I could take over the department for the PX.

All was going well. Then the worst happened. On a Sunday afternoon in August 1960, I went to the beach. It was a usual Sunday outing with my friends. We were having fun running from the beach and diving into the waves as they formed crashing on the shore. I did this with my friends all the time. This day something went terribly wrong. I hit the bottom when I took my dive. I miscalculated the magnitude of the wave and hit the sand bank headfirst. I just went numb. Thousands of needles went through my entire body. I could not move. I was paralyzed. I never lost consciousness but I just could not move. I was very fortunate that my friends were with me and they didn't let me drown. My friends picked me up and they could tell that something was wrong. I could not speak. I knew all that was going on around me but I could not speak. My friends called the police for help. When the police came they put me in their jeep and took me to the hospital. At the hospital, the first thing they did was to pump my stomach. I had not swallowed any water but they fussed with me and put me on a stretcher in this huge room with other patients. I couldn't speak and the nurses didn't know what was wrong. It was about midnight when my family came to see me. Believe it or not, I was concerned that my father would be upset because he warned me not to go to the beach and dive into the water. Some of my father's friends told him that I was a bit of a daredevil and that some day I would hurt myself. Also, one of my cousins had died in the ocean a few years earlier, so my father had good reason to be concerned and now here I was.

I had not yet been seen by a doctor. No one was allowed to handle me because they did not know what was wrong with me. I will never forget the words my mother said when she saw me. "My dear son, you are the sight that my eyes see with, do not extinguish." You know how much I loved my mother

and how much I wanted to please her. When she came to be with me, it was as if that request got my inner self to start working towards healing. By Tuesday, I started to speak to the doctors and nurses and explained exactly what had happened. The doctors were not sure how to treat me and no medication was ever given to me. During the second week the doctors had determined that perhaps there was a way to get my body moving again. I was taken to a device that had a large pad on one side and a pillow on the other. The device was to give me an electric shock. This was done several times. I first started moving my legs, then my right arm. My body repaired itself and I convalesced in the hospital. I was discharged about 2 months later. It was many years later that I found out I had indeed broken my neck. After I came to Canada I was involved in a car accident.

I went back to work. While I was away, the PX had to have someone else manage the shoe department. I now had to work as a helper in the department I created after Lotus Shoes left. Soon it was time for me to go in the army. I was drafted in January 1961. The war in Africa broke out on New Years Eve of 1961. Every man had to serve. My brother Joe had served his time and had been discharged. Even he was recalled and had to go back. Now it was my turn to be called.

All healthy men were trained to be *Cacadores Especiale* (Special Hunters). The real meaning is hunters of the enemy, and in short, we were going to show the Africans who was boss. It was never my desire to fight, much less kill anything, or anyone, and the good Lord looked kindly on me and saved me from having to kill anything or anyone. The training was 6 tough months of physical and mental preparation. One week before I was to leave for Angola, I was transferred from the army to the air force. Not all things under a dictatorship are bad if you know someone in high places. My brother Joe was the driver for the Portuguese air base commander. Joe told the commander's wife about me going to Angola. Because Joe knew someone important, I was transferred to the air base. I was given the rank of Corporal First Class and assigned the duties of a typist. Remember, I had learned a little typing at Doctor Forjaz's home from his daughter. It was not much but it helped me stay out of Angola. Because I spoke English, I was transferred to the military police and eventually got a job at the officers club.

Until 1960, most people only served 3 or 6 months in the army and were discharged. I was of course hoping for this for myself. However, things don't always work out the way you hope or plan. In 1960, the colonies decided they didn't want to be ruled by Portugal. Goa, Damao, and Dio in India became independent states without incident. There the military destroyed whatever armaments there were and they returned home.

Angola and Mozambique were different. On New Year's Eve of 1961, Angola and Mozambique revolted at the same time. The revolutionaries attacked civilian settlers. Portugal appealed to our patriotism and convinced us that we had to defend what was rightfully Portugal's. According to the government, Angola and Mozambique had been Portuguese colonies for 500 years and therefore we were going to fight to the bitter end and we did. Luckily it did not include me.

As I said earlier we would only serve 6 months during peacetime. When the revolution began your time was much longer. Portugal was not very well prepared to carry on a long fight. Just to give you an idea of how unprepared we were to fight; the place that was used to house the battalion had been previously used as a horse stable. The floors were made of cobble stone and the walls and roof were made of large sheets of tin. The showers were simply made from a long pipe at the back of this horse stable. We would shower in cold water after we returned from manoeuvres. If your platoon was the last one to return from manoeuvres you very often did not have enough water to have a shower.

When you are drafted you report to the military base and you are posted to the Quartel. This is a totally secure area and for one month you do not leave the Quartel. This is where you are trained to obey orders and ask questions later. I really did not need to go into the army to learn discipline. I got plenty of it from "Caetano do Rego" but I learned not to be the first or last to do anything because this is when you get noticed by your superiors or the enemy. So I learned to stay in the middle as much as possible. In other words, don't rock the boat if you want to come out of the army the same way you went in. The food during those 6 months of basic training was horrible. But as you

know from my earlier upbringing I was able to cope better than some of my friends. Another thing you learn in the army is to make friends with at least the guys in your platoon. They may save your life and you theirs so you get to know who you can count on and who you can't. Luckily, as I did not have to go to Angola, after my basic training I was transferred to the air force thanks to the air force base commander's driver, my brother Joe.

That part of my service was really easy. I was able to get my job at the American Officer's club in the cloakroom and I did my typing and interpreting for the courts whenever American or Portuguese military personnel got into a scuffle. There was no real friction between the two forces so I had a real easy job.

Remember Coimbra, the friend of Captain Mendes for whom I had to work for 1 year for 1/2 the money I could have earned working for the Americans? It turned out that Coimbra was not happy with his jewellery store and watch repair in the PX. He wanted to make more money so he could be rich and have more influence on the base. Coimbra got involved with some workers on the base who were stealing aircraft bulbs. These bulbs had platinum in them. They would steal the bulbs, break them for the platinum, and sell it to Coimbra who would in turn make jewellery with it. I was not involved in the process of finding out who were the thieves or how Coimbra was involved but I was in charge of putting Coimbra outside the military base. He surrendered his ID and signed a document swearing that he would not enter the base ever again. I inspected the truck that took all his belongings from his store. Life can be really interesting. Coimbra knew that he exploited me for a year because of his influence with Captain Mendes and now I, Fernando Rego, was escorting this thief off the base. A job well done!

Major Solomon was promoted to colonel and he was now in charge of the Officers Club. Colonel Solomon and I were still friends. He invited me to his home for dinner and we talked about life in the Portuguese army. When he learned that I only got paid \$4 per month, he asked me how I managed to keep my shoes polished and my uniform clean. I told him that my parents helped me out. The Colonel asked me if I wanted to take on a job at the officers

club. He told me that he would pay me something for it. He knew that \$4 a month did not go very far even in the Azores and he clearly wanted to help me. My pay was 120.00 escudos per month. At that time, 1 US dollar was worth 28 escudos.

I first had to get permission from my commanding officer, Capitao Cunha Lopes, to work at the officers club. I had to wear civvies and would only be able to work at the club part time. Capitao Lopes gave his permission provided that my work for the Portuguese Air Force was done each day and that I never did anything to embarrass myself or the Portuguese Air Force. I looked around the club to see what job I might do. I knew that because I couldn't be there until after 4 o'clock, being a waiter or a bartender would not be convenient. I saw the cloakroom and decided that this was a job I could do for tips. Colonel Solomon and I agreed that I could run the cloakroom and for this he would pay me \$35 a month. Each month I got a money order for \$35, (1000 escudos) and my tips. I organized that room in sections so that I did not have to give out claim tickets and I left my door open so that when the clients came in I would help them with their coat when they arrived and when they left. The tips were just great.

I never thought that this job would be the groundwork for my adult career and livelihood but it was from doing this job well that I was discovered. Mr. William Stansfield, the CEO of Alexander of London Bespoke tailors, visited the officers club one evening. When he came to the officers club I greeted him and took his coat. Mr Stansfield asked for a claim ticket and I told him that I didn't use claim tickets. I would remember him and his coat and I would be there when he was ready to leave. When Mr. Stansfield came to leave I retrieved his coat from the rack and I helped him put it on. Mr. Stansfield was so impressed with the way I put on his coat that he offered me a job with his company in the PX. Now what was I to do? I was in the army, I had a job in the officers club and now Mr. Stansfield wanted me to work for his company. It so happened that I was about to be discharged from my term of duty and once again Capitao Lopes helped me by allowing me to take this job one month before my time was up.

I went to see Mr. Blythman who was the manager of Alexander in the Azores. He was expecting me because Mr Stansfield had told him about me. I was hired on the spot and started to serve my apprenticeship in the art of bespoke service under Mr. Blythman and George, the tailor. I passed my test and now it was up to me to serve the customers when they came in the store. I had the least seniority in Alexander's and it appeared that everybody knew their salesman. I was worried that I may not be able to keep this great job. Now I had an opportunity to make more money than when I worked in the PX prior to my turn in the army. However, as I often say, necessity is the mother of invention.

Military personnel had money on the 1st and 2nd and the 15th and 16th of the month. That was when they were paid. The other salesmen in Alexander's had their customers and I needed to find my own clients. I went to the barracks and started to talk to the military personnel about wardrobe building. I went between paydays and I learned that it is very easy to sell someone something when they are not paying for it at that time. I would show them styles from the catalogue and I would measure them. On payday they would come into the store and give me a deposit. Taking the deposit would take me all of a minute and soon I became the most productive salesman in the world of Alexander. There was an Alexander everywhere there was an American military base with a PX. One day, Mr. Stansfield walked into the shop unannounced. It was a payday for the military. He dropped his bags at the door and stared at the sight of the line-up of GIs waiting for me to give them a receipt on their purchases. Mr Stansfield asked me to dinner with my fiancée, Cecilia. Mr. Stansfield had never seen such a sight and he wanted to understand how I was able to attract so many customers. He asked if I would tell him exactly what I did step by step.

I told him that I would wait until after payday and the GI's had spent their money. I would go to the barracks and sell them on the idea of putting together a wardrobe for the day they were discharged. Because the GI's had uniforms they didn't need civvies while they were in the army but they could have great clothes when they were discharged. It was easy to get the GI's to pay attention to my presentation because they had no money and nowhere else to go. My

idea was to show the styles to the GI's and to convince them that they could have a great wardrobe when they left the service. All they had to do was pay a small amount each payday. When you were to be discharged, your wardrobe would be paid for and ready for you. The concept did not help Alexander's because the other salespeople were not willing to go to the customer like I did. It worked great for me and when the GIs were replaced every 2 years they would introduce me to their replacements and I got another group to sell on the idea of having a great wardrobe after they were discharged. I was too busy to think of anything else but to keep on doing what I loved doing. I did this job until I came to Canada in January 1969. When I told the company about my wishes they offered me an opportunity to go to another store. I could have worked in Europe or England but my mind was made up. I wanted to raise my family in a free country and Canada was my choice. Here I am, a proud \$15 Canadian, which is how much I paid to become a Canadian citizen.

Not all I did was hard work. I also had some fun too. I was about 18 in the winter of 1959 when I went to watch a show with a friend named Vasco. The show was put on by a choir group and one of the stars of the show being none other than my Cecilia. I had no idea who she was or even if I would ever see her again. But when I heard her voice singing this romantic song called Figueria da Foz about the moon and the beach and how they embraced and kiss in the midnight clear, oh what a feeling went through my heart! I loved her so much. When the show was finished, I went home but not before I told Vasco how much I loved that girl.

Life went on, of course, and in May 1960 I was strolling up and down a certain street in the town. There was an illuminated area on a designated street that was covered with strings of lights. The girls were inside the houses looking through the windows at the boys strolling up and down the street. The boys look to see which girl they may engage with a look. So up and down the street I was going with my friends. My brother, Joe, who is 3 years older than me was also going up and down with his own friends who were soldiers. I saw this beautiful girl in a window on the second floor. Her father was standing in the doorway as if guarding her. I had no idea who he was and I stood there like someone who is determined to get a positive answer from this gorgeous

girl. It turns out that she was only 14 but I didn't know how old she was. But when she smiled, I knew that I just had to meet her. I decided to wait until after the feast to find out where she lived.

As it happened, she and her family got on the 11:30 bus. I got on that bus too; I had to go where she lived. The next Sunday I was there and sure enough I knew she liked me and I loved her. Cecilia lived in a house that was about 4 metres up from the street. For the best part of a year, I courted with me being on the street and her being in her house 4 metres above the street. I never got close enough to her to even touch her hand.

About 6 months later I was talking with Cecilia. She was in her doorway. I was on the street and my friend Vasco saw me speaking with her. He, of course, could tell that we were in love. When I saw him that night at the same theatre where I first saw that beautiful girl in the blue dress singing Figueria, my friend Vasco told me that the girl I was talking to earlier that day, Cecilia and the girl who sang Figueria about 2 years ago were one and the same. Well I couldn't wait until the next Sunday. I had to confirm this very important fact. Imagine that this was indeed the girl whom I loved so much and had actually written-off in my mind as an impossibility. And now I had a chance to court her. I knew by now that we were meant for each other. I loved her even more. Next Sunday came and sure enough she confirmed she was the girl from the play. Well this year we will celebrate our 40 years together as a married couple in Madeira Island, Portugal.

Today when I see kids complaining and getting into trouble, I wonder if we went too far to give them too much. Perhaps a happy medium would be at some point where the 10 to 20 year olds could be given a bird's eye view of the tough life in other countries, perhaps they would learn to appreciate what we have in North America. By the way, the Azores is nothing like it was anymore. Families have become smaller. Many immigrated to Canada and the United States and they have sent money back to their relatives. Portugal is now part of the European Union and so the economy has improved. But I am sure there are many countries where there is still plenty of injustice. If our children were to live there for a month or so, they would see what it is like to live in these countries. It might be a very good investment in the future of our youth.



< This was my gift from Cecelia when I went to the army. I truly cherished looking at it while I was away. Isn't she beautiful.

My gift to Cecelia so she would > not forget me. It worked.





< Our engagement gifts, there were no rings. I was 23 and Cecelia was 17. ✓





< Just married, while visiting a friend.

A very important day in > our lives.





Chapter 5

The Courtship and Coming to Canada

I was first attracted to Cecilia by her looks and as I got to know her I became more and more fascinated with her lack of exposure to the real world. Imagine! She was 14 when I met her and she had never dated anyone else. Cecilia was the eldest of six, and by living at home helping her mother raise the family, she had little exposure to things other than what went on in her immediate surroundings.

Her parents were very protective of girls because if a girl was known to have had more than one serious boyfriend she was no longer a first rate catch and would be at a disadvantage when selecting a husband. Right or wrong that's the way it was and parents that really cared did not want their daughters to be at a disadvantage. I knew that and I also believed in those values.

However, once I spoke to Mr. Branco, Cecilia's father, and told him that I was serious about her and wanted to get to know her better, I expected some more freedom with her. But no such luck. We were always chaperoned under the vigilant eyes of Mr. and Mrs. Branco and Francelina who is Cecilia's

younger sister. Well we managed. But from time to time I would get frustrated that I could not get close enough to her to do the natural things that healthy young people in love like to do. So I would not show up sometimes for 2 months in a row hoping that when I would come back things would become a bit looser, but no sir. However, my beautiful Cecilia was always happy to see me back and we always picked up where we left off that same day. Soon we would get married and the days of living under the caring but ever watchful eyes of family would come to an end. When we got married, I was 24 and Cecilia was 18. We had a beautiful wedding for the standards of those days. We were naturally desirous of one another and looked forward to spending our life together, truly enjoying the intimacy of our love for each other.

We moved to our own house that I rented and we really had an easy time of getting to know each other intimately. My love for Cecilia has always been unshakable. I am proud to say that I have always been loyal to her.

We are good for each other. Cecilia looked up to me for guidance in the early years and I never abused her innocence or took advantage of her position. How could I, I love her. Once I got through the first 15 years of my life, things had really worked out for me, of course with some set backs as it is part of all human life. We somehow always realized that as long as we had each other we could make it. I think wanting Cecilia so much during the courtship years contributed a lot to our happiness. It's the forbidden fruit I think.

When we had been married one month I came home to find Cecilia crying and I asked "Who hurt you? What happened?" She said "Well I went shopping and I spent so much money." So I asked her what she had bought and Cecilia told me it was groceries, things we needed but no extravagances. So I approved and told her that there was nothing wrong with what she had done, and I must say that to this day I am happy that Cecilia is the banker in our house and does a great job at it. Shortly after we were married I went for a haircut and while I was waiting for my turn I gambled \$100 escudos. It's a card game at the barber shop. When I told Cecilia this she was not happy about it and told me how she felt about it. That was the end of my card gambling. I am thankful to her for that help because it was a manly thing to

do for the macho tough guys to gamble as they liked, often not having enough food at home for their children. This was not the case with us but if I gambled a bit here, a bit there, who knows how much gambling I would have done. I know some people who work really hard, sometimes at two jobs and they have nothing because of their gambling habits.

It takes two to tango and the two have to be in tune with the music for the dance to go smoothly. Well life is a long session of dancing the tango and if the two people who choose to live as one are not in tune with the music of life they will certainly step on each other. So choose your partner well if you want the dance of married life to go smoothly. You have got to want it to make it work. You must really want it so that you can change the tune according to the times and circumstances, you know what I mean!

We were married for 4 months and my mother in law asked Cecilia why she was not expecting yet! We were not in any hurry but it appeared that we should be. Anyway, Cecilia conceived my son Fernando and he was born on December 25, 1966, a Christmas boy. The birth took place in a hospital that was run by nuns. They did not believe in helping the birth. It had to be natural. Oh what a day that was. I don't want to go back in memory because at one time during labour I wished for no child so that my Cecilia would not suffer any more. But all ended well. Thank God.

As you will remember from my previous accounts of how much I loved my Cecilia, it was on that day , December 25, 1966 that I fully respected her, committed myself to her completely and decided to protect her even if it meant giving up my life for her. The gift of my son and what she went through to achieve that just moved me so much that I can still remember the feeling. I can only call it respect. I know that she is not the only mother in the world. I also had one that I loved very much, but to me, from that day onward my commitment to her has been unshakable.

We enjoyed our life with Fernando. Cecilia did not work outside the house and once a week a lady came in to wash the floors and clothes. Remember, I was working for Alexander's of London making good money and we

belonged to the Mayor's club. We went to the movies at least once a week. My sister in law Francelina was crazy about Fernando. Her boyfriend was a soldier fighting in Angola and Francelina loved to stay in our house to look after Fernando.

To give you an idea of the good life, I worked 9:30 to 5:30 and it took me 15 minutes to get home by bus. The beach was a 3 minute walk from my house I would often go for a swim in the ocean while Cecilia prepared a good dinner. Afterwards we would go to the arcade to take in a movie and lived like the gentry. And yet I continued to apply to immigrate to Canada. Cecilia and I would stay up talking about how, if we came to Canada, our lives would change dramatically but we were prepared to do it. We wanted to raise our family in a democracy, in a country where our kids could go to university and be whatever they wanted to be. That was our number one goal.

Many people came to Canada from 1955 onwards. My brother Joe came to Canada in 1965, and Manuel came in 1967. I started applying in 1964 with Joe and Manuel but each time I applied I was rejected. I would receive this form letter that would say you are inadmissible to Canada at this time. This went on for 3 years. I was getting pretty angry at Canada. One day I shared my frustration with a neighbour, who was an older American gentleman. Mr. Stark gave me a piece of advice, which I took. His advice was to write a letter to the Minister of External Affairs. At the time it was the Honourable Paul Martin. I wrote explaining that I had been in the military and was healthy, married with one son, spoke English and wanted to make Canada my home. I received four replies from different departments. The RCMP went to see my brother Joe and asked him if he would help me if I came to Canada. In no time I received an invitation to see the Canadian Consul on the Island of São Miguel , which is where the interviews took place.

Cecilia, Fernando and I traveled by ship all night to be there for 9 a.m. Fernando was only 1 year old and was very uncomfortable. We waited all day and at 4:30 the assistant to the Consul came out to tell everyone to go home and come back the next day. I politely asked if he would see me today in view of the fact that we traveled all night and Fernando was not feeling well.

He agreed to see me and my visit lasted all of 5 minutes. I saw on his desk my original letter to the Ministry with my picture. I could tell that this man was upset with me because I went over his head by writing to the Minister. He told me that Canada did not need salesmen or bespoke tailors at that time. I knew he was upset that I had gone straight to the Minister, but he was a very small person to take it to the point of refusing me. I will never forget that man. I was so disappointed and embarrassed because I was actually bragging to my friends that I was going to Canada because I went straight to the Minister of External Affairs. I thought I was hot stuff and now this. I was devastated! I made up my mind that this time I was going to apply as a professional.

I learned that Canada was accepting watchmakers so I bought a book on watch repairs; I had taken some watches apart when I worked with Coimbra and I knew the names of all the watch movements and the popular brands at that time. Again I applied to come to Canada, this time as a watchmaker. In a short time I was called for an interview. The Counsel was not the same and we were approved.

You would think that I had gone through enough heart aches to come to Canada, but no - you are wrong. We had to go for a physical examination and then went back to Terceira Island to await the results. Guess what, Cecilia showed something wrong in her lungs. The X-rays showed that she might have TB. She went back to São Miguel. This time, my mother and Fernando went with her because she had to undergo some tests and they were going to have to wait for the results. This time the results were OK. The problem was that when she took the X-rays the first time, she was wearing a gold chain with a cross and it looked like there was something wrong. Finally, we were really coming to Canada and we did on January 21, 1969. My parents were also coming through my brother's sponsorship. They came to Canada with us on the same plane.

My father had stopped working on the base at age 55 but he continued to work his little farm with couves and there were banana trees, orange trees, and watermelons. My father also rented some pieces of land to raise cattle for the

market. Dad was a go-getter and as we left to get married he adjusted his lifestyle. Dad was resourceful and he managed the farming quite well on his own.

My aunt Mary, from my mother's side, died young and we took in one of her daughters named Isabel. Isabel was not retarded but she was not normal either. Anyway, she could not come to Canada with my parents and there were no other relatives in Terceira Island to look after Isabel. In the meantime people knew that my father was coming to Canada and they were waiting until the last minute to buy our house and land cheap. Yes, my father purchased the 4 acres that he rented when he first came to Terceira Island. Now he was not even going to get half of what the farm and the house were worth and my dad was really upset about that.

There was a man named Alvarino who lived nearby and he was somewhat like Isabel. I came up with the idea that if the land and house were given to Isabel, Alvarino might be interested in Isabel and they could be good for each other. So I started the ball rolling. I wrote my brothers at my father's request to ask if they agreed with this because sooner or later my other two sisters were going to come to Canada. My sister Ilda was going to Texas with her husband so they agreed that my father should give the house and land to Isabel as she really had no place to go.

I let Alvarino know that Isabel was going to own the land and house and sure enough he started to court Isabel and they got married. I am sure the land and house helped him make up his mind. He and Isabel never had children. When Alvarino's parents immigrated to the U.S., they gave him their house. He preferred his parent's house to ours and he let our house go down. The last time I visited there I was a bit disappointed to see the condition of the farm and the house but the reality is that it helped Isabel get married and live a decent life that otherwise she may not have been able to do.

I am really proud of the fact that my father was willing to give away the house and the only piece of land he owned. You know, it takes someone really generous to do that and my parents did it. I was not surprised with my mother but my father gave me a pleasant surprise. He worked so hard and to give it away at age 60, that's how old my father was when he came to Canada.

It was a huge celebration when we arrived. Manuel and Joe came to get us at the airport. We came up Spadina Ave at 2 a.m. on the 22nd of January and I saw the sign for Tip Top Tailors at the corner of Spadina and College. I told my brothers to remember that place. I would go there to find work. The next day my brother, Joe, took me to Eaton's. They were not hiring so he took me to Simpson's. They were not hiring either. I could see that Joe was getting depressed. I told him to go to Tip Top Tailors. When we got there, the Manager, Lui, told me that he had just hired someone to work there the week before but if I went to the head office at 637 Lakeshore someone would give me a job.

