

## Chapter 5 – The Current and the Rocks

Mrs. Kendall was an attractive, well-dressed woman with a pleasant countenance and a presence of professionalism. Her office was very organized with shelves and desk trays. Her walls had pictures of her family along with pictures of employees and employee functions. Another wall had awards. At the top left side of her wall was a small mirror, with a message above that read, 'Have You Checked Your Reflection Today?' Underneath was a printout that said, "If you can look at the reflection in the mirror at the end of the day and feel good about your day, you've passed the test." Another picture was a split picture of a NBA basketball coach whose team won the world championship and the team holding up the championship trophy. Underneath was a printout that read, "There are two views of success, whose are you focusing on?"

The next picture was a group of people rock climbing. Underneath was a printout that read, "If your climb was easy, maybe you chose a hill instead of a mountain." The next picture, one of two people hugging. Underneath was a diagram that said *gratitude*, *thankfulness*, *appreciation*. Mrs. Kendall also had two poems hanging on the wall. The first was directly beneath the mirror and its message. It was apparent the poem went with the picture of the man looking in the mirror.

***Have You Checked Your Reflection?***

Look at me each morning  
Tell me what you see  
Are you starting the day  
Who you want to be?

And as the day goes by  
Come take another glance  
Are you staying true to yourself?  
Or have you changed by chance?

At the end of the day  
Look, am I what I expect?  
Can I leave today with assurance?  
I lived my values with respect?

Let's always look in the mirror  
Because each day is our test  
Do we like what we see?  
And are we doing our best?

Challenge your answer  
Get past the perception  
Do you trust what you see?  
Without any exception?

Author Unknown.

The next poem was underneath the NBA coach and team, "***Employees Mimic What They See***":

I know I can wait  
Because my boss comes in late  
He's never on time  
So why should you mind

He shows no respect  
So what do you expect  
So why the surprise  
That you caught me in lies

When he never takes blame  
It's always the same  
So that's now my default  
It's never my fault

Talk's in the air  
It's different in here  
Here is one I can approach  
He's my new coach

Can't believe what I see  
He's focused on me  
I like this indeed  
He fulfilling my needs

I am having success  
I truly am blessed  
This job is so fun  
It's my number one

It never did seem  
That we'd be a team  
But now we perceive  
That we can achieve

Each day I am grinning  
That we each are winning  
I never would guess  
That we'd be the best

Author Unknown

Mrs. Kendall's wall struck me with the impression of a person that really cares for her employees. "You are listed on Mr. Scott's organizational chart as the Service Manager. Can you briefly explain that title?" I asked.

"Sure. The title Service Manager means I manage the employees that provide our service. Because we sell a service, we must have employees perform that service. If we sold a tangible product, I would be the product manager. Either way, my responsibility is that we deliver what was sold to our customer. Our objective is to deliver that service above our clients' expectations and with complete satisfaction. We realize that we are an instrumental part of the business process because we are the product. As we deliver and maintain consistent high quality, we become instrumental to the sales process. Our success is vital for repeat business from clients. We are vital in the forming of partnerships. We realize that our sales staff helps create this

process, but our security is to advance it. We are an essential part of the team. My responsibility is to maintain that and always work to improve it.”

“Wonderful, thank you,” I said. “Each manager has shared with me how they play into cause and effect in their management philosophies and areas of needed growth or advances. I see on your wall here where you list your beliefs and focus much like they did. Did Mr. Scott ask you to do such a wall?”

“No, but learning from his example I witnessed how valuable and effective it is,” Mrs. Kendall replied. “I saw my colleagues utilizing the concept in their own way and their staff’s growth from it. With the evidence of good results, I became affected in wanting what they had. I did ask Mr. Scott for direction and counsel as well as the other department heads. I then finalized it with the team leaders of my staff as they were very willing to participate. I now see how they take ownership, and it permeates through our whole service department.”