So we went there and I left my letter of recommendation from Alexander's of London and we went home. About 30 minutes after we arrived, there was a call for me to go back to Tip Top for an interview. I returned with my brother and was offered a job as a salesman at Shoppers World, Scarborough. I was to start the next day at \$70 a week and receive 3% commission on my own sales. Joe took me to the store by subway to show me how to get there.

The next day I reported to work. The only other person there was the tailor Tony LaPianta. The manager was off sick and the assistant manger was in court regarding some NSF cheques.

Here again I turned a bad thing into a good thing. The manager was a sick man and he was also an exploiter of people. I was working 50 to 60 hours per week but he was only reporting 44 hours. As you will remember, I was used to being taken advantage of in the Azores so I accepted it. After a short while, my supervisor asked me if I wanted to go for a test to become an assistant manager. I did and got good results. The head office did not know the hours I was working so they thought I was even better than I was and soon I became the assistant manager. It was not long after that I was promoted to manager and transferred to a bigger store at Cedarbrae. Finally I was transferred to Sherway in 1972 where I met DB.

DB offered me a partnership if I wanted to open my own store. I didn't feel I was ready for this move and politely told him that I could not do it at that

time. At the end of August 1973, I was promoted to regional manager and I was just flying. All was going my way. My region was doing great and then one day, as I was driving to work, I was hit from behind and got whiplash. During the day Phil Macks noticed that I was favouring my left arm and asked me what was wrong. I told him that I had this numbing feeling on my arm and my left hand was cold, so he told me to go to the hospital and get it checked out. I thought the doctor was going to cut my head off when he looked at the X-rays. There was a massive fusion from my broken neck when I was 19. I did not think to tell the doctor that part and he thought that I was playing this up to get insurance money. I told him that I had a good job and all I wanted was to get well.

Not so fast! The whole world was slipping away from me. I was put in a neck brace and I was taking Valium for pain. The doctors tried injecting cortisone into my neck. From the top of my head I was a mess and kept going like a madman around this time. Don Evans, my boss, fired the regional manager in Calgary. That man was a 20-year veteran and Don fired him because he knew that his region was under producing. Don asked me to move to Calgary to do the job there so that he would not loose face. Some of the other executives did not agree with Don. Now what? Here I am, sick and hurt, seeing two doctors, taking pills and now I have been asked to move my family away from the rest of our family. Everyone was in Toronto now. But what was I to do? I felt I had to do this for Don.

We moved to Calgary and I turned that region around in 3 months. I met George Perry there, an older gentleman who had aspirations to replace me when my job was done. George recommended that I go see a back specialist because he could see I was struggling. I went to see Dr. Glen and he put me in the hospital right away. He said that my spinal chord could be severed with minimum impact the wrong way. My vertebrae number 2 and 3 were cracked from the original accident in the ocean. They were again damaged from the whiplash. Dr. Glen recommended that I undergo surgery to fuse vertebrae 2, 3 and 4 into one. I went into the Foothills Hospital in early December and they did my lower back first.

We returned to Toronto for Christmas with my family and since I was sick anyway I could not go to work. George Perry was doing a good job for me. Our family was happy to see Cecilia and I with the kids.

In January I went back into the hospital in Calgary. They took bone from my hip to use in my neck and in no time I was back running things properly. The region went up 40% over the previous year. Now Don got a promotion and he brought me back to Toronto as promised. We were all very happy to come back but going to Calgary had been a good thing. Dr. Glen was the best in the business.

Everything happens for a reason and it serves you

When we first arrived in Canada, we were living in my brother's house in one room and a kitchen. After a couple of weeks I went with my brother Manuel to drop off his wife to work at the Bank of Nova Scotia. I will never forget that day. There is Jacinta, a girl who never worked a day outside her house back home and she is going to work at night doing housekeeping. I went home and told Cecilia that before getting her a job we were going to try to manage without her working because she did not speak English. She could only work in a factory or cleaning and I did not want that for my Cecilia if I could help it.

And we managed very well. The next week I went to the manpower office with my brother Manuel because he needed to fill out some papers for my sister Joanna to join us in Canada. While I was waiting I asked a lady what I needed to do to sponsor my father in law and his family. She gave me some papers and told me to fill them out right away because it takes a long time for applications to get approved. So I filled out the application. My father-in-law was turning 50 that year and that was the age limit to come to Canada as a landed immigrant at that time. Soon we got word that my father in law and family had been notified to start procedures to come to Canada. We started saving money to be sure that we could help them when they arrived. There were 7 of them. It was a big responsibility and by February 2, 1970 they arrived. We rented a house at 13 Lapin Ave. They all got work right away and did not really need our help. In March that year I went to Alliston to buy my

first car - a Volkswagen- for \$2600 cash. I went to Alliston to save \$200. Imagine, one year after immigrating, my wife not working and I purchased a car for cash. We all lived together for one year. Paul was born in November 1970 and we moved to an apartment in Scarborough to be near my work. Soon after that, I got transferred to Sherway and I had to drive from the east side of Toronto to the west side. The drive to and from Scarborough was not pleasant so we purchased our first house in Mississauga and moved into it in August 1973. I got promoted that year in the same month that I moved into my house, but we were not complaining. Cecilia looked after the kids, I looked after the business and the Rego's were prospering.

My First Job in Canada

Good things are not always easy - even in Canada. When we arrived in Canada, I was fortunate to get a job the very next day. I arrived on January 22nd, 1969 and was working on January 23rd. I worked for that company until August 1979 and I left because I was too successful.

My first assignment was salesperson at Tip Top Tailors in Shoppers World Danforth. This job paid \$70 per week plus 3% commission on my personal sales. A suit - the most expensive at that time was a \$250 Leishman made to measure, a tie was \$6.50, and a dress shirt was \$9.95. So to sell \$3,000 per week required a lot of hard work. If I could sell \$3000 per week, that would give me \$70 per week in salary plus \$90 per week in commission or \$160 per week x 52 weeks for a total of \$8,320 per year. I actually made \$10,450 that year. Because we sold a lot of unclaimed made to measure suits for \$99.99, the salesman would get \$3 commission + \$5 spiff. Spiff is what stores pay the employees for selling something that is hard to sell. The industry calls them 'dogs'. At Rego, we call them 'friends of the family' because they won't go away - even on sale. Anyway, these unclaimed made to measure suits were gathered from all of the Tip Top stores across the country. Most of them would have come to the store at Shoppers World. I learned how to sell them properly. They were good quality suits; the problem was the fit. They were made to order and did not fit the original customer well. So, I would measure these garments in advance and would mark them my way so that when I had a client buying a regular suit I would also offer them a great price on these

suits that were rejected by the original customer. It was clearly explained to the customer and I made a lot of friends with those suits.

There was a funeral home near by and some times they would come in to buy a suit for a cadaver or for someone who could not afford a regular suit and I would sell the funeral home some of these suits. And you know, I never had a complaint from these customers. It was at that time that the made-to-measure era at Tip Top ended. Harry Rosen was the General Manager for Tip Top and he was determined to put an end to made-to-measure and push ready-to-wear and he did. Tip Top started to grow quite a bit at that time. Harry had been bought out by Dylex and he was given the post of GM at Tip Top. Harry was instrumental in pushing Tip Top to be a great contender in this country in the 70's and 80's. In the late 70's Harry came back to run his own division, where I ended up working for 6 years as the manager of the Eaton Centre store.

Anyway - back to 1969. The manger of the store at Shoppers World was a man who was sick physically and mentally. He would miss a lot of days and I would be asked to work extra hours and extra days, which I was happy to do. We received \$1.50 each night that we worked 12 hours. This was supper money. I of course, would sell more, but my manager never requested overtime for me. Our workweek was 44 hours for the \$70, so the only extra money I got was commission on my sales. That was fine, because I did not know any better. In 3 months I was promoted to assistant manager and got a \$15 per week increase. I was on top of the world or was it Shoppers World? Yes, I was on top of the world. Cecilia did not have to work and we were saving a little money to assist my in-laws. When they would arrive I wanted to be sure that they did not have to go on welfare and they did not. They all got jobs. When they arrived in February 1970 we all lived in one house that I rented - 13 Lapin Avenue, Toronto, near Dufferin and Dupont. We lived there for 1 year.

Back to work. As I said, we were on top of the world. All was going well. Tip Top head office was impressed with my sales and the store. The regional manager asked me if I wanted to take this test to see if I was management material.

When I asked him how much it would cost me to take this test, he laughed. I went and passed the test successfully. My manager started to give me a hard time. He would get on the phone and talk to the other managers, making jokes that I was going to Newfoundland to manage because there were no openings in Toronto. He was relentless. After all the times that I had worked extra hours without pay to cover for his sickness. He was deliberately having fun at my expense. I was a new Canadian and I was still living in my Portuguese mentality – listen and shut-up. One day he went too far.

It was the month of December 1969, a Saturday. It was my morning off because I had to close the store at 9 o'clock, but at Christmas time we were busy. I needed the money so I came in at 8:30 a.m. for a meeting. Tony LaPianta - the tailor and part-time salesman, was also off that morning. But being hungry like me he came to work as well. We attended the meeting and afterwards we started selling. There were a lot of customers that knew Tony and I. We were very competitive. This guy was a good salesman and he would bring in his wife to help with the alterations so that he could be on the floor for the 3% commission. Talk about hard work for peanuts! And then to be treated like monkeys. What I am going to tell you now is hard to believe but, it is the truth and Tony is still alive to confirm this. The manager 'God rest his soul' had brought in his wife and nephew to work. He would get the commission in his number so Tony and I got busy right away. We each had a big sale. When we were about to finish, the manager told us to come to the back. He told us that we were not allowed on the floor until noon – that's when we were scheduled to start. This guy was German, he had been in the war and he was a tough guy . So, Tony and I looked at each other. I was 29 years old and I felt like fighting with him, but I thought that it was better to cool down. I still feel the anger of that day, as I am writing this. I drove that man home a number of times during the day because he could not walk, came back to the store and worked in his place for commission. Only he got paid his hours and Tony LaPianta got his weekly wages as a tailor and the 3% commission on his personal sales. He was saving the store a lot of money in wages because all the alterations were getting done anyway. The store sales were going up and the costs were the same. He as a manager was getting his weekly salary plus commission on all of this and had the courage to do that to us.

Just as all of this was going through my mind, the back door bell rang and it was the Dylex truck with the delivery. Now everybody on the selling floor was busy. There were customers not being attended to. So I told Tony "Let's accept the stuff from the truck and we will go on the selling floor and sell. If he says anything you and I will just walk out." I told him that Monday morning I was going to head office on the Lakeshore. We did go on the floor and the manager would not even look at us. I could not wait for 6 o'clock - when he and his family left. I confirmed with Tony that I was going to the head office on Monday morning.

I did and the manager got transferred to 271 Yonge Street. I got promoted to manager and Tony to assistant manager. The manager lasted 2 or 3 months at the Yonge Street store. He got himself the name of the person he respected the most - Hitler.

In 6 months I was promoted to manager of Cedarbrae and Tony was promoted to manager of Shoppers World. In 1971, I was promoted to manager at Sherway Gardens. This store was open for 6 months; it had a lot of potential. I worked like a mad man in that store. In August 1973, I was promoted to regional manager and that same month I moved into my first house, 493 Galedowns Court, Mississauga. I remember this event so well, because Cecilia was having a hard time in the apartment with Fernando - he was six and a half and very active. Paul was two and a half. When we moved to the house, Cecilia kept the Volkswagon and I got a Gran Torino. Wow! We were really in Canada now. I am still very grateful for having lived that time of my life, when I was really healthy, happy, and strong. I was capable of working 48 hours non-stop and I did it a few times. When we would open a store I would start Monday morning and work until Tuesday morning - sleeping 1 or 2 hours in the store. We worked all day Tuesday, sometimes until 3 a.m. Wednesday. Then I would come home, shave, shower, and go back for the opening.

Mall openings typically were planned for Wednesday. There would be an opening party, by that time I was finished. This happened several times as I kept getting moved around from region to region. This reminds me of a very

special store opening in Lethbridge, Alberta. I was the regional manager for Calgary and Lethbridge . Tip Top had one store in Lethbridge and opened a second one. While I was there Tip Top would go into every new mall – large or small , Tip Top was there. What makes this opening different is the location. Lethbridge was a small farming and retirement city. Tip Top had 3 employees in the existing store.

I was there about 3 months when we opened the new store. I hired a manager, and an assistant manager and we were going to use the tailor from the other store. I realized this was a small city and a shopping mall was opening. In large centres we would borrow people from the other stores to help set up a new store. But here – there was no one else. Head office sent up the window trimmer to do the window and display and a 50-foot trailer with the tailor shop equipment and all the merchandise to fill up a 2500 square foot store. Help!!!

There was no one I could get; even the friends of our 3 employees were helping other people that had asked them before I asked “how am I going to unload this trailer?” I had 5 hours to empty it and have it moved out of the loading dock. Jules Legalt was the manager of the other store and I had him with me. I said “Jules, let’s sit down and start making a list of where we can find breathing bodies that we can use to help us.” I first thought of jail. I thought maybe we could arrange something. It was Sunday morning and Jules said “the Friendship Inn”. I said “What’s that?” He said “That’s a place where the natives stay when they have no place to go and are drunk.” I said “let’s try that”. Jules thought that I was crazy. I said “maybe, but its Sunday morning and Wednesday morning the mall opens, we have to be open.” The people from Toronto were coming and I had seen many openings where certain stores were not ready. I said to Jules “I will do whatever needs doing to open this store Wednesday morning.” So we went together to the Friendship Inn. Jules spoke to the chief there and we agreed to return the men when we were finished because I really had no idea how long it was going to take to unload the 50-foot trailer and put the stuff in the store, set-up the heavy equipment etc.

So we brought these 6 men from the Friendship Inn. They did not speak English or, at least, did not like to speak, so, I jumped on the trailer and started to get the boxes on to their backs. But they were going very slow and it was a distance from the trailer to the back door. I thought about the army and how we got equipment moved around. When we did manoeuvres we formed a line. I measured the space between the trailer and the store. I divided it by 7 and placed each of the 6 Indians in their space. Jules stayed in the last space and I got the stuff unloaded by passing it down the line. I told them that if we finished before sundown I would give them 2 beers each on top of the \$20 they were going to get. We unloaded that trailer and opened the store on time for Harry Rosen, Fred C, and Don E. He was proud of me – God bless his soul. Don was the best boss I have ever had. I truly enjoyed working for him and I always delivered 100%. He passed on young, due to heart trouble. Don was born in the same month and year that I was; perhaps our chemistry was the same. I don't know, but he was a good boss and a good friend. He gave me personal advice about my illness before he died. I miss him. Today he would be happy for me.

A bit about our life in Canada

We lived with my brother Manuel in Toronto for the first 12 months. When the Branco family were able to immigrate to Canada, I rented another place to accommodate us and the Branco family. They arrived in February 1970. Our son Paul was born while we were living here. Those of you who know me, know how dedicated I am to my work. I have always been dedicated and to give you an idea of how dedicated I was to my job, I went to work on Saturday as usual at 8:30 am. Cecilia called me at 9 am and told me it was time for her to go to the hospital; her contractions were about 10 minutes apart. I rushed home and took her to the Doctors Hospital. Paul was born at 2 pm and I went back to work. You see it was Saturday the busiest day of the week. Now I know that might be wrong but that is the way it was.

We moved to Scarborough in December of that year and rented an apartment. We lived there on the third floor until August 1973. Cecilia had a difficult time coping with the boys in that small apartment. In August 1973 we moved into a house in Mississauga. We felt like royalty. Cecilia could let the boys run

in the back yard. We fenced the yard and Cecilia had the comfort of knowing where the boys were and that they were safe. Cecilia's parents lived 2 houses up the street and there were many nice gatherings on the weekends with all the family. We had a great time while we were raising our boys. We were all close to Cecilia's family and mine, as well as the new comers. And then we had to move to Calgary.

It was tough on all of us. When we would go out on the weekends, Fernando would ask us if we kept driving how long it would take to get to Toronto so he could see his cousins. It would break my heart but I had a job and I had to make a living to support my family. While we were in Calgary I had surgery on my neck and back. We opened a store in Lethbridge, Alberta and the chain increased 40% in same store sales over the year prior, and that was with me taking time off for my surgery. I often wonder what would have happened if I was healthy.

When we moved to Calgary, we had rented out our house in Mississauga. We returned in August 1975. Things were going great again, my neck and back was tolerable and I had to wear a brace for my lower back. In those days the doctors did not recommend activity for any injuries. I was told no fishing, no golf, no tennis, no nothing. I was told to be happy that I was able to function as well as I did. By this time I was a regional manager and as a regional manager, I was responsible for an area consisting of 10 stores. I was responsible for staff, sales, display and merchandising. At one point my region consisted of an area from Burlington to Newmarket to Oshawa to Peterborough. I would get up at 4 am and come home at 9 pm never complaining, never asking for a raise. I loved what I did. My bosses respected me and Cecilia was at home looking after the kids. She had her own car and we were in heaven.

In 1978 the Retail Clerks of America Union decided to organize Dylex, the biggest retailer in Canada. They chose Tip Top Tailors in Toronto as their first target. At this time Dylex had decided to close 271 Yonge St, which was a big store and one of the first Tip Top Tailor shops to open in Toronto over 60 years ago. The Eaton Centre had opened on the west side of Yonge Street across from 271. A budget of \$900,000 was decided upon as the sales target

for the 6-week close out sale. Closeout sales were regulated by the city and you could not bring in more goods. On the first day we did over \$500,000 in sales.

I was getting a 0.7% commission on the sales. I searched the Dylex warehouse and I got all the merchandise we could put our hands on. We unloaded it after hours at the back of the store in the alley. I got all my relatives to work there, part time of course. We were still concerned about the union so we had to be careful who we hired because we did not want troublesome workers to come in. The working conditions were not great but we did \$3 million in sales in those 6 weeks. The day I closed the store I went to see Dr W while the others were having a party. I told the doctor that I was having chest pains and he told me that I was overworked and that I needed to take a vacation. "Have a few beers and you will be fine."

When I got home from Dr W's Cecilia told me that there was no money in our bank account. We received our pay through a direct deposit and I had expected to see about \$15,000 for the first month of the sale. My new boss EL had decided that I was making too much money and he decided on his own that he was not going to pay me 0.7% commission on the closeout sale and he did not have the time to tell me about his decision.

I went to see EL and after a very acrimonious discussion, I quit. That was all I was going to give Dylex. EL's boss, CS, called me and for 3 hours he tried to convince me to stay. He told me that I would get my money and that I could choose any job I wanted. I would not have to work with EL. I told him that I could no longer hire people to work for a company that treated me this way. It was over; I paid my dues; this was the only job that I quit. I got my money, rested a week and then went to Toronto to look for a company that would give me cloth samples so I could sell suits in people's houses. I had no plans to leave and no plans for work.

I talked to a couple of prospects but was turned down. On the third try, I found a supplier that was willing to give me some samples, a style book and a price list. I was in business. My business was called Rego Apparel. My first

customer was the priest and my second customer was my next door neighbour then his brother. It was during this time that the union came to my house and tried to get me to testify against Dylex. They heard what had happened to me and they were prepared to give me a big amount of cash if I would do what they told me.

My life in the Azores under a dictator taught me a lot and it came in handy here. I said "I am not unhappy with Dylex. I left because my boss and I had a disagreement. They tried to keep me but I left. As for you - I want nothing to do with you or your politics. Please leave me alone." About 2 days later I received a summons to appear in court to testify in the matters between Dylex and the Union. I showed up at the court house but by the end of the day I got a call at home from CS who asked which side in the dispute I was going to favour. I told him to leave me alone and that I only have one face.

The lawyer for the union invited me to lunch the next day and I told him no thank you, put me on the stand and ask your questions. I will answer but I want no free lunch. I was never called.

Bob H, the second in command at Harry Rosen started after me right away to join Harry Rosen. I said "you are Dylex and I have had enough of you". He insisted and by December he had invited me to partake in the Christmas celebrations. He offered me the job of managing the Harry Rosen store in the Eaton Centre. I was bored seeing only 1 or 2 customers a day in the evening after dinner. I was making good money on my own but I was bored and decided to join Harry Rosen in January 1980 as manager of the store at the Eaton Centre.

This was a brand new experience. This store was about 1 year old and it was quite modern. It had a great looking Polo shop and here I could use my bespoke experience again. I brought all my customers from Rego Apparel and it did not take me long to turn this store around. They kept the manager that I was replacing in the store as a salesman. This was strange for me. He was a bit older than me and now he was a salesman and I was his manger. During January, I was able to review the books and I determined that the store was

poorly run. The shrinkage was 6% of sales. We had inventory on February 1 and that was the official take over date for me.

When we did the next inventory 6 months later the shrinkage was 0.6%. The accountants could not believe it and they asked me what the secret was. There was no secret. It was simple. Everyone shows their bag when they come in and when they go out. That was when I hired a stock person and made him responsible for receiving and checking all merchandise and for all merchandise transfers between stores. I kept an eye on him until I could trust him. He stayed there all the time while I was there and our store was always the best in shrinkage results. The money we saved paid for his salary and the staff did not have to sweat in their suits when they went all the way to the dungeon to receive the merchandise. The shipping dock was really far in that store.

There were a few basic things that needed changing and we changed them. The store had done about \$2 million in the first year. It did \$3 million the next year and by 1984 the store did over \$5 million. We were the first store to do \$1,000 per square foot in the organization.

Bob and Harry had plans to grow the chain, so they asked me to train some managers. We implemented a training program with 3 people to start - this went very well. Harry, Bob, and I would meet once a month - very early in the morning - to review the progress. I enjoyed that. I felt good about being able to contribute - not just in the Eaton Centre, but in growing the chain. Bob started implementing good management programs for the existing managers. We would normally attend those sessions on Sundays and on our day off.

I knew pretty well all the guys and their strengths and in late 1985 one of the fellows that knew little about systems was made my supervisor. That would have been okay if he kept to his word that he was looking for me to help him run the region. His region included my store and he said he was going to let me run my store, as he knew I was capable of it. But that did not last very long. He wanted me to run the store the way he liked and so we had a couple of disagreements. One day I was called into Bob's office. When I got there

my boss was there and Bob, God rest his soul, started by showing me his clean desk. When the meeting would be over my boss and I would start clean and in the right direction. I could not believe that grown-up people, smart people, would behave this way; not even when I was in Grade 3 did I feel such dissatisfaction for my superiors. This was it. I was not going to put up with it – but this time I planned my future.

In 1972, DB, a client at Tip Top Tailors, offered me a partnership and I said “no, not at this time.” DB remained my client for a number of years and in early 1986, I called him and asked if he remembered his offer. He said “yes, and is this the right time?” I said “yes.” We had lunch the next day and we had a verbal agreement. We put the wheels in motion. I started looking for a location. We decided to take a 2300 square foot space in the First Canadian Place. This was right behind Studio 267 – a chain of men’s’ clothing stores that sold to the same demographic as Harry Rosen. I thought that I could bring a lot of my customers from Harry Rosen because we were setting up in the same area. We negotiated the lease, which was much too expensive; 1986 was the peak of the real estate boom in Toronto. Anyway, we worked out all the paperwork and by the beginning of April I had given Harry Rosen my resignation.

I gave them one month – hoping that they would let me go and pay me the month, as was customary. When a manager resigned they let you go right away, but not this time. They kept me on for the full month. On the last day Harry and Bob saw me at their office and Harry asked “is there anything I can do to change your mind about leaving?” I said “no, I have already signed a lease for my store. Harry said he was disappointed I was leaving, but he wished me the best. This was early May and I opened my store August 14, 1986. I certainly gave Harry no reason to be mad at me. I could have coasted along for 2 or 3 more months, but that was not my style. I have my honour still today because I place it above money and commissions.



Chapter 6

The Opening of Rego Bespoke Clothiers

In January 1986, a 50/50 partnership agreement was reached with D.B. We then put the wheels in motion and secured a lease at First Canadian Place for a store space of approximately 2400 square feet. Abel Branco, my brother-in-law, started working on the drawings for this beautiful boutique. In early April, I gave my notice to Harry Rosen and left at the end of the month. Abel and I went to New York to look at some of the men's clothing stores to gather some ideas for the store. Abel had his note pad with him to jot down ideas. When we were on the plane to Toronto, I asked Abel if he saw anything that would help us, and his answer was this: "I know what not to do, so yes, I learned something."

Abel had free reign on the design of the store. I took a big chance because he had never designed retail space before. He specializes in corporate offices. However, he did a magnificent job. I did all the buying which was quite an experience. I knew about menswear but the only thing I ever bought on my own was ties. I had assisted in merchandise meetings over the years but to furnish a store from A to Z is a different story. It was quite a task and, of course,

being a first store no one gave me credit. We had to provide letters of credit in the full amounts, which kept me up at night second guessing myself if I had done the right thing or not. But, we managed to get through it all.

One night in mid-June, I was at the store site at 1:00 a.m. with some of the sheet metal workers and I started to think that I was building a jail for me to live in. At that point the shop was ugly. There were 4 walls and lots of wood, dry wall, and garbage everywhere. I thought that it would be hard for me to take any time off because I had committed over \$300,000 to buy merchandise and committed over \$500,000 to build the store. I thought I was going to lose my mind. Why did I do this?

The next morning, I woke up and decided that there was no looking back. I decided that when I came to Canada, it was a bigger adventure and I did it. This was going to be easier. I was more mature. I had opened several stores for Tip Top Tailors and I had made mediocre stores into successful stores. So, I said “I can do this” and that was the last time that I had second thoughts about my decision to open a store of my own.

The store was scheduled to be finished July 31st. However, it was August 12th and there was still painting going on. Well what else is new? Very seldom things turn out the way you want them to, even with good plans. I had planned to dress my own windows with the help of my staff. This did not work quite the way I planned. One co-worker of mine from Harry Rosen was going to come with me but he decided to stay at Harry Rosen. This happened on July 31st, which was the day he was supposed to leave and start with me. He got cold feet and told me that he was concerned that I might fail. Another person that was going to come with me from Studio 267 was a tailor. He had previously worked with me at Harry Rosen. When he told his boss he was leaving, his boss offered him more money – so he stayed there. The only person that did not back out was 65-year old Phil Macks, who had just retired from Tip Top Tailors.

I really had no time to look for new people. The store was not finished on time and all the preparations including invitations had already gone out so

people could make arrangements. The opening was scheduled for August 16th. Talk about walking on a tight rope! It was a good thing that I was healthy and able to cope with all that pressure. We did open August 16th with a big bang.

I had lots of visitors come in: retailers, customers from Harry Rosen, staff from their Richmond Street store, Eaton Centre, and lots of suppliers. It was terrific. Everything was just perfect but no one had any idea how the whole thing came together. I will give you a good description of this nightmare.

As I mentioned, 2 people backed out of their agreement with me. One of them was a talented fashion co-ordinator who could prepare displays quite well. We had worked together for 6 years. I knew his strengths in that area, so I was comfortable that we could dress the windows on our own; so I did not make any arrangements for a window display person. When this person decided not to come I had no choice but to try and do the windows with the help of 2 of my brother-in-laws: Abel Branco the designer of the store and Ralph Nunno, a teacher, who had worked as a manager at Tip Top Tailors. We thought that we could pull it off. Our first store was windows all around. We had paper covering the windows, but I could not really see the full effect of all the work we had done until I took down the outside paper. We dressed all the mannequins ourselves. The paper came down at 9 p.m.

When I saw my windows, I was shocked! My windows, my store, the best boutique in Toronto, were horrible. You could see all the wrinkles and shadows. It was a disgrace and a disaster. I just could not see how I could present these windows to anyone, let alone my critics. Everyone thought I was crazy opening just behind Studio 267 and across from Harry Rosen on Richmond Street. I heard from different sources that people in the trade were saying "I was a nobody in the business and that they were making bets on the fact that I would not last one year." Now these windows and this is the night before the opening!

I sat down and put my hands on my forehead and started to think about people I knew that I could count on to help me. Tony Ceroni came to my mind. Tony was a window trimmer at Tip Top and a few months back, he had

opened his own store. He was a friend I thought I could count on. I called him at 10 p.m., just as he was getting in his house exhausted from work. He clearly could not help me but he gave me the phone number for Dieter who was another window trimmer from Tip Top, who I worked with many times. At 10:30 p.m. I called Dieter who lived in Port Perry, Ontario. He answered the phone and I told him my story and begged him to help and he agreed. He drove in and brought his niece with him. They arrived at 12:30 a.m.

They looked like 2 angels to me. I could have kissed him and his niece, I was so glad they came. I've heard artists work well under pressure and this was pressure. The color co-ordination was good for the merchandise and the props were all classy stuff that Abel had helped me select. Dieter was in heaven working with good quality merchandise and props. He told me to go home, lock him and his niece in the store and by the morning everything would be first class.

Well, we were finally ready for our guests, my first customers. The store looked especially good to me knowing what it could have looked like. It was just heaven to my eyes. I was so emotional that evening. Having opened many stores before for others was one thing but to open my very own store at First Canadian Place complete with marble walls and floors, armoires, and beautiful windows was truly a remarkable achievement. We had models showing Lou Miles clothes. It was just marvellous. A client came from the U.S. with one of his daughters to be with us at the opening – this was such an honour.

Abel's boss took all of us out at midnight after all the guests had left, to a very fancy restaurant in Yorkville to celebrate Abel's work. The store was absolutely beautiful. A guest from the U.S. insisted on buying something so he could have invoice Number 1. I had already promised that invoice to my good friend Don Evans but Don understood and agreed to let my client have invoice Number 1.

On Sunday, I invited all our family to come see the store for a private showing. We had a party just like on opening day. Now we had even more flowers because I received a lot of flowers from suppliers afterwards. I know my parents were proud of it but my father did not have a clue about the

expense. I remember clearly what he said to me as he was leaving: “Does my son know what he is doing? Can you manage all of this? It’s too bad you could not go to school; you could have been a doctor.” So much has happened since that day and so much is yet to happen; but, I will never forget the anxiety and happiness of it all.

We managed slowly, very slowly. Phil and I went through a few tailors before I found a good one, and a few salesmen until Fernando joined me in February 1987. We did all our accounting manually. My goal was to do \$1,000,000 the first year and we did \$997,000. Black Monday in October 1987 just about wiped me out. All my customers were affected one way or the other. They were either investors that lost a lot of money or stockbrokers that lost their jobs. Some even lost their lives. It was atrocious. My store was hit the worst. I saw all my dreams going down the drain very fast. Instead of going forward I was going backward.

By October 1987, I had already bought for my fourth season – spring of 1988. Sales were few and far between. My store was perceived to be expensive. At first this was alright but after Black Monday everybody was cutting back. We survived because I started going to our customers’ homes after hours and on weekends.

In 1988, Ed Provan closed his store. David B came to work with us and brought all his clients. When Warren K Cook closed in 1991, David and Michael the tailor both left us to open their own store around the corner at Bay and King. This too was very hard to overcome because David took the former Provan clients, my tailor and a seamstress we had been using. We survived because we had to. Our clients were loyal to us and by now, Fernando was developing his own clientele and was helping Dieter with the window dressing. Dieter worked on our windows until 1995 when he moved to the U.S.

In 1991, Paul joined us. He was a road warrior. Paul drummed up sales by going to car dealerships to measure the salesmen in their offices. We kept going and in early 1995 the landlord wanted to know our intentions to

re-lease. My partner told me that he was no longer interested in the bespoke business. He was used to making real money in real estate and cars. We decided to arrange a new lease with the landlord and on June 23, 1995, Rego was ours.



The Fitter measuring device is the family invention.



Some men require made to measure, others simply prefer it.

A Few Stories About My Clients

Mr. H

Mr. H is a very big man. He and one of our good customers, Mr. F, berth their boats in the same marina. One day, Mr. H confided in Mr. F that he never felt comfortable in his clothes and although he needed new clothes, he rarely went shopping because he felt it was a losing proposition. Mr. H noted that Mr. F was also oversized but he seemed to like his clothes. Mr. F suggested that Mr. H call Rego and see about a fitting.

Mr. H had his secretary call one day and she asked if we did house calls. I told her that I would be glad to come to see Mr. H whenever he wanted. I went there on a Saturday morning and met Mr. H for the first time. His wife met me at the door and brought me into the breakfast room where Mr. H was sitting eating breakfast and reading the paper.

Mr. H showed me his closet of clothes. He had been buying off the rack from a local retailer of clothes for the oversized man. These clothes were not only inexpensive but they looked inexpensive. Mr. H was obviously a man of means and his search for comfortable clothes had not been successful. Mr. H challenged me by saying that he didn't think I would be able to help him but both his secretary and Mr. F felt he should give me an opportunity to try.

I started by taking his measurements. It doesn't take very long for a professional to complete the task and about 15 minutes later, when I was finished he asked me what I suggested. I thought for a moment and told him that my suggestion would be for me to make him a pair of underwear, a suit consisting of one pair of pants and a jacket and a shirt. He asked me what I meant by making him underwear. I told him that some men just can't wear store-bought underwear and we should start by making him comfortable without the clothes. Mr. H said he didn't think it would help but if I wanted to go to the trouble, then it was my time. I went on to tell him that with his new clothes he wouldn't want to wear the old clothes and he should get rid of them. Mr. H felt I was conning him and he laughed and told me that I

should be in real estate, because that's where the big money is. I said yes but "who would sell the nice clothes that I am going to sell you?"

A few days later, I had the underwear delivered to Mr. H He called me and said that this was the first time in years that he was able to sit comfortably at his desk. He mentioned that he had assumed that because he was a big man, being uncomfortable was his cross-to-bear. About 2 weeks after our meeting, Mr. H wore a complete new outfit. He was so pleased with the results he called me and agreed that I was right about his feeling so good in his suits. He agreed right then and there, over the phone, to buy a large wardrobe. Mr. H is still a client today.

Mr. R

Mr. R and his family were visiting from the US. He, his wife and 3 children entered our store because Mr. R needed a new belt. They were served by Gary M and while Gary was preparing the bill of sale for the belt, I started a conversation with Mrs. R I learned that they lived in Newark New Jersey and were holidaying around Peterborough.

Mr. R told me he was impressed that I took time to talk to his wife. He mentioned that he spends a lot of money at a fine men's clothier in New York City but no one pays attention to his wife there. I asked him "Why don't you shop here? We can make you anything you want and for sure we will always talk to your wife."

As we were talking he looked around the store and decided to buy an ultra suede sport coat, a pair of pants, 3 made-to-measure shirts, and a suit. His bill was about \$8,000 not including the belt. He paid for everything before he left the store. I thought, when the clothes came in, we would mail them to his home in New Jersey. When his items were ready, I phoned to confirm their mailing address. Mrs. R said she thought I was going to deliver the clothes and without missing a beat, I told her I just wanted to make sure of the directions. I told her I could be there the day after tomorrow and she told me that Mr. R would pick me up at the airport.

I purchased a same-day return plane ticket from the Toronto Island airport to Newark, New Jersey. I took some samples with me in case they wanted to buy something else.

Mr. R showed up in a Rolls Royce and took me to their home. Before he even looked at the merchandise, he insisted we have lunch. During lunch he asked me if I would do him a favor and measure his horse trainer. He mentioned that his horse trainer had never taken a gift from him and Mr. R wanted to give him something in appreciation for his services. Of course, I agreed. Why wouldn't I want to measure someone else?

After lunch, Mr. R tried on the clothes. They fit him perfectly. Mrs. R was in love with him all over again. I was so glad that I had decided to deliver his goods. Then we went to see his horse trainer. The horse trainer told me he didn't need any good clothes and he didn't want to be measured. He said he was too busy to change from his work clothes. I said that's ok, but what harm would there be for me to take a few measurements while I am here. I told him he didn't even have to change. I opened his jacket and I got my hands in to take his waist and chest measurements. Mr. R picked 2 suits and 12 shirts and asked me to select matching ties for the suits.

Mr. R and his wife were going to New York City for a function and he insisted on taking me back to the airport. On the way to the airport he took a detour to show me his condo in New York. Wow, what a place! On the way back to the airport I was sitting in the back seat and I started showing Scabal clothes to Mrs. R. Mrs. R was sitting next to her husband, and she asked me about my thoughts on silk and cashmere. She picked several garments from the books. When we arrived at the airport I saw the plane taking off. Since I missed my flight, Mr. R insisted on paying for a suite at a nice hotel for me for the night. This trip was very profitable for me and we continued to do business for several years.

Mr. T

Mr. T, an American businessman had recently come to Toronto to open an office. He rented an office and asked the real estate salesman if he could refer him to a tailor. Mr. T is 6 foot 9 nine and the real estate salesman referred him to Rego. It was a surprise to me because his father had a clothing store in Toronto on the Lakeshore. He recommended us because Mr. T wanted some alterations done. Mr. T knew he needed a tailor to get suits that fitted properly and he decided to start with some alterations – smart man.

An appointment at Mr. T's office was arranged. Fernando Jr. was working with me and he had made the arrangements. On the day, Jr. was sick so I closed the store and went to see Mr. T. I will never forget this suite or the site. He was a big man and he sat in the middle of a large room with 6 computer screens arranged in a circle. He was looking at the screens and giving instructions through a telephone headset.

I measured him as he moved around his office and I had him put on a pair of trousers so I could mark them. When I was finished he told me to make him 4 pairs of gray pants and forget the alterations. Mr. T has lived in many exotic locations including Bermuda, England, Boston, and New York. He is so busy, he has never visited our store and yet he has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars and all of his clothes are made-to-measure. It is a pleasure to deal with him. Jr. is his man; most of the transactions are done with Mr. T's secretary. We often wonder what would happen if I did not close the store to go see this first time client for alterations. We had no clue as to who he was. By the way, we also sell to some of his employees.

Mr. E

Mr. E has been our client for 19 years and at one time he was the Minister of Finance and then the Premier of Ontario. Mr. E is very particular about his clothes and the way he looks. Another retailer asked me one day, how I got him for a client. My answer was this: "I looked after him and then he became Premier."

Mr. Y

Mr. Y, as a young man, came in and purchased a pair of socks. It was our first year and we took everyone's address and phone number. In those good old days my son, Fernando, had looked after the sale. Some time later Fernando came to me and said "Dad, I am so bored." It was really slow – just after Black Monday 1987. I asked Fernando "have you made satisfaction calls to all your customers?" Fernando said "yes dad." I repeated "All of them?" He replied "All except Mr. Y, he only bought a pair of socks." I said "call him and be very polite, he may be young but he has a father and his father might be impressed." So Fernando called and this is what happened.

Mr. Y had just received a scholarship to go to England to study and his uncle had told him that he would buy him a suit as a present. He told Fernando that he was quite impressed with him taking the time to call. He said that he was planning to go to Harry Rosen to get his suit. Mr. Y came to get his suit from us instead.

Why aren't we doing this still today I wonder?

Mr. William F. White

Mr. White walked into Tip Top Tailors, Cederbrae, in 1970 around October with his wife—who had a baby in her arms. It was 9 p.m., we were just closing, and no one else was interested in him. So, he came to me. I was the manager; his request was so special I remember all the details. He wanted to buy a suit. The problem was the suit he liked was in the window of another store in the mall called Elks. I said, "No problem, but first, Mrs. White, here is a chair for you. Would you like a glass of water?" I offered. She did. I gave her a glass of water and then pointed out, "Our washrooms are over there." You see my wife was expecting our son, Paul, who was born in November 1970 and Mrs. White, also pregnant, was expecting their son, Mike.

By this time all my staff was gone. Mr. White and I went to the other store window. I saw the suit, we came back and I sold him two suits, shirts and

ties, etc. At 10 p.m. I closed the store, he went home and everyone was happy. The next day around 3 p.m. I saw who I thought was Mr. William White come into the store, and I thought maybe I'd sold him too much stuff and he was coming back to cancel the order. I went towards him and he asked to see Mr. Rego. I paused and said, "Mr. White, I am Fernando Rego." He laughed and said, "I am William's twin brother Wayne; he was so pleased with your service that I am here to buy some suits."

Wow! That is not the end of this beautiful story. Mr. William White has a business in the same building where my current store is, and he and his son Mike White work together and are both my good clients, still today.

Four years ago I was invited to give a talk on Dress For Success at a Portuguese event and I pointed out how you the client should be establishing good relations with your salesman because selling is really about relationships, and as a result of paying close attention to relationships, I was doing quite well.

Someone from the audience put up his hand and asked, "Can you honestly say that you give this kind of service to your clients?" His tone of voice implied he did not believe me.

It turned out that Mike White was in the audience—he had been invited by one of the businessmen from the Portuguese Federation of Professionals. I had noticed Mike in the audience and, so now, I took a deep breath and said, "Thank you very much for that question and to answer you I will call upon a person in our midst." I asked Mike White to stand up and tell the group about his family relationship with our store. He did a great job by stating that not only was he getting that kind of service from Rego, but his father was getting it from me even before he was born.

When I sent the first four chapters of my book out to my clients for comment, Mike came in with the book in his hands and said, "Fernando, I want to take a few minutes to give you some feedback. First, he told me how much he liked the book—some of the stories were familiar to him from his dinner table discussions with his parents over the years—and then he proceeded to show

me his detailed corrections. On this first draft he went as far as correcting some phrases and punctuation, and adding words that made sense.

I was so moved by this young man's interest in my book that it will never cease to amaze me how what I did at Tip Top Tailors back in 1970 by doing just a little bit more than required to get the job done has led to so much. Do you think anybody at Tip Top appreciated or cared what I did for Mrs. White (sat her down and offered her water) way back then. My boss did not see what I did or care, and I didn't really care if it mattered or not. As a result of what I did, however, I have had the pleasure of dressing this family, including William's two sons, Mike and Kris, who also buy clothes from Rego.

Mike, who is the same age as my son, Paul, who serves him, is the most loyal, together with his dad.

I have a lot of customer stories. But this one has such special meaning for me, since Michael has shown so much interest in helping me with my book.

As I finish writing this story I can't help but think, was I really born to do this? Is this my ultimate purpose in this life to give examples of good customer service and reap the fruits of my labour and share it with my fellow human beings so that they can learn that indeed the pay back for a job well done comes in so many ways?

Thank you to the White family from the Rego family. We are indeed better for knowing you.

Mrs. Gale White

Bill had been working on Bay Street for just over a year, and it was time to invest in his professional image. So we wound up at Tip Top Tailors in the Cedarbrae Mall in the hands of Fernando Rego. Fate could not have planned things better. Bill knew the look that he wanted and Fernando had no problem putting it together for him, and has been graciously doing so ever since. Fernando wound up locating Rego Bespoke Clothiers in Toronto's Exchange

Tower where Bill came to locate his company, IBK Capital Corp., a private investment banking firm, and it was like wow! with still the same caring service, now being rendered to and by their respective sons. I saw our son Michael the other day in his business attire—a dark blue suit with a fresh new pale blue and navy striped tie and matching blue shirt—and he looked so good, and it was obvious that he felt as good as he looked—so perfectly put together by REGO—that I felt like weeping at how blessed we have been by coming to know this family who have never stopped extending themselves for us— like when Bill asked Fernando if he could adjust his old tuxedo to fit our younger son Kris, Fernando did it at no cost, and Kris came out looking and feeling like a million dollars! Although his needs are not the same as his brother's (he is 10 years younger than Mike) Kris is especially proud to be associated with the REGO family and store. We all are.

EXCHANGE TOWER

Rego's "Made to Measure" Customer Service



They say clothes make the man; the relationship between William White and Fernando Rego is a case in point.

The two Exchange Tower tenants - White, President of IBK Capital Corp., and Rego, who owns Rego Bespoke Clothiers - have a unique relationship. It goes back 30 years, when Rego worked at Tip Top Tailors, and White would come into the store. Rego has been his clothier ever since.

When Rego changed stores, White followed. When Rego worked from home, White went there to get made-to-measure suits. When Rego opened his shop in the Exchange Tower 15 years ago, White became a regular visitor. It's tempting to conclude that White himself moved here five years ago just to be closer to Rego.

What is the essence of the relationship? Start with the clothes - the best fabric, stitching, and attention to detail. Rego lavishes the same attention on his clients, understanding their needs and personal style. That's the Rego "brand".

Rego and White talk about "trust". Rego literally knows White's wardrobe inside out. As a banker, White believes in a professional image; "I even shower with my suit on," he jokes. His clients want to deal with someone who projects stability. Rego's suits convey that at a glance.

The relationship has entered its second generation. Rego's son Paul works in the store, and White's son Michael, who works with his father at IBK, is also a Rego client. In fact, Michael even stopped by the shop on his wedding day, just so Paul could tie his bowtie perfectly - another sign of the Regos' extraordinary level of service.

Basic Knowledge to be a Good Salesperson

In sales, everyone should know that the customer is king or queen. We must treat our kings and queens as though they are our bosses.

How to Treat Royalty

We treat our royalty with good manners, and by being polite, and smiling. We are observant, and listen attentively - for each situation is different. Be attentive and alert so you can deal with the event as it presents itself. Above all show that you are happy to see your king or queen when they visit you. Remember - if there is no royalty, there is no job.

Show That You Are Happy

Your appearance must reflect your environment. If your job is that of a clown entertaining in a circus - you must look like a circus clown. If you are on the selling floor of a good men's clothing store you must look the part. That shows you are a professional, just like the clowns are in their profession. To be a good salesperson you must like people. It has to be natural for you to be happy when you are with people. If you do not possess this quality then look for something else to do because you will never be a great salesperson.

Remember! If destiny has determined that you be a street sweeper, be the best street sweeper ever, and you will be happy. So don't fool yourself. You are the one who will pay the price later on. This is your life and the only chance you have, so make the best of it in all that you do.

A good salesperson likes people and grooms themselves everyday to look their best because your appearance will create a lasting impression in your customer's mind. It's what they see that helps them decide if they will do business with you or not. So, looking your best is a must everyday. Plan your outfit the day before so that nothing will be missing. Think of it as if you were going to perform in front of a camera because that is what you are doing, only without a camera. You are expected to perform for your customer. If you don't like people - forget selling.

Housekeeping

The king and queen judge us by the way we work and the way we look. We are constantly on display. We need to present our store almost like a window. Because realistically we want to sell our product and when selling we must show and sell by displaying the merchandise to the king or queen. As soon as there is no royalty in the store, fix it up right away for the next king or queen who will soon come in and he or she will be impressed just like the last one. All royalty should be treated the same way. There is no way of accurately measuring lost sales and what customers think about your store. The only way to minimize the loss of sales is to ensure that the royalty sees you at your best. Always look great and be sure your store matches you.

Here, each store lists the housekeeping chores and divides the work into as many people as there are on the selling floor. Be sure to rotate responsibility so that no one person gets stuck on a less than equal chore. Monthly rotation is fair, that way the team can see how each section is kept and help each other because they know from experience.

Behind the Scenes

Imagine that you are writing a cheque for the merchandise you are receiving. You would inspect it to make sure it looks the way it is supposed to look. You would check to ensure that the quality, quantity and size is what is marked on the packing slip. If you can't find a packing slip, then you would record the name of the shipping company, the clothing manufacturer, the number of units by size and colour. Then you would sign for it and get another colleague to sign as well so that later on there will be no questions about what was received. By doing this you will start to realize the real value of the merchandise and you will treat it with the respect it is due. For just like no royalty, no job, if there are no profits for the owner, there will be no job. Isn't that so simple?