“That’s great,” I said. “With utilizing your staff, how did you arrive at the end result?”

“I had them share their views. Seeing things from their perspective was extremely valuable. The exercise gave each of us more respect for each other’s views and job task. Seeing things from each other’s perspective showed us that we as individuals were not the only ones with challenges or burdens. It expanded us to share each other’s burdens, which brings better results. It was this exercise that brought to light the number one issue on our wall, ‘Have You Checked Your Reflection?’”

“I am glad you pointed to that as that is my next question. Can you explain more?” I asked.

“Yes, but let me first give a quick example. A few years ago I used to tell myself that I was fit and trim. I believed my face was thin and my stomach was flat and that I was in good shape. A friend saw a photo of me from this time and she made the comment, ‘Wow, you were a little plump back then, weren’t you?’

“She meant it as a compliment because I am thinner now and in good shape, but it made me examine the picture again. There I was in the picture smiling back with a plump face and a stomach. I had tried to convince myself that I was slim and trim, yet I realize now that others saw me as the picture showed, plump face and stomach. I wasn’t being honest with myself or as the poem says, ‘get past the perception.’ The truth is I didn’t want to see it. But I did honestly want to be fit and in good health. However, by not being honest with myself, I held myself back from achieving my full potential. Now a year or so after that, I realized that I wasn’t fit and found fitness, but I do regret it didn’t happen sooner. So, back to my sign on my wall, we feel it is important first to ask ourselves and our employees to really look at the person in the mirror, whether it pertains to work or home, because if we do not see our reflection truthfully, we cheat ourselves of our full potential.”

“How do you implement it?” I asked.

“Well, the exercise we did to come up with our areas of focus helped us arrive at implementation. In our sharing to determine the areas of focus for our department, we realized we saw each other differently. It’s eye opening. We each agreed to step back and look at ourselves in the glass. This then allowed us to ask ourselves good questions.”

“Like what type of questions?”

“The basic questions derived from the poem, ‘*Have You Checked Your Reflection.*’ First, who does this poem say you must satisfy by trusting what we see and why? Think about that. We must satisfy by trusting ourselves first. It allowed each of us to reflect on what satisfaction is for us. This question allowed us to list what we wish to achieve in life, both at home and at work. By knowing this, if we cheat on anything which takes away from us achieving items on our list, then we are not being honest with ourselves and hurting ourselves first.”

Mrs. Kendall continued, “The next question is ‘What does it mean to be honest with yourself?’ We found that being honest with yourself was calling things for what they are. In that

picture three years ago, I was out of shape, but I told myself I was fit. By doing this, I didn't achieve my full potential. What if my unfitness took a toll on my health? Results of my dishonesty can cost me and others around me. The third question is 'How do you cheat the person in the mirror?' Well, by not being honest, I cheated myself out of fitness. In a job you can cheat yourself from advancing and growing. A person that tells themselves that they are spending enough time with their children but truly are not, are robbing themselves of joy, plus the joy their children experience. How many times have we told ourselves, 'I wish I could do it over?' but we can't."

I nodded for her to keep going.

She continued, "The fourth question is 'Why is it important to be honest with other people?' Through the honesty of others, we each came to see a truer reflection of ourselves. Mr. Scott manages in the same manner. We let each other know as well as our employees that we'll be honest. Mr. Scott uses factual, not negative, and it's very effective. My friend's comment about me in the picture was factual yet revealing. Only honesty done in a way not to belittle, but to assist, will grow yourself and others.

"Our fifth question is 'How do you judge whether a person is honest or not?' This can be a hard question, but it is one that as managers we must ask. It is one also in society that we must ask, as parents and just as everyday people. As managers, we must ask ourselves this question. First let's remember the philosophy that trust is verified, not blind. Our everyday task and actions allow us the verification of that trust. That action or behavior brings results. If those results are consistent with the right behaviors, then that also brings verification. Finally, if we believe we have a problem with dishonesty, then we confront it. This allows us to correct it or eliminate it. Remember, it is rewards or consequence."

"Thank you. I like the message. With this focus, how do you further implement it into your environment to make it an everyday thing?" I asked.

"It starts with the hiring process," Mrs. Kendall said. "It doesn't start after someone is

hired, but as we are going through the process, we communicate and we look for it. From there we express it daily. With our employees, we've created workshops that we have every other month or so. We cover many different subjects, but we'll weave in the 'have you checked your reflection' concepts continually. We let employees share stories on their successes and failures. Their honesty really drives it home to others. Within the workshops, we create exercises that are fun yet reinforce the message. But no matter what, we ask each employee to ask themselves ten questions as they look at their reflection at the end of the day."

"What are those questions?" I asked.

"Let me go through the whole list first, then we'll go one question at a time."

### **My Reflection in the Mirror**

- 1) Do I have an attitude to win and achieve success?
- 2) Do I believe I am doing everything today to be successful?
- 3) Am I doing all that is asked of me?
- 4) If there is more I can do to assist myself, my employer, or other employees, am I doing it?
- 5) Am I giving a complete effort today with no shortcuts?
- 6) Do I value others, their opinions, and their advice?
- 7) Did today go as well as I had planned?
- 8) Am I satisfied with today?
- 9) Will I give a complete effort tomorrow?

10) Will I try to improve tomorrow over today?

“That’s the list for each employee to ask themselves as they look into the mirror each night. Naturally we could have thought of many more questions, and many do, that would only help them more. These basic ten questions are a good ‘reflection in the mirror’ exercise.”

“Great, let’s take them one at a time,” I said. “Number one, ‘Do I have an attitude to win and achieve success?’”

Mrs. Kendall nodded. “Here we desire each employee to contemplate and reflect on their attitude. How was their attitude today? Did they error in poor attitude at any time? What about any time that they were upset, even for a moment? This moment of reflection can be eye opening because many times we do not realize there was a time when we got upset. The reflection brings that out. We wrote the question as present tense and not past tense, for as a person’s attitude is a continuous thing; with this, we desire a winning attitude to be continual. Now while utilizing honest reflections with any of these questions, it allows us to call it what it is. We then confront it and make a conscious effort to improve. Without asking these questions, we become blind to any area of needed improvement. A daily look in the mirror is a powerful tool.”

“It is,” I agreed. “Now let’s go to question number two. ‘Do I believe I am doing everything today to be successful?’”

“Ask yourself that question,” Mrs. Kendall said. “If the answer is no, then what didn’t you do? Many times we may try to wiggle around that “no” answer and rationalize why we didn’t do something. I am sure there are times we procrastinate and put something off until tomorrow. With this question I reflect what else could I have done today? Ask yourself, ‘If I lived today over, what else would I have accomplished?’ That’s a good question at the end of the night.”

“Excellent. Now question number three. ‘Am I doing all that is asked of me?’”

“We ask a lot out of our employees, but a lot of what we ask is truly left up to them. It’s



true that trust is verified, but that may on occasion be after the fact. If we allow employees time to study and advance, are they truly taking advantage of that time? If not, they not only cheat themselves but also our clients as well as our business. Many do not realize that they are cheating their fellow employees who value that time and desire more. An employee may have natural gifts and therefore do not do all that is asked of them. Perhaps they are holding back their personal growth as well as our company's."

"Number four asks 'If there is more I can do to assist myself, my employer, or other employees, am I doing it?'"

"This one is a simple reflection. If I could have utilized more help, did I ask for it? If there is a question, need, or something I am lacking, did I speak out? If not, why? If I didn't, I may believe that only I suffered, but once again my employer suffers as well as all other employees. Is there something I could have done to help or assist my employer or another employee that I failed to do? If so, what is it? My reflection will allow me to plan to do what's needed the next day. Is there something I wanted to bring up to my manager? Did I see an employee doing something today that I could have helped them in which would have brought improvement? These questions generate active thought for betterment. There is much we fail to realize until we reflect."