Be the master of your life and do what you have to do or forever be told by others. It's your own choice. If in doubt ask for directions. It's easier to ask humbly than to be told arrogantly. Remember the price of discipline is small compared to the price of regret.

Knowledge

Regardless of what topic you are to discuss, knowledge always wins because knowledge comes from experience and ignorance is its opposite. I would like to share my knowledge and experiences in the retail menswear industry. I say retail because manufacturing of menswear is a specialty on its own.

To sell a man the right clothes you must like people, you must know your product, you need to understand style, you need to know where your customer intends to wear the suit and you need to have a good eye for colour coordinating.

You need to know what this man does for a living and you need to understand which clothes will wear better so that you can put this man in the right fabric and colour. It is extremely important that you establish with your customer where they intend to wear the garment, who they need to impress with their appearance and how much they are willing to spend on their image.

Product Knowledge

You need to know how clothing performs. This information is available in textile books. Price does not always indicate long lasting, hard wearing clothes. Cashmere and silks are luxurious and expensive but they don't necessarily perform well and yet a person who has a large wardrobe may want to invest in cashmere or a silk suit for a special occasion. So, there is a place for luxurious and expensive fabrics but not in an every day wardrobe.

Style

You must know what choices match best with stripes, checks, light colours, dark colours. None of these have anything to do with the use of the garment. It has to do with matching the pattern and colour to the person's skin colour and their stature. A tall man will not look good in a chalk stripe and a short man will not look good in a bold Prince of Wales check. This does not mean

that neither customer can wear stripes and or checks. They can, but in a subdued style. There are stripes that are so fine that a tall man can wear and look good and there are subdued Prince of Wales cloths that a short man can wear and look great.

Colour

Coordination is essential to complete an ensemble. A salesperson needs to have a good understanding of what is going on in the fashion world. It does not mean that you will be putting your clients in stage clothing if his business is not making movies. You need to know the trends so that you can help your clients express their personality in their clothes.

A Lot to Learn

This may seem like a lot to learn to sell a man a suit, however, a good salesperson does not sell a suit. He or she sells a wardrobe and a relationship. This is very important to understand at the beginning of the relationship. To give this the importance it deserves you need to do this bit of math. Say your client is 30 years old and assume he is going to work until he is 65 years. Let's assume he is making approximately \$60,000 per year. With this kind of wage a professional should be spending about \$3,000 per year on clothing. So a work life of 35 years at \$3,000 per year is equal to \$105,000 income to your store. Is this a relationship worth spending time and patience on? I think it is, but you should arrive at your own conclusion. I know you are probably saying "clients are not loyal!" and "I don't know if I am going to be doing this for a long time" and on and on.

My Start in Bespoke Tailoring

In the good old days in England when there were no ready to wear clothes, the best tailors were always busy and if you wanted a suit made by this master tailor you had to wait your turn. So you would reserve cloth until he could give you your first fitting so the cloth was bespoke for as in the bride was bespoke; hence the term bespoke tailors. This term conveniently separated

the best from the rest. So it is that today in Saville Row every shop is a bespoke shop, even if you don't have to reserve your cloth.

When I was in the army I took a part-time job as the cloakroom attendant at the Officers club in the Azores Lajes Air Force Base. This was a job for tips to help me through the 3 years of army life. I improvised on this job. The door of the cloakroom was left open, I came out and got their coats and found a way to hang the coats in a manner that I did not have to give out claim tickets. My tips were great! One day just before I was going to become a civilian, an English gentleman came in for dinner. I gave him the usual treatment and this man was so impressed with my professionalism that he offered me a job in his company "Alexander of London Bespoke Tailors." I took this job because it paid 4 times the salary of any other position I could get on the island, but that was not the end of it. It was there that I learned the art of bespoke service and fitting and measuring.

When I immigrated to Canada I took a job as a salesperson at Tip Top Tailors. I soon got promoted to manager. In 1972, a client told me that I should be working for myself and that he would help me with a partnership. I was not ready for it at that time. In 1986 I called him up and we formed a partnership which enabled me to open Rego Bespoke Clothiers in Toronto. Not the largest - but it is the best menswear store in Toronto.

Through all of these experiences I have invented The Fitter™ measuring device with my son Paul who designed the software. But that is not all. A client of mine that was not a great spender - but received good service - helped me write this book.

I am not relating all of this to brag or to impress anyone but to give the reader a very important message. And that is - if you do your job well, your pay cheque is only one part of your compensation. Who knows what else will come of it. Pride of a job well done, comfort of knowing you can get work anywhere, a job promotion, a pay increase, a strong and friendly relationship with other professionals. If you look at the forward of my book you will see names of people in positions of authority in this complicated world and I am only an immigrant born to a family of 9 in the Azores. So, if you say it won't

happen to me then you are right - if that is what is in your mind. If you changed your attitude and recognize that you too can achieve anything you want, then it will happen and you can start by doing a great job. Remember that this is your life, do what you are good at because this is your only life, you will not get a second chance. This is the real thing, not a rehearsal. If it's to be it's up to me.

Next you need to understand fitting and measuring. In the good old days there were tailors that came out and measured, fitted, and did all the work for little money. Well, we know what happens to things that are not worth too much money. The tailoring profession, before ready-to-wear, was a respectable profession. RTW revolutionized the way clothes were made and sold and so parents stopped sending their kids to the tailor shops to learn a profession that did not pay well and had lost its status at that time. Today a good tailor could write his own cheque - so to speak. I was trained, luckily, in the art of fitting and measuring. Although I have tried teaching many others, this art takes a long time and effort. People today are not willing to take the time or put in the effort. Out of desperation for an answer to my problem of not having a tailor to replace my own when he retires in 2007, I came up with The Fitter™ measuring system, which works on the premise 'that the best alteration is no alteration.' When teaching fitting and measuring in the past, we always started with teaching how to look for problem fits so we could fix them and that was fine. The tailor came to help you - as you needed - but where are they now? So The Fitter™ measuring system is an art turned into a science, which can be learned in a short period of time - through repetition. So far the clients love it. See the testimonials from people who have been measured by it and you too will love The Fitter™. The Fitter™ will not quit on you and it will not ask for a raise. If you don't have The Fitter™ what are you waiting for? As an employee you should learn how to use this device because when there are no more tailors, off the rack expensive suits will not sell so easily - regardless of the label. If you really think about it, once you determine your customers' needs properly, how can you sell him something off the rack, even if his size is standard. For example, if a client is a 44 regular and he presently has 5 blue suits, and all you have on your rack are blue suits in 44 regular, are you going to be his friend by selling him another blue suit? If the man does a lot of 2-day business trips then a suit with 2 pants may

mean he won't have to pack so much stuff for the 2-day trips. Packing an extra pair of pants is easier than packing another suit. And when you travel overnight for a meeting the next morning you don't really want to check in any luggage, but you want to look fresh in the morning. Made-for-you clothes are really the way of the future for better quality stores that cater to today's businessperson.

What would you prefer – something made for you or something made for someone like you? Well then - train yourself on The Fitter™ and start doing a great job for your client and save him the most valuable commodity today – time.

David Wood

A more personal approach to the clothes you wear.

We have felt for a number of years that in the future, clothing at the quality we sell will be mostly custom made, i.e. a one by one process that considers a customer's measure and style more carefully than ready-made. And that technology both at the fitting and manufacturing level would bring the cost very close to that of ready-made.

We are pleased to announce that the future is here!

In the past five years we have seen the cost and production time to make a single garment decrease dramatically. The delivery time is now as short as two weeks. The cost, within 15% of ready-made. These will both continue to decrease. The gap was in quickly, accurately, and consistently transmitting the measure and posture subtleties of the customer to the manufacturer.

A year ago, we purchased a measuring device; we affectionately call the "Fitter". This was very new technology (we were among the first stores in the United States), but we had a good feeling that the Canadian developer knew what he was talking about. After a years experience, we are confident that the system works. Forty six measurements are taken in about twenty minutes. A computer generated order is e-mailed directly to the manufacturer. Occasionally the finished garment needs a slight tweak, but most of the time

it can be worn “out the door”. Since all measurements are stored digitally, subsequent orders for suits, jackets, pants or shirts are even easier. Many customers now call with a general idea of their needs and we do the rest.

The selection of over 1000 suit, jacket, trouser and shirt fabrics is staggering, but we also have an edited selection efficiently displayed for those who don't care to muse through the swatches. And remember... every fabric shown is in your exact style and size!

There is something about a garment made just for you. It just fits right, feels right and looks right. We invite you to experience a David Wood -one by one- today.

Thank you David for purchasing a fitter and for your confidence. Good luck. The following are some samples of testimonials from customers measured by the Fitter at Rego. Following these are two pages that compare the old method of measuring and the Fitter method.

CARREL+Partners

Barristers, Solicitors, Trademark Agents

October 9, 2003

90001 000

VIA FAX & MAIL

Mr. Fernando Rego Sr.
 Rego Bespoke Clothiers Ltd.
 1800 - 130 King Street West
 TORONTO ON M5X 1E3

Dear Mr. Rego:

RE: Fernando Rego and "The Fitter"

Two months ago I had never heard of Fernando Rego or "The Fitter". It was quite by accident that our paths crossed. That is another story, but the catalyst that brought me into Rego's was my long standing preference for the Warren K. Cook suit.

Purely by chance, when I entered Mr. Rego's shop for the first time, he chose to attend to me personally. After some convincing dialogue, he placed me in "The Fitter" and the measuring process began. There is no question but that I was skeptical, even dubious. Mr. Rego, being the gentleman he is, did give me the choice. It was because of his obvious enthusiasm and personal dedication to "The Fitter" that I initially bought into the process. I thought that anyone with that kind of faith in a product, and willingness to risk reputation, deserved a fair chance. Furthermore, he turned down my offer to pay in advance with a deposit, such was his confidence. To use his own words:

You are taking a chance with me; I will take one with you.

Some weeks later, I returned to Toronto and stepped into my new suit. Simply put, the fit was precise. The slacks were to remain untouched. One minor adjustment for a slight shoulder caused roll was required for the jacket. This was not done by my request, but as a result of Mr. Rego's observation. Because of a long standing shoulder athletic injury, that adjustment has been necessary in every suit I purchase.

The testament to a satisfied client surely is whether he or she would return to again purchase. In my case, it was not a matter of returning to purchase. After trying the suit on, I never left the shop before I ordered a second suit plus a pair of pants.

In summary, as a result of personal experience with Mr. Rego and "The Fitter", I will be a long term customer. I frequently purchase new suits. It must also be emphasized that this testimonial is not for consideration. I simply like the way I was treated and I like the product.

I wish Mr. Rego and his sons every success with "The Fitter". If what occurred with me becomes the norm, it should be a very successful adjunct to shops like Mr. Rego's.

Yours sincerely,



Kristopher H. Knutsen, Q.C.
 KHK/bPrienley

1686 Alley Drive
 Thunder Bay, Ontario
 P7B 6M9

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 (1924 - 2000)

Nicholas J. Paulina, Q.C.

Christopher H. Knutsen, Q.C.

Jack N. M. Simonsen**

Alexander W. Demas**

W. Daniel Hewitt

Roderick W. Johnson

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Bruce L. Latimer

Wesley J. Halovich

Mark J. Veil

Peter M. White

Radi-Lynn L. Rusch-Kinsky

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CARREL+Partners LP

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August 8, 2005

90001 000

VIA FAX & MAIL

John B. Carrel, Q.C.
(1924 - 2000)

Nicholas J. Postina, Q.C.

Kristopher H. Knutsen, Q.C.*

Jack H. M. Jamieson**

Alexander W. Demes**

W. Daniel Newton**

Roderick W. Johansen

Bruce L. Latimer

Morris J. Helervich

Samuel R. Bachinski

Mark J. Vuell

Peter M. White

Edward S.E. Kim

Rob-Lynn L. Rzesnick-Kinsky

Cynthia A. Cline

Johanna L. Dooiff

Diana M. Cack

Mr. Fernando Rego Sr.
Rego Bespoke Clothiers Ltd.
1800 - 130 King Street West
TORONTO ON M5X 1E3

Dear Mr. Rego:

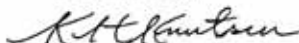
RE: Fernando Rego and "The Fitter"

I previously provided a testimonial to Fernando Rego with respect to "The Fitter" on October 9, 2003.

In the two years since my letter, Mr. Rego and his staff have continued to faithfully and conscientiously fulfil my clothing requirements. On average, I purchase two suits per year plus accessories. Service and quality appear to be the continued hallmark of Rego Bespoke Clothiers Ltd.

I am a very satisfied customer.

Yours sincerely,



Kristopher H. Knutsen, Q. C.
KHK/bPriestley



BMO Nesbitt Burns Inc.
130 King St. West
Toronto, ON M5X 1J4

Tel: (416) 365-6000
Fax: (416) 365-6007

December 22, 2003

Dear Rego Family,

I have been a client at Rego for more years than I can even remember. I've always required made-to-measure, being short in stature. In the past, when ordering garments from you there have always been minor adjustments required, as expected. However, once I was measured in your store using The Fitter, the jacket and pants I ordered fit perfectly, without any alterations.

I was so pleased that I immediately ordered another jacket, and it too arrived requiring no alterations. I think this is the best way to shop. In a busy world, with little time I can now shop knowing that each purchase only requires one visit. I would be happy to share my experience with anyone. Please don't hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Forbes", written in a cursive style.

David Forbes
(416)365-6020

BMO Nesbitt Burns Inc.
Vice President,
Senior Investment Advisor

66 West 38th Street, Apt. 15C
New York, New York 10018

December 23, 2003

Fernando Rego Sr.
Rego Bespoke Clothiers Ltd.
130 King Street West, Box 16
Toronto, Ontario
M5X 1A9

Dear Fernando:

As you know, I have been a patron of Rego Clothiers since 1995, dealing mainly with your son Paul. Over this time I have relied exclusively on Rego for made-to-measure shirts, suits, pants, and sport coats. Although I now live and work in New York City, I continue to shop at Rego for your in-depth expertise and individualized service.

During a recent trip to Toronto, Paul introduced me to The Fitter, your new automated measuring system. Although I was initially apprehensive about the change, my first experience with The Fitter (2 pants and 2 shirts) was nothing short of amazing. The length of the pants were perfect AND they were already hemmed when I came in for my 1st fitting. Paul had told The Fitter that I like my pants on the long side and it automatically adjusted the measurements to accommodate me. Single pleat, no pleat, cuff, no cuff - it didn't matter, The Fitter worked flawlessly. The shirts were also a perfect fit right out of the box. Because The Fitter eliminated measurement and input error through the entire made-to-measure process, no final fitting was necessary and I was able to "fit-in" an extra appointment while in Toronto.

I unconditionally recommend The Fitter and congratulate you on your remarkable achievement which is sure to revolutionize the bespoke clothing industry.

Sincerely,

David Mark

1 Balmoral Avenue, Apt. 313
Toronto, ON
M4V 3B9

July 27, 2005

Fernando Rego Sr.
Rego Bespoke Clothiers Ltd.
130 King Street West, Box 16
Toronto, Ontario
M5X 1A9

Dear Fernando:

Congratulations on the continued success of The Fitter and Rego Clothiers. It has been two years since I was first measured with The Fitter and since then, made-to-measure has been as easy as off-the-rack for me. Last week, I stopped by Rego to buy a few ties and ended up with an MTM sport coat – it was that simple.

The Fitter is a revolutionary breakthrough in the bespoke clothing industry. Best wishes for continued success.

Sincerely,

David Mark



November 25, 2003

Fernando J. Rego
Rego Bespoke Clothiers Ltd.
130 King Street West
Box 16
Toronto, Ontario M5X 1A9
Canada

myoung@casselsbrock.com
tel 416.869.5380
fax 416.350.6902
file #

Dear Fernando:

Just a short note of thanks for again looking after me during my recent visit to the store. As always, your attention to detail is unsurpassed.

I also wanted to comment on "The Fitter", your marvellous invention for taking measurements. While it may have taken a few extra minutes at the front end, it was time well-spent as my purchases fit perfectly first time, saving the time which might have been spent on second fittings. Additionally, with my measurements now in your computer system, I know that future purchases will also fit perfectly, without any further measurements required. I think it's a terrific concept which has been well-executed and which will be of great benefit to your customers.

I look forward to seeing you again soon, the next time I drop into the store.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Mark I. Young", written in a cursive style.

Mark I. Young
MIY:bl

Time & Cost Analysis (“Old Method”)

Step	Task	Client	Salesman	Tailor	Total (mins)
1	Persuading the client to buy MTM	15	15	-	30
2	Looking for cloths & choosing	10	10	-	20
3	Deciding style	5	5	-	10
4	Measuring client	15	15	15	45
5	Writing order & fax or e-mail	-	5	-	5
6	Garment arrives, receive & call client	-	3	-	3
7	Client comes in for fitting	15	15	15	45
8	Tailor shop average time (bottoms, sleeves, sides, lower collar- mainly)	-	-	90	90
9	Call client	-	3	-	3
10	Client comes in & tries on	10	10	10	30
	Client travel time = 3 times (expenses, parking, gas etc.)	180			180
	25% of the times requiring second alterations				0
11	Tailor shop		-	30	30
12	Call client		2	-	2
13	Client comes in - fitting pick up	10	10	2	22
	Client travel time	60	12	32	104
	Total travel time	70			70
	Grand total Time	320	105	194	619

Time & Cost Comparison “The Fitter” Way

Our success rate is 90% first time out the door. The other 10% require minor alterations - very minor and we deliver to client.

New way Using The Fitter					
Step	Task	Client	Salesman	Tailor	Total (mins)
1	Get the client interested in made for you not someone like you – by showing the Fitter – this should make the decision	15	15	-	30
2	Select fabrics	10	10	-	20
3	Deciding style	5	5	-	10
4	Measuring client	12	12	-	24
5	Writing order & fax or e-mail	-	5	-	5
6	Garment arrives – salesman checks for accuracy and get cuffs put on – one day pants will come finished	-	10	15	25
7	Salesman calls client	-	3	-	3
8	Client comes, tries on & picks up garment that day	10	10	10	30
	Travel time 2 trips	120			120
	10% of the times requiring second alterations (garments will be delivered)			30	30
	Grand Total	172	70	55	297
	Old Method	320	105	194	619
	Time Saved (new)	-148	-35	-139	-322
	Improvement %	-46%	-33%	-72%	-52%

Reduction in costs
and speed = Profits
& Customer
satisfaction

This per unit multiply by total
output to show results



Lessons Learned

How I Stopped Smoking – Cold Turkey

I started smoking when I was very young. I was around 11. I was working and bringing home some money. We couldn't afford cigarette paper to make the cigarette, so we would use corn leaves. The leaves that are close to the corn are very fine and if you pick them when the corn is dry, the leaves hold the tobacco just like in a paper cigarette. My mother, God rest her soul, supported my habit. She actually gave me a little money to buy tobacco. My father would not have approved. He did not smoke and at the time he was away on Terceira Island.

Looking back now I wonder why my mother supported my smoking. I guess she thought, since I was helping to support the family, I should do what adults do. We never smoked in front of my father. He knew that my brothers and I smoked – it was the manly thing to do! It was only when we came to Canada that my brothers and I would smoke openly in front of my father while we were playing cards or when friends would visit. We were all married and my father said one day “I know you guys smoke, you don't have to sneak

around my back. I don't approve but go ahead – it's your money to blow." My father didn't think that smoking was bad for you; he just did not think it was a good use of money to blow it up in smoke.

As my kids started school, they would come home and when they saw me smoke they would ask me to stop because the teachers showed them pictures of what smoke does to your lungs and told them that smoking would kill you before your time. I tried to quit a few times without success. I even went as long as 2 weeks without smoking. One day, while I was trying to quit in 1976, I was in a meeting with the buyers and I became uncharacteristically aggressive and I had an argument with one of the buyers.

The buyer's manager called me after the meeting and asked me if there was something going on that was causing me stress. "Why?" I asked. The manager told me that my behaviour at the meeting did not reflect my character. He wondered if there was some personal stuff going on. I explained that I was trying to quit smoking and I found myself to be a bit edgy. "Well", he said, "That's the problem. Go back to smoking so we can work together". It was a great excuse for me to go right back to smoking.

Later in 1980, my manager, Bob, at Harry Rosen asked me to quit smoking because I was not showing a good example. In those days we weren't allowed to smoke in the store but we could smoke in the corridors of shopping centers. I would stand in front of the store; keep an eye on what was going on in the store and smoke. Nothing was going to make me stop smoking.

In 1981, I went for my annual physical. Dr.W examined me and then he sat down in front of me. He said "You look like an intelligent man." I looked at him. He went on to say that an intelligent person does not kill himself 3 seconds at a time. He went towards a wall, where he had a picture of a set of lungs. He proceeded to draw several lines. He explained that there was a wall of little hairs with the job to keep pollution away from our lungs. Normally these hairs were able to keep our lungs free from the pollution in the air. But if on top of fighting the pollution around us, the little hairs had to deal with the abuse of the cigarette smoke that we inhaled every half hour or so, they would give up working and collapse. If the little hairs collapsed they would

form a wall around our lungs and it would block our air and make it more difficult to breathe.

He went on to say that a lot of people will die from other conditions or diseases even though they smoked. He gave me a scenario that if I was involved in a car accident and was taken to a hospital and suppose an older person was also involved in the accident, the doctors would go to the older person first if he was a non-smoker because the doctors knew that the non-smoker stood a better chance of recovering than the younger person who smoked. They know that when you smoke you really hurt yourself in many ways. And then he said “In view of what I told you – do you think you are intelligent if you continue to smoke?”

I did not reply. I went home. This was my day off. I told Cecilia that I was going to quit smoking and Cecilia just went “Hmmm.” That was the final piece of motivation that I needed. After dinner Cecilia asked me if I was going to join her and the kids in front of the T.V. I said “No, I am going to stay here at the kitchen table doing home work and smoking until midnight because today is the last day that I will smoke.” Cecilia replied “O.K.” However, I sensed some sarcasm in her voice.

I did what I had decided to do and that was to smoke until midnight that day. At about 11:30 p.m., I opened a new pack. I smoked 2 more cigarettes. At the stroke of midnight on our grandfather clock I had a talk with myself that went like this “Are you happy – stupid? Your mouth is giving you an indication of what smoking does to you!” It felt like I was eating straw. I felt really stupid and I did not like it.

Thank you Dr. W, to this day I am smoke-free! I went into all of the details above for a good reason and that is, I have enough proof that you will only do what you want to do for reasons that suit you personally. The desire to do it has to come from within yourself – not because you want to please anyone or because you have or don’t have will power – it has nothing to do with that. It is done when you want to do it from within – you alone have the key to your success or failure. You choose and you live with your choice. My father

used to say to us about our choices “It is your bed; make it well because you will have to sleep in it.” How true this was and still is. You need to believe in yourself. When you do, others will believe in you as well.

How I Lost 40 lbs and Kept it off for 6 Years

On January 2nd, 1994, I went to the Y for my regular workout. When I finished my routine, I showered and weighed myself. I just did not like what I saw. I was 195 lbs before Christmas and today I was 200 lbs. Well, actually 199.9. “Wow, what is the matter with you?” I said, “200 lbs, 5 foot 6 inches, a 44 short is not your size any more.”

Being in the clothing business I had a tailor who would let out my clothes and so putting on weight was not a major problem – at least when it came to clothing. But, I know that being a 46 short – you look like a barrel. I apologize if this statement should offend anyone who might fall into this category, but, I hope it gives you a message similar to the one Dr. W gave me. It took him suggesting that I was not intelligent for me to smarten up. So, if you are one of these people – face the facts. Decide once and for all that this is not good for your health and do something about it.