"That's so true. It's a very simple thought process." I agreed.

"Yes, it is," Mrs. Kendall agreed. "These ten questions only take seconds each day. The more we practice them daily, the more they become habit. The habit of reflection is good and allows you to make improvements."

"True," I said. "Now let's go to question five. 'Am I giving a complete effort today with no shortcuts?'"

Mrs. Kendall said, "This question can play into some of the previous ones asked except we could answer yes to the previous ones and then come to question five and answer no. This

takes honesty, as does each question. So here when one is reflecting, they either honestly believe they didn't take shortcuts and that they put forth a complete effort, or they realize any areas they did take a shortcut. Once again, perhaps they are gifted and didn't study or learn as was asked of them. That's a shortcut. Perhaps they didn't give a complete effort in helping or teaching others. Perhaps they had something to say to me and watered it down. If so, they not only cheated themselves, but cheated me and possibly others. There is much more that the reflection can bring out with each question."

"Well, that brings us to question number six. 'Do I value others, their opinions, and their advice?'"

"As you look back on the day, ask, 'Did I value others? Did I show them the respect I desire? Did I give them the time of day?' 'Did I go out of my way to be personable?' You see, it's not only giving them the time of day, but we may be avoiding others unknowingly. So, did I go out of my way to be personable? I hope to answer yes each day. We need to look back and reflect. Are we approachable? How did I react to others' opinions or advice? If I'm not receiving their opinions or advice, then why? It might be because of how I acted in the past. Or once again, did I seek any out? I find that a person who seeks opinions and advice is believed to be approachable by others and will receive some daily. Small corrections or insights can make drastic improvements."

"I've known people that others will not approach because they are not open to opinions or advice," I commented. "The sad part is this person is the one who suffers as they seldom improve and actually become blind, if not arrogant, to their ways."

Mrs. Kendall nodded. "That's actually what will happen. So look at that person in that glass at the end of the day and ask yourself that question. You will then improve yourself."

I agreed. "Okay, question seven. 'Did today go as well as I had planned?'"

"Well, did it? It's a simple question, isn't it? Or maybe you don't plan your day. That can

be one of the answers. Or when you plan your day, did you plan for a good day? Did you give it much thought? This will come out in your reflection. But also ask, 'What would I change?' Is there anything that you would eliminate? What was the cause of that result? These questions will have you planning your days to be effective and productive. As we reflect each day we improve each day."

"Number eight looks very much the same as seven," I stated. "Number eight asks 'Am I satisfied with today?'"

"In some ways it does seem the same except when it's all said and done, even if there are areas to improve, are you satisfied? Can you go to sleep tonight satisfied that you achieved progress? Sure you may do some things differently, but it's still okay to be satisfied. But if you're not satisfied, make a mental list why, if not an actual list. Is your effort tomorrow going to make you satisfied at the end of the day? That should be your conclusion."

"Thanks for explaining that. We're on number nine now. 'Will I give a complete effort tomorrow?'"

"Do you see how the order of the questions progresses and builds on each other?" Mrs. Kendall asked. "Many may say this question is a given 'Of course, I will.' But by asking yourself each day, you're reminding yourself each day. This sets in determination. Now if your answer is no, then why? Are you unhappy? Can you change this status? Sometimes an honest reflection may bring the determination that you're in the wrong job for you. That's a wakeup call to change."

"That brings us to our last question. 'Will I try to improve tomorrow over today?'"