I want to remind the readers that the real reason I am writing this book and why I made my circle of life public, is because I want to make a difference in people’s lives – a difference for the better. At first I thought that this book was aimed at helping the poor because of my background, but as I work on it and write about all that I have gone through, I believe that this book and my talks can help anyone who really wants to help himself or herself. We just need a push in the right direction. It starts with being honest with oneself.

Look in the mirror and see what it is you like or don’t like. If you are 5 foot 6 inches - don’t even dream of becoming 6 feet tall or if you are 6 feet and would like to be 6 foot 4 inches - don’t try. As far as your height is concerned don’t try to change that – be happy with your overall stature. I was once challenged by a 6 foot 2 inch American GI. He said that I could not reach the height he could reach without getting into a chair or a step ladder. Anyway, I

agreed with him and I told him that he could not reach as low as I could - standing up - he would have to bend. In the Azores 5 foot 6 inches is the average height for a man. I really had no hang ups about being 5 foot 6 inches.

You are meant to be happy with yourself the way you are. If you are fat and happy recognize that this is your choice. Later on you will pay the price and I don't even mean that you have to pay for new clothes. That was a good thing when people lost or gained weight - they bought new clothes, which was good for business! What I mean is you will pay the price with discomfort. You will put more stress on your heart than it can handle - it will slow you down and you will have moments of unhappiness - if you are honest with yourself.

So why not face the facts. We all let go for one reason or another and we put on a little weight and a little more and pretty soon that is just the way we are. It's our metabolism, it's our genes etc. Life is too short anyway and of course the favourite 'We are all going to die anyway'. Yes, we are ,but I did not ask to come so I am not going to ask to go sooner than when it's my time. That is what you are doing to yourself by putting on more weight than your bones are structured to carry or your organs are capable of servicing. The truth is that you are indeed shortening your life by being overweight and if you are lucky to reach 60 you will decrease the quality of your beautiful life.

These are real facts and don't say you don't care because you do. I think we all want to be smart and we think we are. Heck, I did until that one day when Dr. W told me that I looked like an intelligent person. Well, I did not like that. I thought I was pretty smart, who was he to tell me that I was not? Well, I am sure you have heard this expression "The truth hurts." Yes, it does, but, you can change all of that on your own; without drugs, without doctors' help, without anyone nagging you. YOU can do this - when you are smart enough to recognize it. "If it's to be, it's up to me." These are the 8 little words that worked for me that January 2nd, 1994.

If I had not wakened up I would probably be dead now or worse. I am sitting here on a beach in Aruba and I see people much younger than me struggling to move and can see why. They are overweight. They eat too much and they do not exercise. Who am I to say this? I am your fellow human being who has lived and experienced all that you have done or will do. But, I woke up

and I hope that what I am sharing with you will help you because you are not alone and you are going to be affected by other people and by circumstances that have not yet happened.

So, you must be ready to deal with the obstacles that are coming your way. Sure as the night follows the day, things will happen that require your full attention and strength. You may think you are smart and you probably are smart – but, you just lost track of the fact that smart people don't do things to hurt themselves.

So what did I do to lose 40 lbs in 4 months?

I decided that I was fat. I found out that for someone my height the proper weight should be between 155 lbs and 165 lbs. A variance of 10 lbs is really not so strict. You can splurge occasionally. The key is that you must decide what is right for you because you have to live with your decision. It will not work if it is unpleasant and hard to do. If you decide for yourself on what is right for you - you CAN do it successfully. Believe me; I can't wait to go for my walk 5 days a week. It's the best way to start my day because it is what I want to do.

When I was at the Y, I noticed that a lot of runners were thin. I decided that if I wanted to be thinner, then I would have to start running. At my neighbourhood YMCA, 5 laps on the track is one kilometre. I could not complete even one lap the first time I tried. I ran out of air. I could not do it, so I walked a bit and ran a bit. My son, Paul, had one time lost weight by eating oranges. So, I started eating 2 oranges for breakfast and drinking coffee with no cream and no sugar. I started saying "I take my coffee straight – no drugs in my coffee." That's how I started to like black coffee – and I still do. That's the way I like it and I never had black coffee before.

I persevered with my running and walking around the track. I progressed so that I was running more than walking and I soon started to run 5 laps at a time. On a Sunday in early February I ran 50 laps in 1 hour - Wow! Only 1 month before and I could not even do 1 lap. At the store, my customers were going out of their way to compliment me. They could see the difference. Oh

boy, that really kept me motivated in achieving my goal. I was there before May 1st, which was my goal. In April, Cecilia told me to put on some weight - I looked too old according to her. So, I went up to 163 lbs from 155 lbs and I stayed that way until 1999 - when I started to feel weak and I could not run.

I went to see my doctor. We started doing all kinds of tests and by 2001 I was diagnosed with my blood problem. I had to stop running, but I kept walking. I would just walk a bit longer to keep doing my 5 km per day. So really - all it took was 5 km per day and cut back a bit on the bread and cheese. I still had some - but less - and black coffee. When I was diagnosed my wife stopped making me salads. She thought that my diet might have something to do with my blood problem and, of course, I started putting on weight again. I went up to 178 lbs by December 2004. Which brings me to the next thing I stopped 'cold turkey' and I will tell you about it after I go for a swim in the ocean.

How I Stopped Drinking

You look good for a 60 year old, but it is my responsibility to tell you to put your life in order. My life was in order but ever since that day all kinds of stuff has happened and my life has never been the same. I am going to state the details of my diagnosis and what happened leading up to that day in the hopes that it will help other people cope with their own situations - however different they may be. I don't blame anyone or even myself for my condition. What I was unhappy with is the way Dr. M. gave me this bit of bad news. I am really concerned for other people who have to go through this scenario and I hope that my explanation of what has happened to me can help them cope. Even though I know how hard it is to cope everyday with pain, you can deal with it better if you are positive and always look for the bright side of things. Because as sure as the day follows night things do change and often for the better. If it's to be it's up to me.

On September 13th, 2001 I went to the hospital at Toronto East to learn the results of a bone marrow test that I had done 1 week prior. Going there was

a fearful experience. This test was supposed to put an end to 2 years of other tests to discover why I was so tired most of the time. I remember looking at all the patients in the waiting room – some very very sick, with no hair, young ones, old ones, men, women, there were quite a few people. Next to me there was a young man about 6 feet tall less than 30 years of age and he had a book that – judging from its size – must have 500 pages. Looking at the cover I noticed that it was a medical book. The title had something to do with blood science. I paid particular attention to this because this fellow did not look sick, but he was there and reading about blood. He must have some sickness related to blood problems and that made me think how lucky I am to have lived all of this time healthy.

It is now my turn to see Dr. M. I sat down. She closed the door behind me. She went to her computer and confirmed my name and birth date, then she searched for a box of tissues and put it on a little table next to me, and this is what she said. “You look good for a 60 year old, but it is my responsibility to tell you to put your life in order.....”. I don’t know what was going through my mind. The next 20 seconds felt like 20 minutes. I lost my hearing. She was talking but I was not hearing. I was just stunned. This is a dream. She is telling me to put my life in order. My life is in order. It has been for a long time. I have a will, life insurance – “Oh my God I am going to die.” All of these people outside with no hair and so sick. That’s me in the future. Wow, I was nervous and I began to realize why she put the Kleenex box next to me. Well, I am a softy. I do cry easily but not that time and not there. I disliked this person; I thought that she had no business being a doctor. She should be in a funeral home. As I said, I don’t know what was going through my mind. Finally I asked her what was wrong with me and she said something that I could not comprehend. I said to her “Please write it down for me.” She did. Myelodysplasia (MDS) and refractory anemia. Your blood cells are the shape of teardrops. “What is the cure” I asked. She said something like this: “It’s something like Mario Lemieux, the hockey player had”. I said “That’s good, he is playing hockey again.” She said that my situation was not yet bad enough to determine there was nothing she could do for me. “We will have to wait and see how it develops and we will deal with it then. This is in the family of leukemia”. I was furious. I told Dr. M. that

she had a rotten job and I said “how can you do this?” She said “I get to meet nice people like you”. I left her office with an appointment for next month and she would report to Dr. K. That’s the last I saw of Dr. M. – I never went back. I don’t know how I got to my car in the parking lot but I did. I sat down and I had the biggest cry of my life. I sat there and saw the end. I could not believe this was real – I knew it was real but I did not want to believe it. I don’t know how I got the courage to drive to my store, but I did. As I was driving I did not know what I was going to tell my wife and sons. They were all at the store. This was about 1 p.m. and our busiest time at the store. So I drove in and of course my wife was concerned and she asked me for the results. I told her that I had to go back – they were not there yet. I went into the washroom and again I drained my face in tears. I could not face my family so I told them that I was going to see Dr. K to see if she could get the results for me, and I left. I went straight to Dr. K’s office. She is not just a doctor; she is a good person and a friend. So she took me into her office. When she saw me, we hugged and cried and I told her my dilemma. She saw what was written on the piece of paper and told me that she had a lady patient that was 80 years old with a similar condition and she still went to see her on her own – this condition is unpredictable etc. I told her that I was not going to tell my family. I really did not want my family to know, so they would not have to worry. We have a great relationship – my family and I. We work together. We have disagreements, but all in all we are a good family that gets along well. I love them dearly and I did not want them to know and worry about me. Dr. K explained to me that my red cells used to be 150 and they were now 109. When they go below 100 you have to take blood and you will behave differently. If nothing else your family has to know so that they understand why you will behave the way you will – which we don’t know. They have to be told. So I asked her if she would tell them for me because I really did not know what to say. She agreed. She met us at 6:30 p.m. Thursday evening, I brought my family over and she gave them the bad news. I had cried so much all day, so I was able to handle things a bit better, but you can imagine how we all felt. I asked them not to tell anyone else about this. We would see how this would develop. I did not want customers to know or my family, Cecilia’s family etc. I was a different person. I was taking it pretty good, but I was good for nothing. I was so confused.

So I went to see my very good friend Don, who had long been afflicted with heart disease, looking to him for some comfort. Don listened to me and said “Fernando, you need a second opinion”. I agreed. Don arranged for me to see Dr. B at Princess Margaret on December 23rd, 2001. Dr. B confirmed my diagnosis as being what Dr. M. said and he told me that he was going to check my DNA to determine if I was carrying 2 genes or just one. He explained at the time that Europeans are subject to this. If you have it from both parents it is fatal, but if it is from only one parent your chances are better to cope with this. There is no known cure, but there is a small percentage of people that can live with this for a long time and die from something else. After listening to him talk about this small percentage that cope with this – I put myself in that group right away. You can’t believe the difference in my mind after that visit. I believed then as I believe now that our mind can help us deal with a sickness if we have a positive attitude. However, it can also hurt us and get worse if our attitude is that of a negative or confused nature. I was not taking any medication before I saw Dr. B or after - it was just a different attitude because of the way he explained to me that there is a small percentage of people that cope with this for a long time. Bingo – that’s me! I am in that group. I want you to take this seriously. After that appointment, I sat down in my office at home, closed my eyes and spoke to myself. I said “You must cure yourself, so that you can accomplish the things you want to accomplish.” As you know I wanted to write this book on self-help and so I said to myself “Take a pill of the medicine that you want to give to your readers about positive thinking and who knows this could be a great chapter for your book”. And it was on that day, December 23rd, 2001 that I found the answer to why everything happens for a reason and it serves you. I had a hard time accepting my diagnosis. Why? What purpose can there be in this for me? I was having trouble accepting it until this new attitude came over me and I decided to fight and work towards all the things I want to do and not worry of what might be. We will all die one day. I did not ask to come, so I am not going to ask to go. When that day comes it comes. I decided to write my book back in the early 1990’s. My plan was to write it when I retired because I knew that it was not going to be easy to write this book and do enough public speaking to make a difference. I knew that I needed to dedicate more time to this part of my life in order to succeed. Now that I

have turned my attention to the book, I have to write it. I hope that people will be able to benefit from it. So I drew my circle of life and got started right away looking for help with the writing of my book. Originally I was going to call it *The Art of Living Well through Self Awareness*, but all of my friends thought that this title was too long. So, I thought O.K. let me write my book and worry about the title later, and so it started.

I worked on it with Andrew Kennedy and as we had planned, I had a draft of my book by July 31st, 2003. But I was not happy with it and put it on hold. Back in early 2002, I was going to see Dr. B at Princess Margaret for my blood and Dr. H. at Toronto Western for my iron on my liver. My iron levels went way higher than normal and the fear here is that the iron can deposit in your liver and it can be fatal if not controlled. Often, for iron overload, blood is taken every couple of months and the level drops down, but this was out of the question for me with my condition. So we were watching this every 3 months.

I was due for an appointment in early July 2002. I went in to have my blood taken one week earlier as usual. The night before my appointment I woke up at around 1 a.m. in so much pain in my shoulders, my hands, and my chest. I could only think of what Dr. M. had told me back in September 2001. Oh my God, she knew what she was talking about. I had to slide out of my bed. I could not stay in bed. The pain in my shoulders was so much that I could not get myself out of bed. Somehow I managed and went to sit in my office waiting for daylight. I was in a lot of pain. My motivation was gone. I had no energy.

Morning came and Cecilia drove me to the Toronto Western hospital and she went to work. I went to the 8th floor to see Dr. H. One of her assistants took a look at me and sent me to the Rheumatology department. They said that my blood sedimentation was too high and that explained the pain. In the Rheumatology department, I was examined by Dr A and several other young doctors. After several hours and more blood work, the doctors came to an agreement that I had something called 'Polymyalgia'. Dr. A prescribed Prednisone. I filled the prescription and took it home. I took the medication and was able to sleep and I took my regular walk. The next day I went back

to the hospital and gave Dr. A a huge hug. She really liked that, I guess she felt good that I had come back to thank her.

Ever since 1974, when I took Valium for my neck and back pain, I have hated taking medication. I was told that people can get hooked on these drugs, so I became very selective about taking my medication. But when you are really sick you don't have much choice. Anyway, I was told that I was going to have to take Prednisone for 2 years to treat my condition. So I resigned myself to take it. One of my friends at the YMCA is a psychiatrist and he told me to watch for certain symptoms like headaches, losing sensation in my nerves, and lack of concentration. He told me that a lot of people get side effects from this drug because it is steroid based. So I kept going back to see Dr. A every 2 months and Dr. H every 3 months. Dr. B said that my red cells were stable and I did not need to see him, but I should still visit Dr. H to check on my iron levels.

By December 2003 I was going through a lot of problems. I was having trouble concentrating on my work. So I started cutting back on the Prednisone and by April 2004 I had stopped taking it completely. Dr. A had given me instruction to cut back with a stopping date of July 2004, but I was not taking any after April. I saw her in July and told her that I had not been taking the Prednisone since April. She asked me about my pain. I told her that I preferred to live with my pain than to have the other symptoms - especially indecision and uncertainty of what was going on. I would change my mind 10 times a day.

Dr. A then told me that I could not have had Polymyalgia if I did not have the symptoms without the Prednisone. She continued to see me every 2 months - but no medication. However, in October 2004, she sent me back to Dr. B at Princess Margaret to see about my blood. There was something she thought he should review because he is the haematologist. I was also scheduled to do a liver biopsy with Dr. H, which was cancelled the night before. I got so frustrated with making all these appointments, being poked and prodded and then to have an appointment just cancelled without any notice. I made an appointment with a private clinic to go through a complete

check-up. This was at a cost to me of almost \$1,400. I had it done and I explained to the doctors at the clinic why I was doing it and about my condition. When I went back for my results, I was very disappointed to find that they did not have all the test results and were not able to give me any help with my condition.

I went to another hospital to have a nuclear test of my cardiovascular system and from there got an appointment to go see a cardiologist in January 2005. In the meantime, I had my biopsy rescheduled and on December 21, I would go back for the results. On December 16 2004, I went to see Dr. B at Princess Margaret who told me that my iron level was too high and that I should start a procedure to bring it down. He explained there were 3 methods presently in use to deal with high iron levels. The easiest was to take blood every 2 weeks until the levels normalized but in my condition I could not do this. The second way was to implant a small valve in one of my veins so I could administer daily some medication myself. The third way and the least desirable to me, was to take an injection every day for 6 months to one year until the condition improved. I told him I was seeing Dr. H. on December 21 and he agreed that we should wait to see what she said about my liver biopsy. December 21 arrived and I went to see Dr. H. My appointment was for 10 a.m. and she saw me at 1:45 p.m. This is not uncommon for doctors at Princess Margaret hospital or Toronto Western hospital. I think maybe they have to deal with emergencies, I don't know and I don't complain. Remember - I was born in Portugal: first there is God, then there are the doctors, and then the police. Anyway I got used to just about everything.

Dr. H came to see me with 4 or 5 students. She asked me if I was Italian, I said "No, I am Portuguese ". "It's the same thing" she said. "No," I said, "But close." Anyway, she explained that if I was a North American, she would not have much hope for me to stay away from the booze, but Europeans normally are good at following her instructions. She went on to explain that I had the liver of an alcoholic. It was Level 2 with the worst being Level 4. She explained that the condition would reverse if I stopped drinking any alcohol at all. She said she was so sure of this that she did not want to see me for 6 months. I asked her about my iron and the treatment Dr. B was suggesting and she said "If you stop drinking all alcohol, you will not need this iron

treatment.” Well this was quite a relief! I determined, right then, that I would stop completely after the New Year. When I went home, I told Cecilia about my decision. I realized it was going to be hard not to have my 2 glasses of red wine with my meals but I was determined to do it.

Remember the deal I made with myself was to quit drinking after January 1st, 2005. On December 24, we had the usual gathering in my house. All the family was there and we were all having a good time. At about 10 p.m., a thought came into my mind. If I need to stop drinking for my health, why wait until January 1? So I decided that now is the time and I started drinking water. The next 3 days I was at home. It was the holidays and I did not touch a drop of anything alcoholic. On New Years Eve, we celebrated in my house. All my guests had wine and I had water. I decided that I was doing what was best for my health. I also started to loose about 3 pounds per week. I was enjoying this - I was starting to feel good and I was losing weight.

At the beginning of February I caught a cold. It was the worst cold I have ever had in my entire life. I was so sick, I was sure the end was near. Cecilia made an appointment for me to see Dr. K. She gave me a prescription for antibiotics. I took them for about one week and by Saturday I started to feel a little better. By Monday I was so sick that I went to the Mississauga Hospital. I was given more prescriptions. I had a follow-up appointment with Dr. B. on February 21st. Dr. B was shaken up when he looked at the results of my blood tests. Through my entire blood ordeal, my platelets and my white cells had been shinning stars and now they went down dramatically. Dr. B said “I want you to stop taking whatever you are taking and come back to see me on Monday. Have the blood test and come right up, I need to deal with this, I don’t like what I see.” Well, imagine how I felt to hear this from the only doctor who had given me hope 3 years ago. I was really worried. I went home and told Cecilia that I had decided to have a glass of wine with my meal and to hell with Dr. H. I have never been this sick in my life and I think cutting out all of my wine at once was not the right thing to do. So, I had one glass of wine that night and every night after that. I went to see Dr. B on Monday and he was happy with the blood test results. My white cells and my platelets had come up to where they were before.

During this period of trouble I made up my mind to break away from my business and really concentrate on my book. As it happened, we had a meeting arranged to update our shareholders of SIT before going on my 2 week vacation to Aruba. The meeting had been planned before I got really sick. I informed our shareholders of my health having deteriorated and that I wanted to concentrate on my book and live whatever is left of my life the best way I can. Today I feel great. It is March 4th and between the sun, the good food, no hassles, and my dearest wife sitting next to me quietly and patiently listening to me, I can't help but think life is so wonderful and I am the luckiest man on earth. If there is a heaven it can't be much better than this. Tomorrow I will concentrate on why I am writing this book and what good has come to me for being unselfish in trying to help others and how much this has helped me.

Why am I this Way?

I lived to be 50 years old without really knowing who I really was. I wonder why I did the things I did. During these last 50 years I had no reason to inquire. I was living a decent life. I accomplished a few things even though I had a limited education - that is a limited formal education. I had a degree from the school of life. So why at age 50 did this discovery become important to me? It happened when I went to a seminar with the intention of finding 3 people to help me with a new approach to my business. I wanted to start a direct sales force to see if I could grow my stagnated business.

At that seminar I learned that we can accomplish anything we want, but first we "Have to want to work." I asked myself "What do I really want to accomplish before I die?" The first thing that came to my mind was to write a book telling people about my life and, with so little education, what I had been able to accomplish for me and my family. As modest as it is, I am proud of what I accomplished for me and my family. At the seminar, I decided that I was not going to hire anyone from the attendees. I learned, during the break sessions, that the majority of the attendees were people who really didn't know what they wanted and so they drifted from job to job and from seminar to seminar and the others were the 'sharp guys' - the organizers. I thought so much for this idea of hiring someone from here. As it is my habit to be always looking for lessons in life, I thought "What did I learn in those 2 days for

\$400?” Well, I learned that I would like to become a public speaker but, of a different kind. I did not want to attract people to listen to me, pay their money and one week later they would be back down where they were before. My motive was to help people understand – like I did – clearly that they can accomplish anything they want to if they know what they want and by focusing on how to get it – they can get it. There was no doubt in my mind then and still today that it is achievable. The only difference now is that I know how it can be done and I am also able to share with my readers how they can learn this simple but special technique of learning first what makes you tick.

The most fundamental point is that you need to know yourself. Once you learn this, then you are on your way to achieving anything you want in life. How do I know this and what makes me so sure? Life experiences, personal discovery and the benefits that can be had by all experiences of life. Everything happens for a reason and it serves you. You must look for the reason and the benefits will manifest themselves to you in the most efficient ways. Imagine that you will stop living in doubt once you discover the knowledge of who you really are, or what makes you tick.

Why do I want to do this? Whatever it is you want to do, if you want it, you must know why you want it and if you are willing to pay the price to get it. When all of those facts are clear in your mind you can achieve what you want in life. For within each one of us lives the power, the knowledge, and the desire to achieve anything we want. The reason most of us don't achieve is because we don't know why we want it and, therefore, we don't know how to go about getting it. How do I know all of this? – You might ask, and you should ask. Don't take anything for granted. Knowledge about ourselves, knowing who we are and what makes us tick, is your best friend – especially self-knowledge. Ignorance is our worst enemy.

I lived a decent life until I was 50, but I really did not know who I was or what really made me tick. Yes, I knew my name, my parents, my children, my wife, her parents and siblings and a lot of life experiences that helped me along the way. But, I did not know really what made me tick until I decided to write this book. Why? Maybe it's because I was born poor and now I live comfortably and I want to help others. I think if I can do it anybody can do

it. I broke my neck when I was 19 and I did not die or wasn't permanently paralyzed. I want to encourage other people with injuries to be positive about their health and hopefully this will help them get well.

I was not sure if this was the right path and by this time I started to have self-doubt about my project. I thought who is going to listen to me? Me, with only a Grade 3 education! I am not a famous person; I don't have the kind of money that makes people pay attention. Who am I really? In fact my son Paul reminded me of that and he would say "Well the bums are not going to listen to you and the ones that are well off don't need your help." So, again I was not sure. I would put the idea away, listen to another motivational tape and the desire to write this book would come back. I would be reminded of some of the good things I did for my family like working at age 10, going out to get the bundle of wood and working in the Officers club. A lot of these things I did on my own of my own free will. Why?

One day I was thinking about giving up the idea because it really did not make sense. I was not going to get customers from these public speaking engagements. I really did not have enough money to stop working and do this so maybe I was biting off more than I could chew. But, I really wanted to do this. I could see myself speaking to a large group of kids in Brazil. I could see myself trying to motivate them. "Look at me" I would say "I was once where you are, I was 12 years old when I got my first pair of shoes. My parents were poor, I had only a Grade 3 education and look at me now - there is hope for you." These thoughts really made me feel good, but, who am I really to achieve this. Well I thought I would put the idea aside until I retire and at that time I will do what I can. In the mean time, concentrate on your business and your family . If you really want to do it you will find the way!

It was like a light came on over my head and it was so clear in my mind. The reason I wanted to do this was because of the way my mother would ask me to do things and how she thanked me by giving me praise and hugs - that is why I want to do it. I want recognition for doing something good for others - O.K. there is nothing wrong with that but what really drove me to want to do it is the way my mother conditioned me. It turns out that when I discovered

that for myself, I realized that my own discovery will help me help others discover themselves. By this time I had read many books on how the mind is triggered to function. First the inherited basic brain functions, the many years of survival and human suffering, but not many people pay attention to the ever present subconscious part of the brain. There exist all records of our existence and for whatever reason people tend to accept defeat easier than success. Our mind can be our best friend or our worst enemy and the choice is ours. Henry Ford said it best “Whether you think you can or think you can’t, either way you will be right.” What I am trying to share with you is this: once I discovered what made me tick, that is my mother’s conditioning, I stopped having second thoughts about writing my book. In fact, I started thinking how this one simple discovery could help me help others help themselves.

Who are you really? What makes you tick? What do you want out of this beautiful life other than existence? You have so much to give and accomplish, go for it. Know your self and your life will never be the same. Uncertainty will not last very long in your conscious mind because once you master the knowledge of who you are and what makes you tick all other events in life are just events that you need to deal with and you will be successful.

Why?

It’s not because we are lacking self motivation books or examples of good people, or exceptional people. What we are missing is the knowledge necessary to help ourselves determine who we are and what really makes us tick. I believe that this book can help people achieve more. By keeping things simple and to the point, a desire can be created in the readers mind to look for themselves.

If, while considering your own life, you learn that during your conditioning you were hurt by the negative reactions of others, or by what others said to you, or if you can point exactly to what has made you the way you are, there won’t be much trouble finding the solution to make you better. Your conditioning is the most important part of your character. This takes shape by the time you are 10 years old. So if you really want to help yourself, your

first job is to go back in memory and really look for all the reasons that have formed your mind set. Don't accept the first thing that comes to your mind, unless it's so convincing that you really don't need to look any further. You never really know what it is until you look for it.

I was 50 years old when I learned who I was. I also learned that when we know what makes us the way we are and we don't like it, we can change. I am convinced that this book will help others because I do not tell you to follow an example. All I say you must do is to look within your heart and search for the key that will open the part of your mind storing the reasons why you are the way you are. I use my examples because they can help you realize that until you discover for yourself what really makes you tick, it is proper to have doubts and confusion as to why we do what we do - good or bad.

We just don't know and no one else knows, not even the person who did it to you. I know my mother had no idea what she was doing. All she wanted was to get that chore done and the approach she used got her the results she wanted. At age 63 my main goal in my life is this book and to help others help themselves. Think for a moment. If my mother was rough and unjust in the way she would ask me to do things for her, I know that I would have turned out different, not necessarily bad, but different. Think about what happened to you during your adolescence that carved your life to be the way it is. I think all human beings need to know this so that we can truly perform to the best of our ability. It is our God given right to be free and unique as we all are created equal but unique and different and no one should ever be compared to anyone else, because it is impossible to find two of us the same. If the creator wanted us to be the same we would come to this world with a manual of procedures like a computer. What a boring world it would be! The way we are born and brought up is what makes us so unique. We all have at least one good book in us. By the time our stay here comes to an end, let's find our personal purpose and act on it until we can write that book to help the next generation make this earth a better place for all of us here now and those not yet born.

Conditioning Can Occur At Anytime In Your Life

The reader will remember the story I told about how my Uncle Joe refused to give my father back the rented land that was my father's when he returned from Curaçao back in 1940. He never reconciled with his brother and they would not speak to each other at all.

My Uncle Joe had married a lady whose father had immigrated to the United States a number of years earlier. She was allowed to immigrate to the United States with her sons and my uncle. They lived in Boston. My cousins and I would talk, but not our parents. In 1982 my Uncle Joe died and my brothers, Manuel and Joe, took my father by car to Boston to attend my Uncle Joe's funeral.

The drive from Toronto to Boston takes about 10 hours. When they got to Boston, they went straight to the funeral home. The funeral took place that day. My father was 74 years old. They drove 10 hours through the night and stayed up all day attending the funeral. I imagine it must have been stressful on my father for him to travel all night and then go to the funeral of his younger brother, especially since they were not speaking to one another. If it was not for my brothers going to the funeral out of respect, I don't think my father would have gone. But, they went and stayed at the home of another relative for the night.

That morning at 5:00 a.m., I received a phone call from my brother Joe to tell me that they were in the hospital with my father who had fallen from a second floor window of the house where they were staying. They wanted me to bring my mother because they did not think my father was going to make it.

I booked a flight for me and my mother. I packed a pair of pants, a shirt, and a blazer. At 9:00 a.m. we were in the Boston University hospital. My father was still in emergency. He was aware of what was going on and he recognized me and my mom. I asked why he was still in emergency and the nurse said that they wanted to know who would cover the expenses – so, I gave them my American Express card and my father was moved to ICU. The report of what happened to my father was that he wanted to go to the washroom and for

some unexplainable reason he walked out of a window. This was a low window to the room floor, but, to open it he had to slide it up and he thought it was just as low to the outside. He needed to go to the washroom. He did not know where it was – so, he was going to go outside to do his pee. Well, he fell from the second floor and he landed on a handrail of the front porch. He broke his pelvis and 3 ribs and one of the ribs punctured his lungs. When I saw my father at ICU, I saw what looked like a football on his left side – it was all blood from his lungs.

We were brought up in the Azores where many of the older people believe in ghosts. The first thing my mother said was that it was my uncle's ghost that pushed my father out of the window. A lot was made of that because they did not speak and I guess my father must have told him what he thought of his action of not releasing the land.

But, be that as it may, here is the reason I am sharing this story with you. My 2 brothers came back to Toronto and that day my mother stayed at the home of her brother, Manuel. I stayed in the ICU with my father. I only had a jacket, one pair of pants and one shirt because I thought I was coming to pick up my fathers body – according to my brothers phone call at 5:00 a.m.

The routine was to stay in the hospital from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. then go home to my uncle's place to sleep – they allowed me to use one of their cars. I borrowed some shirts from one of my cousins. My mother would come to visit during the day and my father was showing signs of recuperating. The accident happened on Sunday morning and by Friday the doctors felt there was hope. My father was put on a respirator to help heal his lungs. He was immobile in a special bed because of his broken ribs and pelvis. So things were looking good. On Saturday, I came in at 6:00 a.m. and I was told my father had been taken for some x-rays. When they brought my father back he had this strange look on his face. His eyes looked like the eyes of a person that had lost his mind – he looked like a madman. “Oh my god what is going on?” I asked. My father would not speak because he had the respirator tube in his mouth. All I could see was this expression in his face.

I took his hand in mine and he squeezed it as if he would never let go. He started to try to warn me of something, but I could not make out what it was. It seemed like he was trying to say don't drink the water and don't trust the doctors. They wanted to kill us. This of course made no sense but I comforted him the best way I could. During the day Saturday there were a lot of visits from other relatives, so I was able to take a bit of a break from being in that trauma room. If you are well you are not supposed to be there. However, since my father did not speak English, they allowed me to stay there with him.

When I got there on Monday morning, my father had worsened. He was hanging on to my hand like a lost baby who had found his father and would not let go. I was worried even if my father got better. I thought he had lost his mind because he kept trying to say that the doctors were not to be trusted or something like that.

I will never forget this entire scene. But in particular, what happened next. This young doctor, who was making his daily rounds, came around eating an apple and I told him that my father was trying really hard to say something to me since Saturday and it had to do with not trusting the doctors. I said "I know that this is not true. Your people are doing a wonderful job!" The doctor said, looking at his charts, "When did your father start acting like this?" I replied "Saturday" and he said "That's the day we did the CAT scan. Did you explain to him what the CAT scan is?" I replied "No, I don't know what a CAT scan is for."

I could tell that this doctor was upset. He told me that my father probably thinks he was going to be buried alive, because the instrument used to do a CAT scan looks like a glass coffin. He told me they always explain this to the patients. He asked me to explain it to my father and he went on eating his apple.

My father was awake and holding on to my hand while I was talking to the doctor. When the doctor left, I thought for a moment and gathered my thoughts on exactly how to explain this to him. I started by explaining to my father that if the doctors wanted to kill him they had lots of opportunities to

do that. I explained to him that what they did on Saturday morning was to take a complete picture of his body with this box that looks like a coffin, but it is a machine – a camera. I could see that I was getting through because the look on my father’s face changed and he let go of my hand and fell into a deep sleep.

The next day at the same time the doctor came around and asked me how my father was doing. I told him that my father was calm now and that he had rested quite a bit the day before. The doctor apologized; he said that this could have been avoided if the procedure was explained to my father prior to the CAT scan. I told the doctor that I was worried about this, and that my father may never be the same. He smiled and said if your father recovers from his wounds he will block off this bad experience from his mind. He said our mind has a tremendous ability to block off the things we don’t want to remember, and if your father thought he was being buried alive he will block it off – let’s concentrate on his physical wounds and worry about his mind later if we have to.

My father was in that hospital for one month. We flew him by ambulance helicopter to Toronto Doctors’ Hospital where his family doctor worked. My father was there for a couple of months. From there he went to Hillcrest Recovery Centre and came home and lived to be 87 years old. My father lived the last 10 years of his life with my mother at my sister Helena’s - where he died – October 23, 1994.

It was my weekly habit to visit my parents and I would go for a walk with my father as long as the weather permitted. We would do this and talk about life in general. He would tell me his hurts and I would comfort him with my successes. I know how much he enjoyed hearing about the good things I accomplished and that’s all I shared with my father. However, one day about 10 years after the accident, I was already working on my idea of writing a book to help people help themselves. At that time the title was going to be *A Message of Hope*. Anyway, I remembered what the doctor had said about us blocking out the experiences we did not want to remember and so I asked my father to tell me his feelings about what happened in the Boston hospital. He

looked as if to reprimand me and said I don't want to talk about that anymore – ever again.

And this was all the proof I needed to convince myself that indeed our mind has the power to serve us well. Sometimes it is affected badly – especially when we are young and vulnerable. We can be conditioned in a negative way by the ignorance of the adults around us who do not know any better.

Why am I this way? I thought at first that this question should be asked of the poor, unhappy, and confused. I now think that every human being should ask this question and pursue their destiny once they know what makes them tick, so that they can accentuate the positive and destroy the negative. So that we can all maximize our potential as humans – different from all other creatures.

Your Conditioning can be changed

“But you need to know what it is you want to change”

You are in control of your own destiny regardless of your conditioning. I once asked a psychiatrist what he did for his patients and his reply was “I get paid to tell them what they already know.” We know what conditioned us; we just don't pay enough attention. It could have been a simple thing but repeated several times it can have a lasting and negative or positive affect. Negative reinforcements such as you will not go very far in life – you are a bad kid, you are ugly, you are lazy, you never clean up after yourself, stop it, don't do that, look how clumsy you are, can't you be more like your brother, or I don't like you can be very damaging to young people. Add your own comments until you see the ones that apply to you and see if this is holding you back. Don't forget your teachers or that adult that tried to hurt you or did hurt you. Realize that once your umbilical chord is cut you are free! You must know why you want or need to change for uncertainty is a terrible place to be. If you are uncertain about anything you really can get sick and weak.

“I think therefore I am.” Rene Descartes

“Think you can or think you can't. Either way you will be right.” Henry Ford

“Your thoughts determine the outcome of your endeavours.” Fernando Rego

When you try to help others help is on its way to you

Preparing myself to write this book helped me deal with my own problem later on. If I had not been preparing to write this book I would not have been able to deal with my health problem the way I did. I am sure of that.

When you least expect it, something happens that can throw your life around. When I was diagnosed with my blood condition I started to look at all of the things under my control to see what I could do to deal with life's decisions to the best of my ability. The first decision I had to make was what to do with the business. Jr. and Paul get along well and they could make a good living with the store. I have a good insurance policy in place and so I started planning. When it came time to reflect on the future without me and our tailor, Benny, I realised the boys could have a problem, after all we are bespoke tailors. The fact is when Benny retires there will be no more tailors and so I thought where there is a problem there is always an opportunity. I started looking for the solution that would deal with the lack of tailors and I thought if stores could provide better measurements to the factories, which are all automated and computerized, then the need for tailors would be greatly reduced and in time eliminated.

What was needed was a standard method of measuring people, because so far there was no standard way of measuring. I have tried to teach people how to measure for clothing over the years and the only real success I ever had, was with my sons. It takes too long to learn the art of measuring well. So, I turned this art into a science which can easily be taught. I developed a simple mechanical unit with an upright and a set of arms that move in and out parallel to the floor. It was invented to hold the measuring tape in the proper place while the person measuring can see what they are doing and this way takes proper measurements. I worked on this unit for quite sometime on my own and one day I asked my son Paul to lean on it so that I could measure him and I noticed for the first time that one of his hips was higher than the other. Of course, Paul was impressed with this and became interested in co-operating with me. Paul designed software that could be used to maximize the use of this mechanical tailor's aid, which is now called The Fitter™. We spent a

lot of money and put in a lot of hard work in developing The Fitter™. By July 2003 we showed The Fitter™ at the Collective Men's Show in New York City. We were not really ready but we showed it because we had booked the show 4 months earlier. Because we were not really ready for the market, we did not try very hard to sell any at that time. It was a good idea, a lot of retailers were exposed to the invention – and it was great.

We started preparations to come back to the next show in New York planned for January. The next show coincided with Market week. This time we decided to show at the Rihga Royal Hotel in conjunction with Samuelsohn, the clothing manufacturer. We had sent out literature to the effect that we would measure those retailers after they did their buying at Samuelsohn and they, the Samuelsohn reps, would promote The Fitter™ to them. We had a good plan until the worst that could happen happened.

You guessed it; The Fitter™ never made it to the show this time. The first time we sent The Fitter™ we used a private logistics company. For the January show we used a big national company and we sent it with 3 extra days. The time was more than the courier needed and we made arrangements with the hotel to accept this big shipment of 7 boxes. This almost destroyed our company and all the courier offered me was \$500. We were hoping to sell 20 units at the show. We were only able to sell one and that was because the buyer had seen it at the July show.

I don't think I am a fatalist and of course our family is not cursed but certainly we do find some situations more challenging than others. After the July show we returned to Toronto. In September, we attended a dinner put on by Copley and a few other suppliers featuring Jack Mitchel an American retailer who has written a book on customer service entitled "Hug Your Customers." As a prop, Jack uses a tape around his neck when he is on his speaking engagements. We met Nat Peno of Holt Renfrew at that dinner and 2 weeks later she came to see The Fitter™ with 5 other associates. One of the associates was Brian, who was my assistant at Harry Rosen many years ago. Now he was in a position that could help us with a favourable decision if Holt Renfrew was to buy The Fitter™.

In the meantime, Brian left Holt Renfrew. We did not know what Holt Renfrew was going to do. Fortunately they continued to be interested and brought in their President and CEO to make the final decision. The meeting took place on a Thursday and he indicated that he was very impressed with the concept. The following Monday morning, I read in the paper that Mr. Jennings, the CEO of Holt Renfrew, was leaving to join Saks Fifth Ave. I thought “now what else could go wrong?” With any organization the incoming CEO may veto what the one leaving had started. This time, it was not the case. We had also measured the CFO the day that Mr. Jennings came to see The Fitter™ and when we delivered the suit the CFO was very impressed and gave the OK to install The Fitter™ at Holt Renfrew. We delivered two units to the Bloor Street store in March 2004.

I had planned to call on Mr. Jennings in July when we were coming to New York again but he beat me to the punch. In May, we got a call from Saks Fifth Ave. A gentleman named Tom Ott and Peter Harris wanted to come to Toronto to see The Fitter™ as soon as possible. This was in response to a request from Mr. Jennings. They came and liked what they saw. They spoke to the people at Holt Renfrew, who had been using it for a few months and were really happy. So, in July we met with Mr. Jennings at the Rihga Royal Hotel. This time my son Paul drove The Fitter™ to New York.

So, a deal was started and on October 1st we delivered two Fitters™ to Saks Fifth Ave. At this present time we have two Fitters™ in Paris, France, one at CAST and one at Thierry Mugler, two in Saks Fifth Ave, four at Holt Renfrew in Vancouver, Montreal, two in Toronto, and two in Ottawa tp E.R. Fisher, and several others in the United States. Our very first client was Baumans in Little Rock, Arkansas. This store was voted in the top 25 clothing retailers in the U.S. according to Gentlemen’s Quarterly magazine.

It is a modest start but it is a success. I predict that one day every menswear store will have The Fitter™, because thanks to the combination of the mechanical device and the software program designed and coordinated by my son Paul, we have a winning combination. The clients like to be measured by The Fitter™ and it is easy to learn because the person in the store takes the measurements the same way every time. It’s easy to learn and there is a great

video that teaches people how to use it with ease. Also, the manufacturers like it because they can trust these measurements and the forms are nice and neat. Yes, it is a winning combination. Everything happens for a reason and it serves you, you just have to look for the opportunity behind the problem.

How the Subconscious Works and how it can be affected at Early Childhood

We have heard of reverse psychology. We know that people don't like to be told what to do unless it's something we really like. A child is always asking how things get done because they want to learn if the experience is pleasant. If they get a polite answer to their question and it makes sense to them they have a tendency to seek more and more knowledge because it's pleasant. It becomes something they like to do.

After a chore my mother would praise me and give me a hug. The next time she needed a chore done, she had no trouble getting me to do it. My mind was rigged to do those chores without complaining. Throughout my life certain things were done as a result of that conditioning. Now at age 63, after raising a family, my greatest desire is to help others help themselves because I admit I am looking for the recognition that will come with the success of this book. You see, I share these thoughts and feelings with you, not to brag, complain or ask you to help me, but to help you find out about yourself. I shared them with you so that you can see that indeed my mother's conditioning at such a tender age is still working today. I am happy about it, so I let it run my life, and if I was not happy, I know I could change it. That's why I am convinced that my examples will serve to illustrate to you how important it is for you to know the source of your own conditioning.

Experience #1

After I started working towards my book I had this dream that one day I will be in Brazil speaking to the poor kids. I thought about this a lot. One day, while I was still running, I guess it was in 1998, I had to stop in the middle of the run because my heart was racing so fast that I was running out of breath. As I slowed down I realized why I was so tired. In my mind, as I was

running, I was giving the emotional talk to the kids in Brazil. I was living the emotion as if I was there. I was speaking in Portuguese to give credibility to my talk. I would say “Boys - look at me today and imagine that one day I was as poor as you. My first pair of shoes was at 12 years old and today I own a store. I wrote a book. I am here speaking to you and all the formal schooling I had was Grade 3. So there is hope for every one of you, but you must want to help yourself”. Then I spoke about the Chinese proverb: Give a man a fish, feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, feed him for life.

I believe that if you give a man a fish you feed him once, but you also condition him to wait for his next meal or go hungry or steal. But if you teach him how to fish, he will feed himself for life and become an entrepreneur. He will catch more fish than he needs and he will sell them. So don't go begging for a little money. Learn how to make lots of money, so that you can have what you want, when you want it and you can be proud and walk tall because you have earned the right.

We have within our own mind the fortune necessary to achieve all of our desires. But we need to discover the power. Just as you were not born this big and you grew up to the size you are now, you can grow into the person you want to be – if you really want to. I had to stop running. I was out of breath. I ask you this question: Do you think I was passionate about my book? I guess I was and still am. You know that in 2001 I was diagnosed with a blood problem. If I was not passionate about helping others, do you think I would still be working on this book? You tell me.

Experience #2

During 2004, my invention took a lot out of me and as I mentioned, I was no longer running but I continued to walk 5 K a day, 5 days a week. So during my walks I would strategize my day's events. During that time, my son Paul and I were having a lot of disagreements and differences of opinions. You know what I mean – we were having arguments. So on this day during my strategy session, I got into an argument with my son, and like the time before, when I was having my talk with the Brazilian poor kids, I started to get angry.

Because during my session I was visualizing my son disagreeing with me and I started to get angry at him – and this was at 6:00 a.m. I was all alone in the streets of Mississauga and at that time my son was probably still sleeping and I was having this big argument with him.

Do you think I am sharing this episode because I am proud of it? No! I am sharing this with you to prove to you that we become what we think about. I am lucky enough to know this and I actually became more careful with future arguments with my son because I was aware of my state of mind and that it was easy to disagree with him, due to the fact that he is younger and lacks experience in some subjects and he has a strong mind set. So, it's not unusual for us to disagree.

Experience #3

There are 2 men with the same education and same job. They are both married and they each have 2 kids. One goes to work and concentrates on his job. The other one has a doubt in his mind that his wife is having an affair. Who do you think does a better job? So what's in your mind? If it's to be it's up to me.

Your mind can be your best friend or your worst enemy. What frame of mind are you in? You have no idea what life will throw at you, but your frame of mind will hand you the results that matter – good or bad. It's up to you on how you will deal with it. The mind is so much like a diamond in the rough and there are so few jewellers to help polish the diamonds to their real value. I look at life as a gift that comes wrapped and well taped; all the edges are well secured. We need help un-wrapping this gift. Some of us are lucky to have parents that help polish the diamond. They know how to make our diamond in the rough shine early enough and we continue from there and maximize our gift. Others don't have such help and sometimes live and die never to un-wrap their gift. It is a pity.

I sometimes look at the mind as a garden and some of us had parents who were able to tell us how to take care of this beautiful garden. We also come

across people who did not have the same kind of parents and these people are not sure of how to tend their garden. It's easier to neglect something than it is to work at it and good clean gardens require work and effort. You must weed, and feed, and water. We know all of this but our latest found friend or friends show us that we really don't have to care for our gardens. They suggest that our parents were silly to work so hard. After all, we are going to die anyway, so why bother? And so if we stop bothering, we start to hang out with these people who have lots of weeds in their garden. Soon enough the weeds pollinate and come into our garden. Now their garden was always rough and they didn't know any better. But our garden was beautiful at one time and now we really don't like what we see, but we think it's too late and we ignore it even more now. Our garden not only has weeds but the plants our parents planted and watered have now turned into shrubs that really cover any flowers that might try to flourish from time to time and we grow unhappy. We actually start to look up at this person that got us to neglect our garden. We think that they are smarter than us because they adjust to getting along with a bad garden where we had a taste of the good garden and we just don't know what to do. I say this to you "Tell me who your friends are and I will tell you what you will become."

How Our Mind Works

In my childhood we had no T.V., movies, or access to books because our parents did not have the money. The other kids and I would get together on the street and the older ones would tell stories. These stories were mainly about witches and spirits of the dead. It was believed that if you were bad you would go to Hell. We even thought that certain ladies were witches and we were afraid of them. I remember clearly this spot on my street. There were about 50 meters of the street without houses and there were no lights. Sometimes at night, I had to go to my grandmother's to get something for my mother and I was really afraid to pass by those 50 meters. I remember clearly feeling a wave of heat through my body and, of course, this would reinforce that indeed there were spirits that would get you, and I would run. Of course I outgrew those fears, but at that time they were as real as they could be. I was also scared to go by the cemetery at night. I did not admit this to the other kids, but in my mind

I was afraid those horror stories were real. I can't help but think that if that stuff is at all left in your mind – as real as it was when you were a child – you can be less sure of yourself.

I remember asking my father about the souls of the dead people being harmful to little kids and my father telling me “Do not be afraid of the dead, they are where they belong. It is the ones that are alive that will hurt you. Do not believe those silly stories.” That was good enough for me then and now – I am sure of it.

I hope this little story will help you relate to some of your childhood silly stories and that it may help you clear any doubts put in your mind when you were vulnerable – like I was.

More important are the things people told you that you could not prove or disprove. Things like your parents are stupid and so are you – you are poor, you are good for nothing, if you don't go to school you are dumb, you will never get a good job.