"To sum it all up, will I make that conscious effort to make tomorrow better? With my reflections, will I take the steps forward to improve? Now if today was considered a good day, then challenge yourself to duplicate it. But ask what could I do to improve? Set out to make tomorrow better. You'll find yourself enjoying your days more, not only with this question, but

also with all of the questions. In one of our workshops, we encourage our employees to do the same in their personal lives to be full and complete. This exercise helps. A satisfied employee is much easier to be around at home, but it is also important they prioritize and keep their family at the forefront. Questions like. 'Did I show my wife love and respect today?' Or, 'Did I spend quality time with my children?' Or, 'Do my children know I love them today?' I once stopped dead in my tracks with this reflection and went and tucked my kids into bed and told them I loved them. We value our employees' success here and at home. I believe we show it."

"This is a great exercise, but why do you have this first?" I asked.

"Attitude is everything. This is the building block of everything that comes after. We have created a healthy attitude. It breeds the right environment."

"Let's look at the next picture and message on your wall. Are the people significant - the coach and the players? Or is their significance their roles?" I asked.

"I would say their roles. I chose this picture as a personal preference, as I followed this team as a fan in the 1980's. Even today I'm a big fan. My husband's friends think he is lucky to have a wife who loves sports." Mrs. Kendall smiled.

"The statement associated with this picture states 'There are two views of success; whose are you focusing on?'"

"There are two views of success. One view is my own personal success. The second view is the success of those that are the team. 'Whose are you focusing on?' is a profound question. I say that because our focus is on the team. Simply stated, my focus is on the success of our employees and staff. If I focus on my success, I become shortsighted or blind to others. True long-term success comes by focusing on what it takes for the team to succeed. This takes becoming involved and knowledgeable to each individual. If you create this environment, you'll have an appreciative team, knowing that your focus is on their success. This coach had five championships in ten years. The other years they were very much contenders to win, but what

brought this coach success was not focusing upon him or on what would make him look good. He realized that by focusing on his individual player's success that the team came together to be successful. Their success naturally brought him success, but this formula was long-term. That's the key to building this way.

“Shortsighted managers or coaches will focus on themselves. Sure, everyone wants results, but shortsighted managers or coaches make it all about them. Many autocratic styled managers or coaches have had quick success but usually long-term results fade. This NBA team excelled as a team. Over that ten-year period, they even made difficult decisions on players. But because they knew their coach's focus was truly on them, they knew it was for the better of the team. Their coach had their trust. Managing employees is no different. Now I have personally worked for both types of managers. The difference in the environment has me working harder. If you enjoy your work, the team environment, and respect and trust your manager or managers, you will naturally work harder. You'll find yourself more dedicated.”

“How do you instill this?”

“I help my staff focus on our players, as I do myself. I evaluate their success based on those factors. Our employees' development is very important. Since Mr. Scott took over, we have had several employees get promoted outside this location. We've become a source of people development to our corporation. A shortsighted manager or coach would not want to lose anybody. A coach whose focus is on the player would understand that others growing breeds a stronger environment. Those that have gone on to promotions we hold up as examples. Our corporation looks upon us favorably, so our focus has brought Mr. Scott success. Funny thing is that when we lose someone to a promotion, we always have good people to fill those rolls. Tell me, would you rather work for an employer that had no growth opportunities or one that continued to have growth opportunities?”

“That's a no brainer. Obviously the one that continually has growth opportunities would excite me. I think I would naturally work harder at what I do.” I stated.

“That is exactly my point. That’s the environment this creates. That’s the environment that helps sustain success. Focus on your employees’ success and yours will come naturally. It creates a strong, healthy and enjoyable environment.” Mrs. Kendall smiled.

“By interviewing the other managers, I am aware of many ways that you develop people here. I understand about giving people the benefit of your time, rewards or consequences, trust yet verified, confrontation as a benefit, factual not negative, and many of the other methods. I appreciate each one. But I’ve always believed that developing people is an art. So out of all these tools, what stands out the most as a key to developing people?” I queried.

“I remember listening to Mr. Scott answer a question on how our location develops so many good people for corporate promotions and he answered, ‘With all the patience in the world.’ Now all the methods we utilize are instrumental, but Mr. Scott stated two things: patience and empowerment. We must have patience to grow individuals and to allow them to falter at times. We use our methods to coach that individual through the process. But with that growth, we must empower them with challenges, knowledge, and tasks, and so on to bring them along. As Mr. Scott develops us, he’ll delegate, which is empowering us. But Mr. Scott does state that true delegation is giving someone what they are ready for. I’ve seen past managers’ delegate, but what they truly did was just load someone up. If there is no coaching, accountability, and follow through, then there is no learning or advancement. Remember, the person delegating must assume responsibility, not deny it. All of our methods are designed to utilize our people skills. Mr. Scott once said that if an employee gives him all their effort, he’ll give them all his patience. Mr. Scott lives that daily. This doesn’t mean there are not times that Mr. Scott or any of us must come to a decision on an individual, but our process executed consistently clearly brings that determination to light.”

“Thank you, Mrs. Kendall. Now I notice that you have a poem hanging up that says, ‘*Employees Mimic What They See.*’ Why do you display it?”

“I believe the poem is self-explanatory. Go through each line. What we show our employees each day has a direct reflection on how they grow, act, and succeed. I believe so

strongly in this message that I display it as a continual reminder to me and our staff. We're not always perfect, so a visual reminder allows us quick correction. Seeing it each day also helps maintain our mindset, so we stay consistent. Second, I believe that by showing it to our employees it makes us accountable and makes them appreciative. Any time your employees are appreciative, you've grown your sense of team and enhanced your environment."

"Thanks. Do you have any other comment on this topic before we go to the next?"

"Only to remember that your peoples' success is your success. I'm here to help people be successful."

"Excellent. Let's go to your next sign and the rock climbing picture. 'If your climb was easy, maybe you chose a hill instead of a mountain?' What message are you trying to portray here?"

"If you look at the wall, we started by first challenging everyone to take a look at themselves. The process of self-evaluation is a strong foundation to build upon. The next step was the focus and understanding that true success is the success of your people. So this is understood and lived by myself and our staff as well as the other managers, but our employees see it and appreciate it. I desire our employees to expect it as the norm. When they do, you'll have a loyal, enthusiastic employee. With those foundations established, then it is our duty to challenge and assist our staff and employees to set high expectations. This is very much our job to help and do. So, the message here by the statement is to challenge yourself on your expectations. One must evaluate their goals and desires. We help and assist with goal setting. We put processes in place that sets high standards, but we also put the support mechanisms in place to help assist."

"Is there a special way you go about it?"

"First we speak it. We communicate high expectations in the hiring process, then through the training process, and then live it each day. Miss it in any of these areas and it will have a

negative effect on obtaining consistent results. Now I would say the next step is what you believe.

“Remember the movie *Stand and Deliver* where a schoolteacher in Los Angeles believed his students could do better? This school did not have a track record of success as many accepted the environment of mediocrity. This teacher believed otherwise and set high expectations. He encountered resistance, but he taught or brought the students through the process of looking at that person in the glass. Next he showed and communicated his focus and efforts on their success. The teacher was there to serve his students. He taught, coached, and encouraged them. With this foundation he was able to get the students to believe in themselves and to believe in high expectations. The process of believing is a key and a valuable process. Remember, if you think you can't make it, you're probably right. These students then believed, and that opened the door for the teacher to assist their growth. The teacher helped set high expectations, challenges, goals, and shared his vision continually. His vision focused on each of their success, and he spoke his vision daily. More importantly, he then showed the steps to obtain those high expectations, no matter how challenging they were. Whether it was studying harder, reading more, or helping each other, he was there to coach throughout the process. One thing that I like to point out as a belief that I have is that this teacher did not have a standard teacher's mentality.”

“What's a standard teacher's mentality?”

“A standard teacher's mentality is that every student cannot get an A. Some must get B's, C's, and some must fail. The old mentality is that if everyone received A's then the teacher is not doing their job. Now how backwards is that? Isn't it the teacher's job that their students' succeed? This teacher believed more could succeed. He believed they could excel higher, and they did.”