I am reminded about a story about the President of Camara. He had a son named Guilherme, who was 1 year older than me. Occasionally I would play with him in his backyard and sometimes the maids would give me something to eat. But I most enjoyed chasing birds in their glass houses in which pineapple grew. When the pineapples were picked we would go into these houses and chase little birds that would go in and stay trapped inside. We could catch them and we loved to tie a string to their legs and hold on to them and play. Remember, there were no toys; we used what we could. Now I think it was cruel to do that to the birds.

The reason I am telling you this story is that one day, the last day I played in his backyard, his mother told me to go and play with my own kind. I did not belong there. At the time, she really hurt me. I was poor but that's all. I was not a bad kid.

It so happens that these people were very rich by Azorian standards. I have since heard that Guilherme immigrated to Canada but he died a poor and broken man. I am really sorry that this happened to him as a human being.

“What right did that woman have to say that to me? Who was she really?” She could have hurt me permanently by making me believe that I was inferior to her son.

How about you? What kinds of things were said to you that had an effect on your mind? And you really never knew how much it would hurt you. I don't think that gave me a scar, but I remember it so it proves that our mind stores many events – good and bad. The good ones serve us well and the bad ones hurt us. You can fix this if you really want to. Those people who hurt you had no idea what they were doing, and even if they knew what they were doing – who were they? What wisdom did they have that you should respect their opinion?

Try this Exercise:

Be in a secure place (where you have no reason to open your eyes, until you are ready,) be by yourself. Close your eyes. Make sure you are safe and that you will not be interrupted. Now go back in memory and only look for an exceptional event – anything that is positive.

Relive this experience:

Look for all the details, look for nature if it took place outside, look at all the surroundings and consider whatever happened. Really look for this over and over and you will see that the real important things will stand out from the not so important. Don't be in a hurry to stop this experience. If you learn to do this well – it's like going to a movie and you are the star. Do this once a day for one month. Only look for good events. If you run out of good events review previous ones. But do this exercise for one month.

Then do the same thing for bad events and this too should be done for one month. You alone will know how you feel in both situations but I assure you, you will be amazed at the power of your subconscious mind – when you can recall all of the details of previous experiences.

I am still amazed with myself when I do this. Of course, now I spend more time living the present. But once in a while, I wander into my past and see that indeed people can be trapped in bad situations that have nothing to do with the reality of today. They are still carrying the luggage put on their backs by others that did not even know what they were doing. The sad reality is that because these events are stored in our minds, they affect the way we behave and they can make us or break us. I ask you not to just read this book. Please try to use your mind on these simple exercises. This is how I started to understand what really makes me tick. This is my main goal for you; to learn how to do this using your mind, which is your birth given right to be free to think for yourself, learn from all you see, but always arrive at your own conclusion.

You will not be hurt by reading this book- I hope. But, if you can put into practice some of these lessons - I know you will be on your way to freedom and happiness for the rest of your life. Notice I said "On your way" because it is the journey to happiness that keeps you interested and it is a lifetime commitment.

An athlete works hard to get to the point of perfection, but he or she does not stop until the competition or - he or she wins. And that's what I think you want to pursue for yourself. A happy state of mind on this beautiful journey that is life itself.

A Very Religious Man

I am reminded of a story about a very religious man. He was only 40 years old when he died. There was a huge temporal storm, and his street was flooding. Someone came in a truck and offered to take him away (from his house that was filling up with water). He refused saying "God will take care of me." Then someone came in a boat, by this time he had moved up to the second floor. He was looking out the window and this person offered him a ride out of there and he said, "God will look after me." Then a helicopter came by, rolled down the ladder, and offered him to climb the ladder to safety. By this time he was on the roof and again he refused to hold on the ladder saying "God

will look after me.” And so the house washed away and he died. He went to Heaven as he was a good person. St. Peter welcomed him and was about to show him his beautiful place that of course he deserved. He thanked St. Peter and said “I do have a complaint St. Peter” and St. Peter patiently asked him “what is it?” He said “well, I was only 40 years old, I really should not have died yet” St. Peter patiently reminded him that God sent him a truck and he refused it; God sent him a boat and he refused it; God sent him a helicopter and he refused it. God only helps those who help themselves; even though you are really good and obeyed all the commandments you refused to help yourself.”

The Donkey that Refused to Die

One day, a blind old donkey fell into a well. The well was dry and it was too deep for the owner to pull the donkey out. The owner decided to bury the donkey there – so that he would not suffer and actually stink up the farm. But, as the soil fell on the donkey he would shake it off and move on top of it. And so when the hole was filled the donkey walked out of it and served his owner for a few more years.

I hope you liked my stories. Don't do what the 40 year old did – nothing. Do what the blind donkey did and live free and in control of your own destiny, because if you don't someone else will take advantage of you and make you do what they want, and not even God will help you, even if you are a good person. You must want it if you are to get it.

How I Look at Life

I look at the gift of life as a diamond in the rough. Until discovered, we really don't know the value of our mind. Every human is the CEO of a great enterprise and yet, many people think they are poor. In my opinion, all humans are very wealthy, it's just some of us never really discover the value of our gift, which is life. The mind that comes with each human life is a treasure chest filled with all the riches required for a happy and prosperous life. Unfortunately, not enough time and effort has been put in place to help parents raise their children to maximize this great gift.

Once in a while someone does go on to be a tremendous success. If we adults understood how the mind could be our best friend or our worst enemy, we would spend more time learning how to help children maximize this great gift. Instead, we are busy with our own careers and we ignore the potential of our children. We let others mould these marvellous minds into something a lot less than what they can be. What a pity.

The mind is the single most important part of us and yet so little is done to nurture it. The body requires food and clothing and we make sure we have our food and clothing. However, the mind is invisible and so, “out of sight, out of mind” as the saying goes! Why? Don’t get me wrong, there have been many studies performed to prove that indeed the mind is very valuable. I have read quite a few books on the subject. The following books come to my mind: Working with Emotional Intelligence, The Power of Positive Thinking by Dr. Napoleon Hill; A Discourse On Life by Rene Descartes. Also, 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Covey, The 17 Habits by Dr. Napoleon Hill, and of course there are many books on the psychology of the mind.

However, I have never seen anything on how to maximize the power within the mind for both parents and children in a very simple and plain way. Simply put, if it’s to be it’s up to me. Perhaps there are other books on this subject but I have not seen one that is easy enough for everyone to understand. I am sorry , there is one The Bible. Especially the passages pertaining to the life of Jesus and his preaching equality and love for one another. Love your neighbour as you love yourself; if you don’t love yourself how can you love your neighbour?

You cannot love yourself if you hurt yourself with drugs and other abuses such as over- eating, or over- working. You must take care of your gift of life and all that’s precious to you. Because it is the beginning, it is life that sustains your mind and spirit. Your physical body needs to be treated with respect if it is to serve you well. It is said that some people take better care of their cars and houses than they take care of their body. It is so simple to see and yet ignored. I think it all comes down to the fact that we don’t really know the value of the gift of our life and I say gift because it is really important to realize that we had nothing to do with being born. So, it is a gift – don’t abuse it, use it

well. It was given to you to use not to abuse. If you do you will pay the price. If you disagree with my opinion, then perhaps it is time that you pick up pen and paper and share with the world your point of view on the gift of human life. Perhaps we can start the best school ever on how to maximize the power of the human mind so that this world can indeed become a paradise and all humans can live in peace and love one another. We can start by loving ourselves and show it in the way we look by taking proper care of this great diamond in the rough. This makes a lot of sense to me.

What's on your Mind

What's on your mind? I don't mean right now, I mean what's on your mind most of the time. What really consumes the majority of your waking time? This would be a great place to start if you really want to find out what makes you really tick. Whatever it is that occupies your mind the most, for example: if you worry about failing or being broke or losing what you have – chances are that you received a lot of protection when you were young. You were given things without working for them or it could be the exact opposite. So, there is no clear cut way to indicate what makes you tick. It is your life and only you will know how to discover what makes you tick. If you depend on someone else's opinion, sooner or later you will question the validity of your reasoning and that puts you right back in the darkness of uncertainty. You don't want to live in uncertainty because ignorance of oneself is the worst kind of ignorance.

You don't have to know how to cook to eat; you can buy any food you want if you have the money. You can be the richest man in the world. If you don't know who you are, then what are you? You must discover it yourself and believe me there are many wealthy people who don't know what makes them tick. Take Elvis Presley, Belucci and countless other people who had all the earthly possessions and still take their own lives because they cannot stand the darkness of the ignorance of their existence and no matter how much they have they die unhappy. What a pity. It is such a simple thing to do, if only you put your mind to it. Like those successful people who accumulate fortunes. There is nothing wrong with accumulating fortunes provided you don't hurt others along the way.

I am reminded of a story about a rich gentleman who is about to die. He had a huge fortune. Not even his family knew how much he was worth. So, on his death bed he calls his eldest son and tells him that he will give his son 1 million dollars if he can find a way to arrange for his father to take with him all he owns when he passes away, which he thinks will be very soon. His son thinks for a moment and says “I’ve got it, you transfer all your wealth into one bank and I will make out a cheque for the full amount payable to you only and I’ll personally put it in your coffin when you expire.” This gentleman obviously never found out the true meaning of life. It is to live life to its fullest and leave this earth the same way we come in, with no material wealth, with enough power to achieve anything we want including peace of mind and understanding of when and how to let go of everything and embrace our spirit. What’s in your mind?

Letting go is hard to do

Especially if you are not yet ready to let go. Everything happens for a reason and it serves you!

At the beginning of February I caught a cold. It was the worst cold I have ever had in my entire life. I was so sick, I was sure the end was near. Cecilia made an appointment for me to see Dr. Kennedy. She gave me a prescription for antibiotics. I took them for about one week and by Saturday I started to feel a little better. We had a show in Toronto and one in Dallas. Paul was in Dallas with Jeff (a sales associate from the store), and I was in Toronto with Nathalie and Gerry (both SIT employees). On Saturday my son, Fernando, set up the show for me. This really made me realise how vulnerable we are when we are sick. On Sunday, I went to the trade show and did the best I could until about 5 o’clock when I left Nathalie and Gerry and went home. If you know me, you would know that I had to be really sick to leave Nathalie and Gerry at the show. By Monday I was so sick that I went to the Mississauga Hospital. I was given more prescriptions. The next day I did not go to work and I really started to think about my life and what’s left of it and that I must change. If you keep doing what you have been doing you will keep getting the same results. So I decided to back away from SIT and let Paul sink

or swim with it. We had a pre-arranged meeting with the shareholders and I had decided to tell them of my decision regardless of what the doctor said about my blood on the coming Monday.

I had a follow-up appointment with Dr. B. He was shaken up when he looked at the results of my blood tests. Through my entire blood ordeal, my platelets and my white cells had been shining stars and now they went down dramatically. Dr. B said “I want you to stop taking whatever you are taking and come back to see me on Monday. Have the blood test and come right up, I need to deal with this, I don’t like what I see.” Well, imagine how I felt to hear this from the only doctor who had given me hope 3 years ago. I was really worried. I went home and told Cecilia that I had decided to have a glass of wine with my meal and to hell with Dr. H. I have never been this sick in my life and I think cutting out all of my wine at once was not the right thing to do. So, I had one glass of wine that night and every night after that. I went to see Dr. B on Monday and he was happy with the blood test results. My white cells and my platelets had come up to where they were before.

During this period of trouble I made up my mind to break away from my business and really concentrate on my book. As it happened, we had a meeting arranged to update our shareholders of SIT before going on my 2-week vacation to Aruba. The meeting had been planned before I got really sick. I informed our shareholders of my health having deteriorated and that I wanted to concentrate on my book and live whatever is left of my life the best way I can.

Today I feel great. It is March 4th and between the sun, the good food, no hassles, and my dearest wife sitting next to me quietly and patiently listening to me, I can’t help but think life is so wonderful and I am the luckiest man on earth. If there is a heaven it can’t be much better than this. Tomorrow I will concentrate on why I am writing this book and what good has come to me for being unselfish in trying to help others and how much this has helped me.

I walk 8 km every morning and I swim between chapters of my book and life is wonderful. By the way, every morning when I am walking I say “Good morning” to everyone I see and yes, some people are slow to respond and

some might think that I am crazy. But the way I look at it is this: if I say good morning 200 times how can I have a bad one? This is priceless: this morning a lady sneaks up from behind me and said “I am passing you so that I get my good morning – you are a breath of fresh air” this lady passed me and again crossed and again I said “good morning” and I could see that she was really laughing inside. She just had this real happy face and of course this proved what I already knew - what’s wrong with saying good morning to strangers? If nothing else it would make me feel good and if I made one person happy – wow! So I still have 1 week to go and I will continue with my good mornings. There are a lot of familiar faces already because where I walk is the same path every one uses and I do 2 laps – which is 8 km. So I do see the same people at least twice. I also noticed that walkers and runners are people who have a good disposition. For the most part they are among the select few that try to do something about their health and I believe that walkers and runners realize that they have something in common.

Raising a Family

Today I know that Cecilia and I were not really ready or trained properly to raise a family, but I think we did a good job with so little training – thanks to the fact that Cecilia stayed home to look after the kids. One day when Fernando was 20, we asked the kids why they thought they turned out O.K. and they responded unanimously that having their mother home kept them out of a lot of trouble. They had no time to get in trouble. Everything was supervised – mom was there for lunch and for when they came home from school. They also had to do their homework before going out to play.

A few special things I did were the reverse of what my father did. Whenever we misbehaved, my father would beat us. We were afraid of his punishment; perhaps we were even afraid of him. I did not want my kids to be afraid of me, but there had to be some respect of course. One day when Fernando was about 10 years old he had misbehaved. Cecilia told me when I came home from work and she was upset about it. I don’t even remember what he had done but he deserved punishment. I sent him to his room and told him to wait for me. I had my dinner and I decided that I didn’t want to hit him. I

knew I would not hit him hard enough and if he lost the fear of a spanking – what was I to do after?

So when I got upstairs, with my belt in my hand – he was trembling and scared. I discussed the punishment and made a deal with him. I told him that if I hit him he would never forget it, because I would mark his body with my belt buckle. This time I was not going to hit him and he agreed that he should not behave this way again. I am so happy to report that there was not a next time. Fernando did misbehave in other ways and we talked about it – in fact, I would often sit Paul down to hear my lectures to Fernando. I would start by telling Paul that the reason I wanted him to hear this was so that I did not have to repeat it to him later on. This seemed to work well. One day after such a lecture, Cecilia told me that Paul really gave Fernando a lecture of his own saying that he was tired of having to sit through these talks and asked him when he was going to smarten up.

Another lesson I learned about raising children was in church. There was a sermon that Father George improvised that I liked and never forgot. It was about a successful man who was having trouble with his 25 year old son. He came to the priest for help. He told the priest that he put his son in the best schools, gave him a car when he turned 18 and yet he is a bum. The priest asked him “Tell me if you can remember what you owe your success to?” The man replied that he was the eldest in the family and his father died young. He had to work hard to help raise his family and by the time he was 24 he was a construction contractor and built his own house etc. The priest then told this man “What a pity that you did not teach your son the most valuable lesson you learned by having to work hard.” I will never forget that sermon. I knew I was not rich, but I was going to make sure my sons learned about work and the value of it. So, they both had a paper route, delivered pizza and they worked part-time in stores as soon as they turned 15. I insisted that they get jobs so they would learn responsibility. I am sure this was good for them. I did give them freedom to make some choices. I think young people really need guidance – even though they don’t like it and sometimes rebel. As a good parent and adult you must give them guidance – not just with good examples but also discipline - even if you are not going to be popular for a

couple of days. It's never too early to start and kids really want to have guidance. Don't ever give up on your kids. My son Fernando was harder to raise than Paul. Sometimes I would get frustrated and tell him that it was easier for me to give up on him than to reprimand him. I did not like to reprimand him. I wanted to love him and do things with him, but that did not happen very often. I had to lecture him more than I liked to. When they became of age to have a car, we helped them but made sure that they had some responsibility for the car such as insurance and gas.

When Fernando turned 21, we made an effort to make this birthday a special occasion for him. We got him a one-week vacation in Acapulco by himself. Fernando was born on Christmas day and I think he missed out on the parties because his birthday was on Christmas day. One day Fernando gave me the biggest compliment of my life. He said "Thanks dad for never giving up on me." I really appreciated that compliment and to this day I am thankful that he recognized my efforts. It really made all the efforts that I had put in to helping him grow, seem really worthwhile. It made me feel great that he benefited and recognized my efforts. And still today, before I give up on anything, I make sure that I have used all that I know to prevent the worst and it works. If you try a little harder, it always works.

I am sure any parent reading this will agree that it is hard raising kids, but that single comment and thank you erased all the memories of worrying about him growing up. As I said earlier, having Paul listen to the lectures paid off. As Paul grew up, I had few concerns. Of course, no one is perfect and his concerns came later on - when he became a man. His character is very set in his ways and this has made it hard for both of us working together. It's something like a commercial that was popular some years ago when an auto mechanic said "You can pay me now or you can pay me later." Pay me now or pay me later - that's what happened with Paul. I love them both very much and I am very proud of them for being the way they are. I am thankful to God for their lives and their personalities and for only giving me a little grief. I am sure Cecilia had a lot to do with the way they turned out. I wish I had more time to enjoy them when they were growing up. I did watch them play hockey and baseball. We went on vacation together a few times - very few since Cecilia

stayed home. We just could not afford to go away. All of our expenses were well budgeted. We preferred to be comfortable at home rather than go away and spend money we did not have. I just could not justify paying interest to go on vacation.

One Step at a Time

We perform best when we are dealing with one thing at a time in a calm and collected manner. So we should go through the process of eliminating the routine things such as showering, brushing our teeth etc from our conscious mind. If you have to prepare your breakfast – lay it out as much as possible the day before and do all of those things at the same time, the same way. So it becomes routine – not requiring your conscious mind. Exercise – when I used a trainer for my routine and was left alone the first week, I had to have the chart with me and looked at what to use, how heavy a weight to set up etc. After I memorized what to do, it was much faster and simpler and I have increased the weight – according to my body ability. Wow, so simple and yet so useful. The more things we do automatically, the more our conscious mind is free to deal with the new and unexpected things that keep coming every day.

To break old habits, it is the same process. Determine what it is that you want to achieve such as losing weight, stopping smoking, or stop worrying. Once you learn how to order your subconscious mind to help you with a new habit, you can also order and organize it to help you to stop the old habit. If we are to deal with a habit in a permanent way, the resolution has to come from within. Yes, you still have to persuade yourself that you want to do it. That decision has to be reasoned out properly.

It is no accident, it is part of a plan and that's the way it is. We should look at mistakes as a good thing. If we learn from our mistakes then we become better informed, but if we know we made a mistake and continue to do it knowing it is wrong – that's a big mistake. This will cause the heavy pain of regret. For example, if you smoke and you know it's bad for you but you keep doing it, regret is around the corner. Sometimes it can cause your life to be shortened and made miserable with bad health. Why drink, smoke, overeat, or do harm unto others knowingly? All of those things are bad for you. If you know it and do it you are asking for the pain of regret and you will get it if

you live long enough.

If you are looking at the grass over the septic tank because it looks greener there, stop looking and start watering your own grass and fertilize it with care and soon your grass will really be green, not a fantasy. It will be real and it will be yours. Wow, isn't it so simple when you know what to do to be happy? You can think yourself happy and you can think yourself sad. It's your choice and that will come from within. But, you can control it if you want to. What do you really want? Ask yourself until the answer comes to you. But, ask smartly - the Bible says "Ask and you shall receive" not "Bitch and you will get it." - Get it?

The Power and Fear of Suggestion

According to the Oxford Dictionary power is the ability to do something. It also means vigor, energy, or strength. Fear is defined as an unpleasant emotion caused by the nearness of danger or expectation of pain. All human beings are exposed to both the power and the fear. No one is born powerful or afraid. We become a bit of both through "Suggestion". Fear is induced through our imagination. Did you know that 80 percent of our fears never really happen and 15 percent never happen exactly as you saw them in your minds' eye? So, you can't really prepare for 95 percent of your fears.

When what you are afraid of does happen, you need to be prepared to handle it. You need to be at your best and rested - not worried and weak. Death of loved ones and natural disasters are fears that we have no control over and cannot predict, and yet we must deal with these two fears in order to survive and be happy.

Death, Inferiority, and Fear

Death is the most certain thing that will happen to all living things. Over time there is nothing to fear or worry about because you are not required to do anything about dying. It will happen so forget about it, because only the body dies - your spirit is untouchable. We fear inferiority but we need to remember that there are no two people alike in the entire world. We are all unique. You

are neither superior nor inferior. You are unique. Our fear of failure can be debilitating at times, however, if you plan your endeavours there is no such thing as failure. There is something to be learned from every attempt that you make towards achieving your plans and you call those lessons. As we experience each lesson we become closer to solving our difficulties or set backs, as many positive thinkers call it.

*Any lesson learned,
is a victory earned.
Why be concerned,
about a fire burned?*

In the final analysis there are only two fears you must do something about, which require you to be at your best and possess all your power to be able to deal with them. So fear nothing, but fear itself.

Now, about the power of suggestion: Once you know who you are and what you want from this life, you will learn how to maximize your powers and minimize your fears. For it is knowledge that fights ignorance and it is power that overcomes fear and it is learning that makes you human and spiritually driven until you meet your maker.

Visit to Dr. B

I have come to the hospital for a visit with Dr B. First, I must go to the clinic to give the routine sample for the testing. I am number 103; they are currently serving number 95.

My left shoulder is really giving me grief. I think my cold is 99% gone, thank God ! It has been a full month since I got it. This is the worst cold I have ever dealt with in my life. Too bad I had this cold to interfere with my routine of walking and exercising. I was really doing well. However, such is the course of daily life.

My last visit here was December 16, 2004. Since then, I have lost 18 lbs. I am anxious to hear what Dr B has to say because I was supposed to have

started the daily shots that he had recommended but Dr H recommended that I stop drinking wine instead, and I have.

At the blood station you really get to see all kinds of patients; old, young, real sick and people like me who can take it, well we act like we can take it. It is quite an experience to see the variety of illnesses in the faces of these different people.

Its 9:30 and I moved up to Dr B's section, second floor haematology department. Across from me sits a young man who suffers from the same thing as the more mature gentleman sitting beside him. They exchange experiences about their treatment. They are clearly getting treatment every two weeks so I assume their case to be acute and that is as far as I am willing to explore or guess as to what it is they are dealing with. I notice each patient has a relative or a friend with them and I happen to be alone. That is OK with me; I really don't need company for my misery. I can handle what I am dealing with on my own and I don't think that exposing Cecilia to the misery in this place is such a great idea.

So my thoughts are back to myself and how fortunate I am to be able to deal with things on my own. I have this strong feeling that I will overcome all that comes my way until my book and my motivational speaking is done. I am interrupted by a lady offering cookies and cranberry juice. What a nice gesture! It is refreshing to see that people really care and here there are volunteers. What an example of kind human deeds. One thing I notice here is that everyone is kind to each other. For some reason we feel more equal in this place.

It is sad to see that it takes an illness of this magnitude to wake people up to the reality that we are mortals and that one day all will be left behind. Today there are a lot of people here. There are people from many different nationalities. Also, there is an equal mixture of sad and not so sad faces. I guess the relatives that come with the patients are the sprinkles of happy faces otherwise it would be a very sad place. What am I really doing here?

Today I feel strange. I am here because I have an appointment. I really have no choice. It is not under my control. I have mixed feelings about what Dr B is going to say. I hope it is good news and that he says that he doesn't need to see me for a while. Normally I am more positive than today. I guess it is this cold that is really making me feel so down.

My writing is somewhat morbid right now but it is what it is. I am making an effort right now to change my attitude and I am beginning to feel a difference. It is really amazing the difference I feel already. It is an example of how you can change your attitude if you make up your mind that you really want to change. I find this change in me is like a small miracle.