“So how do you change that mentality?”

“First you must confront it. Then you need to speak and communicate that you believe differently and that you expect differently. You will utilize all behavior tools. This teacher used



rewards or consequence. He showed that trust was verified. This teacher truly gave the benefit of his time. Behavior modification is no different with school children as with adults. Now a lazy teacher could just give out the answers to their students, but this teacher taught study habits, and he taught that high expectations are a challenge. If he did give the answers, he would then educate on why it was the answer. Therefore, their understanding grew as well as their success.”

“What other steps do you take?”

“Part of giving someone the benefit of your time is helping develop realistic expectations. From there, you lay out what steps those expectations require. You coach, participate, and monitor the process. You set a clear vision on what each stage of success looks like. When or if those results stray, you coach and correct as well as encourage. You utilize all tools within cause and effect.”

“Is there any special way you guide them through?”

“Yes. Our job is to help maintain their focus. Take the example of a leader of white water rafting trips. This person leads the group as well as instructs them. His job is to help deliver learning, enjoyment, and ultimately their safety. Now if you have ever seen people white water rafting going through the rapids, you’ll see an exhilarating event. I always wondered about navigating around the rocks. How does one teach that? I asked and the leader’s reply was that he taught how to navigate the raft and how each one affects it. But he also explained that if you stare at the rocks, you will naturally drift toward the rocks. So, he teaches everyone to focus on the current. After all, the current was the vehicle taking them to their final destination and success. When one worries and focuses on the rocks, the likelihood for danger and failure are increased. Well, business and employees are the same way. Our job is to teach safety but to focus our employees on the current, not the rocks. Focus on the vehicle leading you to success and you’ll avoid danger.”

“But don’t employees have to know about the dangers?”

“Sure they do. We teach that before the trip, just like they do in white water rafting. If they start to stray toward danger, we correct. But our belief is that if we can keep employees focused correctly, they can achieve high expectations. The wrong focus will not achieve this. There is a profound difference between caution and too much focus on danger. We must teach and recognize the difference and coach through it. Now, like in rafting, sometimes some failure may occur. But by our training, we maintain safety and then take that opportunity to learn. This instructor said that most of the time if they hit rocks or someone flips out of the boat, the person almost always admits they focused on the rocks. By evaluating, one can admit the circumstance, then learn and make corrections and then move forward. Some may struggle or be hesitant to move forward while others make the right change of focus. Our job is to evaluate that process. That brings me to my next illustration.”

“Great, what is that?”

“I recently read where a hired guide took a group horseback riding in the mountains. The leader explained that on part of the trip the path was about six feet wide going along the side of the mountain. On the other side was a cliff with a rather long drop. The leader explained that those riders who focused on the cliff, their horses would automatically walk along the cliff side. Those riders that did not focus on the cliff, their horses would walk along the mountainside. When they reached their destination, the group shared their experiences. The riders who rode along the mountainside spoke of the beauty, the clear blue sky, and the forest. The riders who rode next to the cliff spoke of the cliff, their fear, and how long the drop was. Each reached the same destination but had different experiences. The riders that had caution knew the cliff was there, but didn’t allow that to affect their focus. The other riders allowed caution to turn into fear and did not have an enjoyable experience. It’s our job for our employees to have the best possible experiences. Good experiences grow expectations within oneself and help us challenge ourselves more. A bad experience can be a setback and cause us to lower our expectations. On this trip, the leader explained how those with the bad experience wanted to turn back or not go on to the final destination. It affected their expectations. If one is straying, we must recognize it to correct, coach, and encourage continually.”

“Is there a method of doing that?”