I do feel better and I hope that this passage can be used to help other people one day. These hospitals are full of sick people. They are not on vacation here so if they can have a positive thought as opposed to a negative thought then perhaps their visits to the hospital or clinic will be easier to tolerate. I really need to work on this to help others. It is when you are sick that you need the most help and if you can learn how to lift yourself out of these sad feelings then you will be able to better deal with your illness. It won't go away on its own but it can be easier to deal with.

I am now going to start thinking about my business challenges and to do some planning to really take my mind away from this place. My body has to be here but I am going to take my spirit elsewhere and strategize for The Fitter™ and its success. Paul arrives from Las Vegas today with Nathalie. I hope he brings good news about more sales of The Fitter™ but above all I hope he brings a new attitude for our business. We have a huge job to do to keep The Fitter™ going long enough to succeed, and God knows we need to succeed. I am determined to make this work and it really means that I must work with Paul to see beyond our current problems. I believe that six more months with Holt Renfrew and Saks Fifth Avenue on board everything will start to head in a positive direction.

I am thinking about tuxedo rentals, uniforms and stock specials. Oh what is the use, I can't concentrate. I am really trying but I can't help but hear, to my left, two people talking about their health problems. To my right, two more

strangers are exchanging opinions. Another person, 72 years old, is saying how he feels blessed that he has had 72 healthy years. It is next to impossible to stay focused on The Fitter™ with so much sickness all around me. So, I will make the best use of this time. I wish I had brought a book to read because writing here can be depressing and I don't want to be depressed. There have been plenty of let downs already. No one needs to hear my troubles to add to their own.

So I will try to speak to someone and perhaps I might even be able to help someone by being positive and encourage them to be positive about their ailments. I am going to give it a try; it is now 11:30 am.

It's now 12 o'clock and I find it impossible for me to even strike up a conversation with anyone because most of the sick people are listening to some music or their relatives are reading to them. The patients who are not doing anything are too serious and quiet. I don't feel that it is appropriate for me to start up a conversation of any kind and so I am back to writing my thoughts to pass the time. It could be 2 o'clock before I leave here. I am not surprised. It seems to be the case every time. As usual a group is starting some form of entertainment downstairs. Every time I come here, I hear groups doing different things. Today it is music. I think that one day I will do a talk about dealing with our illness and see if there is a way that I can help the others. I say this because I know my illness is temporary. I am certain of this and the talk will be something like there is always a tomorrow if you handle today with a positive attitude.

Life is like a diamond in the rough. Some of us find it early in life and explore it to its maximum value and yet others never really get to see the value of their diamond. They never really get to see the brilliant side of that ugly rock. That is such a waste. Unfortunately we will need a little help in polishing our diamond but sometimes that help comes too late or sometimes never.

I believe that each human life has sufficient value to become anything that person wants to be. I also believe that the reason we don't have a procedure manual for living is because we are all so uniquely different from one another and that only the individual can assess the value of their life.

When we do what we want to do of our own free will we can accomplish anything. If we are made to do something we don't really want to do we fail miserably because it is not our idea. There are many examples of people who have disabilities such as blindness or deafness and they make phenomenal accomplishments, yet people without disabilities can be so miserable and incomplete human beings. Why?

How disappointing it is for a life to be wasted because there was no one to help polish their diamond in the rough. One little gesture can make you or break you. How can I really make a difference and inspire governments or people of influence to help others? I know if it is to be it is up to me but if I can get the power behind my will I will be able to move mountains.

I am almost there with The Fitter™ (first), then my book, and then people working in harmony to make this world a better place in which to live. Isn't that what life is all about - to make this world a better, safer place for all human beings and for life in general.

I am disrupted by a doctor coming to see the person next to me to have her sign a consent form. This person looks really sick and this form is to enable her to receive more chemo-therapy treatments. She is visibly shaken and her mother looks helpless. This doctor thanks her and walks away. I am sure he has done this so many times that he does it as if he was ordering his lunch.

Her mother offers her a ginger ale. She takes a sip and calms down a bit. She has lost all her hair and looks really pale, almost ghost like.

You cannot ignore that there are some really sick people here. Life is so precious and so fragile and yet we take it for granted. We abuse it. We misuse it. We do things that hurt this precious gift. All people should be exposed to these waiting rooms before they get sick, especially people who, if they saw other humans gasping for air, might stop abusing their precious gift.

A fine volunteer lady comes out to say that they are running terribly late and that some of us should go for lunch. The very sick girl goes for lunch first. She will start treatment after 1:30 p.m., once the doctor has her blood results.

My name is not called so I continue to wait. It is now 12:45 p.m. I take a deep breath and wait and see.

It is 1 p.m. and a family comes in. It looks like the mother is in a wheelchair. She is very pale and fragile. The husband comes to the counter to check her in. She is too weak to even come to the counter. Her other companion makes her comfortable and they caress each other with such compassion. No words, just gestures of love and compassion from one to the other. They may be sisters. Again I can't help but notice how fragile people really get when their blood starts to fail. I have no idea what afflicts this woman. All I can see is how sick she appears. Occasionally I can't help but think of myself. Somehow, I need to get out of here and not come back if I can help it. I think that I have seen more than enough but I must just be patient and wait and see. The waiting room keeps filling up instead of emptying with so many sick people with similar health problems.

Three gentlemen of the Muslim religion come in but they do not look sick. I could not help but notice that one had a navy blue turban. One was a lighter blue and the other was a powder blue. I am working up enough courage to go and ask them why the different colour and the reason for it if any. The music outside has stopped and this place is really quiet even though it is full of people. I am not sure if I should go ask them or wait to see if I am called to go in. It should happen any minute, I hope.

Today I am hungry but I am not going anywhere in case they call my name. Right now – my name is called. This waiting reminds me of the time when I was in the army, working at the Officers club cloakroom. I wanted to go to the washroom so bad but I would not go for fear that someone would come and take the wrong coat and I would be held responsible, so I would hold on and on.

It is 1:30 p.m. and I am waiting now for the doctor in this room. It can take up to 30 minutes before the doctor comes in so I wait. At least my cold is better. I have not been coughing or sneezing. I notice an Indian family and an old lady is the patient. There are two young men with her who look like

her sons. They really seem to care about her and are really kind towards her. They are in the room next to mine.

I don't know why this particular family drew my attention. I guess it reminded me of how I used to take my father to his doctor visits long ago. My father passed away October 23, 1994. Prior to his dying I took him to the doctors every month for at least 14 years, ever since his major accident when he broke his pelvis and punctured his lung with a broken rib. This was in 1982 when my father went to his brother's funeral in Boston and my father fell from the second floor window. It was a terrible accident and it really disrupted my father's life after this fall. Dad never really recovered and I unofficially volunteered to take him to the doctors. The doctor wanted to see him every month and, of course, I would never dream of changing that. So I went with my father every time. I still have no regrets about having to do that for my father. I truly loved him and I know he felt good seeing me talk friendly with the doctors. It made my father feel that the doctor would take good care of him because he and I talked like friends. I could see, in my father's eyes, the comfort of me speaking to the doctors in such a casual way. You see we were brought up to think doctors were always serious and were to be regarded as special people - almost not human. I am talking about real old school, old mentality, like in the Azores.

Luckily my visits with my father were to the family doctor. There you are not exposed to the health problems that you see here at Princess Margaret. Anyway it's now 1:50 and no doctor yet so I am going to put this paper away and wait. He should not be much longer, I hope. Now I am getting hungry but not impatient. I am surprised with myself because I am normally very impatient. "Such is life" as my father would say. God gives the cold according to the cloth. So I find patience when I have no choice.

Dr. B is not happy with my white cell and platelets. I must come back on Monday to redo my blood tests. I must do this to see if it is related to the cold or something else. This was a shocker for me since I was not expecting white cell and platelet problems, especially after not having drinks for two months. I have decided to start having a glass of wine with my meals and see if there is going to be any difference on Monday when I go back for the blood tests.

Monday February 21, 2005

Another wonderful thing happened to me. I went for my blood test results and lo and behold they were back up to what they were in December. It's like a miracle, I am so happy.

Between Wednesday and Monday I thought about my life and my health and I realised that it was time to make a painful but important decision and I did. I decided to stop working on The Fitter™ now and let my son, Paul, take over. The last two years have been particularly hard for me with my health issues and trying to run two companies. It has just been too much.

Rego is doing particularly well under the direction of my eldest son, Fernando Jr. and SIT will do okay. I have also told my shareholders of my decision and I do feel good about having made the decision. The time is right for me and I can now really focus on my book and helping others. I was really frightened on Wednesday when Dr. B told me in a nervous way that my platelet and white cells were really low and that I had to come back on Monday for new tests. I have not felt well for over a month. I stopped going to the Y and I was going to bed at 7 o'clock in the evening. I took antibiotics, anti-inflammatory and painkillers . Nothing seemed to help. I was really sick - and now my blood.

Again everything happens for a reason and it serves you if you learn from it. I learned my lesson. Let the boys work for their success and I am going to enjoy whatever is left of my life with my wonderful wife. This summer I will enjoy the grand children between my book appearances; for now, I am on my way to Aruba for 2 weeks starting tomorrow February 26.



Thoughts Upon Completion

Everything Happens for a Reason and It Serves You

Today is August 28, 2005. My book was completed on August 24, 2005. It was sent electronically to the printers. Yesterday, Mike Dodd and I spent a lot of time finalizing all the last details and we were happy. I have a meeting on Tuesday August 30th at 2:00 p.m. with Sarah to show her exactly what the changes are and print my long awaited book. However, I needed to finalize some sayings for my book marker.

I woke up at my usual time 5:30 a.m. and on the weekend I do not exercise. It's my resting time. So, I went to my office to work on my book marker and I had some good ideas which you will see for yourself. So, I am ready to write and can you believe this? A book writer and there was no paper at all on my desk or in the house period! As far as I was concerned the book was finished and I had left my brief case containing a pad of paper in the store. In the last 10 years I have had paper on my desk all the time. So here I am with fresh ideas and no paper. I was not impressed with myself. However, I

wanted to write these ideas now. So on my file for duplicate stories that I worked with while writing my book, I took some paper and started writing on the unused part of the story. When I finished putting down the ideas I had awoke with, I took a look at what paper I was using and it is the story you are about to read.

Failing to plan is planning to fail and I recognized that we did not use that in my book. Writing a book is not hard, if you really want to do it. However, it is a lot of work and I missed this topic all together - until this morning when I went to write my ideas for the book marker. My point is this: Everything happens for a reason and it serves you.

If I had paper available in my office to write my ideas for the book marker, this last part would not be in the book. I really wanted to include it because I think it will help the serious reader, the ones that really want to help themselves. But, if I was lazy and said "Oh well, I will do it tomorrow," I would not see it. Or - what if I got upset at myself for not having paper at home? Imagine - someone writing a book and running out of paper? That's kind of silly isn't it? But, I say this to you "Could I have planned this whole event to unfold like it did - 24th book finished, 27th corrections done, 28th go write for the book marker - no paper?" I don't think so - this was meant to be so that I could have one more example to share with my readers and those who are willing to listen and learn that everything happens for a reason and it serves you.

Note: I almost lost my ideas on the back of other stories. I hope you enjoy my book marker. Following are the ideas I considered for the final piece.

Sayings for the Book Marker

- > From: Bare feet to Allen-Edmonds Shoes
 - From Rags to Brioni Clothes
 - From Grade 3 to Inventor and Author
 - From Salesman to Store Owner
 - From Smoker to Non-Smoker
 - From 200 lbs to 160 lbs
- > If you want to help yourself you should read this book

- > Everything happens for a reason and it serves you
- > “I think therefore I am” Rene Descarte
- > “Think you can or think you can’t- either way you will be right”
Henry Ford
- > Your state of mind determines the outcome of your endeavors in short, what you think is what you get
- > The only constant in life is change
- > Everything in moderation including moderation
- > Failing to plan is planning to fail
- > If you want things to change you must start with your current thinking pattern
- > Learn from all you are shown and told, but always arrive at your own conclusion
- > The bundle of wood
- > Virtue is harder to find than fault
- > Time is the most valuable commodity. Everyone gets the same amount of it everyday. What do you do with your time?

Failing to Plan is Planning to Fail

Why then do businesses with good plans fail? And people with a good upbringing still end up on welfare and drugs or just existing - going from one place to another without direction?

In my viewpoint, a business fails because the leaders of that business lack commitment to see their plans to the end and therefore only 10% of all businesses started actually end up succeeding. I have been looking for an easy explanation to use to motivate my audience to better themselves in life in general. To show my audience that there is a better life for all of us. We all are free to start living the life of success according to what we want for ourselves without hurting others. For only caring about ourselves, without regard for others, is certainly planning to fail - in a miserable way. Why are successful people lonely sometimes?

We are rigged up to be good to one another, but, we lose track of that quality when we get hurt because that's something that is not supposed to happen. So, we start to lose track of our plan and therefore we start being selfish. We go on to succeed financially but intellectually we are out of sync with the human reality. We become, in our own right, successful financially. But, we are not really happy and the road to failure starts to build up inside ourselves.

It is human nature. We are rigged up to be good, but we don't really understand that. I am not surprised because even though there are many schools teaching business at different levels, only 10% of all businesses succeed. We, as far as I know, have no particular school that teaches us how to find ourselves.

What really makes us tick?

Yes, there are many books that help us probe into our resourceful mind. But I am not aware of any school that teaches about life and how to maximize our potential as human beings, which is to help one another become better from generation to generation. I really don't think that we need a myth of any kind to achieve that. I believe that many humans before may have done a wonderful job of showing the rest of us that really the greatest accomplishment of a "life" is to better things for another or many others - especially lives yet unborn.

Wow, yet to be born. This is the area in which mankind can make a huge difference. Build something to show all the human race how to love one another by first loving ourselves. Loving ourselves should not be hard, as we will certainly benefit from it directly and we will not get hurt in the process.

Young people will probably read this and think that I am nuts. This is o.k. I was young once and I thought I knew everything. But, as I grew older I must have forgotten a lot because now I find myself learning something important and new every day. And at age 63, I know that when you stop learning you start dying.

I hope that, adults at least, and mature young people will learn something from my experiences of life and help deter someone that is starting to go the wrong way or is already in trouble; perhaps the reader.

If your life is not going quite the way you would like it to go right now, ask yourself why? Be honest. Start by saying “what small part of my situation is my responsibility.” If you take all of the blame – it is wrong and hard to do. But, if you look honestly into your heart and look for that small reason that caused you to be angry at someone, and you find it, then it becomes easier to start to reconcile your differences.

Here is what works for me.

Let’s say it’s an argument or disagreement with someone. I of course am right - the other person is wrong. So, I start small. What really happened? Hmm, oh yes, he didn’t agree with me and I raised my voice to prove my point. Then he raised his voice, then I raised mine and we walked away angry. Whose fault is it anyway? I of course am right. But, it really was my fault. I started the yelling match – not the other person.

So you see, even when you still think you are right you could be wrong. Knowledge of all the facts and details will help you deal with the situation in a more reasonable way. This is a simple example, but a good one. You must know all the facts before you can reason properly what really happened. We all know how important communication is and how poor we are at communicating. A lot of problems are really caused by poor communication. Believe me, I know. I am still working very hard on this. The more I try to communicate the more I understand how ill prepared I am, so I will try to keep it simple. I will only give life experience examples. I can’t teach anyone how to communicate, but I am just alerting you to bear that in mind. When dealing with an apparent problem - look for all the details. It may be different when you know all the facts, i.e. I started to raise my voice, and therefore I am wrong even though I might be right.

Now about your life, nothing goes the way you want. Why? Now I refer you to the stories. See how I was conditioned and look for your own conditioning. There is the answer to the million dollar question; why am I this way?

How can I plan my life so that I can live my plan and not someone else's? I hope you take the time to discover why you are this way so that you can truly enjoy your life – your way. May all your wishes come true, including learning who you really are?

Some examples,

Have you ever hurt yourself physically i.e. a cut or bruise – you of course got better and depending on the degree of the cut or bruise your body fixed itself.

So this should be enough proof that our body can repair itself, given the right circumstances and our frame of mind. i.e. “Oh, I had better wash this cut or put ice on this bruise.” Something to help your body heal itself. I know this is so basic but so is everything that goes on. If the cut is bigger you need more help to heal, but it can be done. You don't have to live with that cut and bruise the rest of your life.

The same can be done with our mind. If we have been hurt with bad conditioning it can be changed if we know what it is that needs changing. Also, if we are happy with our conditioning and we know what it was, we can be surer of ourselves and even improve on our happy state. We all need to because sooner or later we will have to deal with a problem - or is it an opportunity? You decide. Do you see what I am trying to show you?

Clearly, if it's to be it's up to me and failing to plan is planning to fail.



The Penny Story

Happiness is a State of Mind

You can think yourself happy or you can think yourself sad. Sometimes all you need is to find 1 penny or to lose 1 dollar. You really can be happier with 1 cent than with 1 million dollars. At a glance most people will say yes to 1 million and no to the penny. But after further consideration many people will change their mind.

If you had 1 million dollars but you are very sick, very uncomfortable, and unable to eat or hear or to walk would you not trade all your wealth to be in good health? Would you not trade your wealth to live in a free country where the sky is the limit if you knew you could be anything or do anything you wanted? Would you change your million dollars for a penny? This idea came to me on April 19, 2005 as I was walking down University Avenue. I had just received the results of my latest blood tests. Even though I am still in the danger zone with my low red and white blood cells, low platelets and elevated iron levels, there is a remarkable improvement from where I was in February 16th when I thought I was going to die.

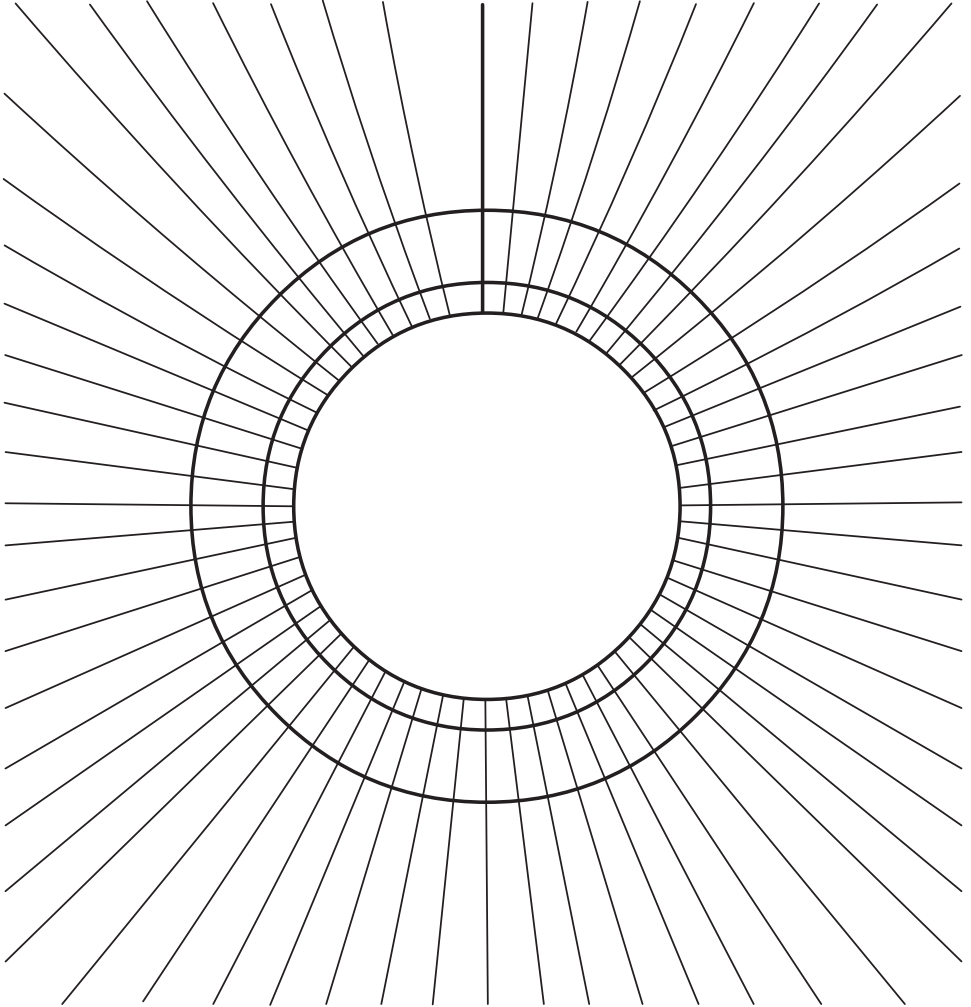
As I passed by a man with a baseball cap in his hand asking for change, I first wanted to give him all the money I had in my pocket – all of it. But, I saw a penny near him on the sidewalk and I stopped and bent over to pick it up. I cherished the penny and I thought with this penny and my health, I am better off than with a million dollars and the poor health I had in February. I was so happy with those results that it made me think about how I could use this experience to help others. This penny will help to remind me of the way I felt that day and still do when I think about it or talk about it. We have all heard perfectly healthy people complain about this and that and anything that they can think of - I wonder how they will feel when they are

sick and old. How will they cope? I would find it very satisfying if I could find a way to share the happy feeling I have today. I am still in danger but I am in better condition than I was in February. If I could only find a way to explain this, it might help someone who is confused about their life. If I could I would.

Let Me Try

We don't really appreciate a healthy life until we get a close call. I hear this all of the time from heart attack or stroke or cancer survivors. I have heard it from patients who have survived attacks and can function – even with some difficulties. You can see how happy they are for just one more day of life. They enjoy one day at a time. Why is it so hard to understand that now is the most important moment of our life. Life is a present. It is important that we don't waste our present worrying about the future or living in the past. We should enjoy the company of others as they may go before us. You don't want to have regrets for not being more appreciative of their life with you.

If only I could, I would help the world to come to this understanding. All you take with you when you go are your deeds not your belongings. What have you done lately, for yourself, as well as for others? Why does it take a close call for us to wake up and smell the roses? I have learned to love my life more after I was told to put it in order. It was harsh, but it woke me up. What will it take to wake you up and get you going in the right direction? Why am I this way and yet, a perfectly healthy young man is standing there wasting his life away waiting for change from people passing by? Why?



This circle is provided to encourage the reader to use it. It could be a good start to trigger thoughts of your past that conditioned you.

Bibliography

List of books read for research:

- Think and Grow Rich, Napoleon Hill
Man's Search for Meaning, Victor Frankel
The Positive Principle Today, Norman Vincent Peale
The 7 Habits of Highly Efficient People, S.R. Covey
Siddhartha, Herman Hesse
The Art of Happiness Dalai Lama
Self Matters, Dr. Phil
The Power of Focus , Jack Canfield, MV Henson
3 Keys of Empowerment , Ken Blanchard John P Carlos
Emotional Intelligence , Alan Randolph
Working with Emotional Intelligence, Daniel Goldman
Tuesdays With, Mitch Albom
Who Moved my Cheese, S. Johnson
Conquering Life's Obstacles , Gerry Robert
How to Win Friends and Influence People, Dale Carnegie
How to Stop Worrying and Start Living, Dale Carnegie
How DO We Know, Leonard E. Read
Discourse on Method, Rene Descartes
The Bible,
The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari, Robin S. Harma
How to Know God, Deepak Chopra

Tapes

The Prosperity Solution, Dr. Jonathan Parker
Building a Winning Self Image, Dr. Jonathan Parker
You Were Born Rich, Bob Proctor
Unlimited Power, Anthony Robins
The Science of Personal Achievement, Napoleon Hill,
There is a Mission in Commission, Bob Proctor
21 Days to Freedom, Dr. Clifford Baird,
The Goal Achiever, Bob Proctor,
Vocab, Bergan Evans
The P Seminar, Brian Tracey

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Take advantage of my life's lessons and better yourself. I went from bare feet to Allen Edmond's shoes, from rags to Brioni clothing, from grade three to clothier, inventor and author. Everyone knows that eating an apple a day keeps the doctor away BUT who does it?