“Well, it is not my intention to dwell on horses or compare people to them, but situations on training can correlate in behavior, whether human or animal. I also read where someone asked a trainer how to teach their horse to comfortably cross narrow waterways. The horse was fine crossing water that was six feet wide or more. The trainer explained that the horse must have had a bad experience in the past crossing a narrow waterway. The trainer explained that it is the owner’s job to overcome the horse’s natural instinct or the aftereffects of a negative experience through patient training. The trainer stated the owner first must build a strong foundation or establish a leadership position with their horse so that the horse will respect and trust the owner. This process must be followed to correct negative experiences. Obviously it is better to eliminate negative experiences from happening. But when they occur, we must realize them and put these steps into place. Now look at these steps. Number one, build a strong foundation. Two, establish a leadership position. Then three, earn trust. Isn’t that our process? The tools of cause and effect are designed to do exactly this.”

“I see and agree. You mentioned helping setting goals and sharing vision continually. Can you explain more?”

“Sure. Let’s talk about setting goals first. One important factor in assisting an employee on setting goals is not just to set them to our desires. The employee must share ownership of that goal. If I force what I believe their goals should be, then that employee’s ownership is lost. Sometimes that could be the very rationale in their mind if their goal is not obtained. They might rationalize that it really wasn’t their goal anyway. We must meet and share in this process. The employee shares their goals and their views on why they believe their goals are reasonable and also show tangible means of obtaining them.

“We as managers share our views and communicate whether we think the goal was too low or too high. If there are no tangible means of obtaining the goals, then we’ll address why and make it more realistic. Within the process, we define our reasons and expectations. Our experience over time has shown that as an employee has been through this continual process on the two views on goals, the employee’s view and our view, that the views are actually very close.

“This process can only be successful with us as managers having close knowledge of all the facts, not blind knowledge, which can only be obtained by our close, daily participation with each employee. That is why the whole process of cause and effect is valuable.”

“Excellent. I like it. Is there more?” I asked.

Mrs. Kendall continued. “We witness that the employees value our participation and appreciate that we are so closely involved. We use this process continually, whether we are defining small goals or long term ones. We encourage our employees to set personal goals that involve their outside life and family. Many have their personal goals hanging up in their work area. These may include a home purchase or vacation location. We have celebrated many times when personal goals have been obtained.

“There are times when we may re-evaluate a goal. We’ll look at results and share our views of the factors involved. The employee will also share their views. At this time, we may adjust the goal to make it more realistic. That may become easier or a more challenging goal. Once again, as the employee works and lives in this environment we actually see that goals are being set higher more than lower. The process is a continual process and adjustments are made continually at the proper time of need, not waiting until total completion.”

Mrs. Kendall paused and then continued, “I believe the importance here is that we don’t follow a blind process. I remember under past management we’d ask for goals of something and employees would give a blind answer. On several occasions, a manager wouldn’t accept that employee’s goal and would impose their expectation. This process allowed for no involvement, no coaching, and ultimately no ownership. Our goals were obscure and, if met, it was more out of luck than out of a good process.”

“Thank you. Now can you define vision for me?” I asked.

“Vision is foresight or unusual foresight. The vision only becomes unusual as the process

you utilize creates the vision's accuracy. Each employee has their vision of success at work and at home. These visions come to fruition by conquering their goals. This is why a good process in goal setting is so important. If you have ever read Zig Ziglar, he teaches to start with the end in mind. So, with their vision, the end would be what it would look like, feel like, smell like, and any other factors. From there you work backwards and break it down by needed steps. This helps define goals, and once again this is why a process that allows us as managers to be knowledgeable in the areas that are tangible in creating the results is valuable.

“I admire the golfing legend Jack Nicklaus. I have read that he envisions how he will accomplish making it to the green for each hole. He looks at the challenges, such as yardage, water or sand traps, and the layout of the fairway. He envisions where he will hit his first shot and where it will land. Jack further envisions where he'll shoot from there and once again, where it should land. He determines what it will take to achieve each shot. He thinks on how high to hit the ball, or how much spin, if any, and what club he needs. His vision allows him to back up and define everything it takes to obtain his objective. By utilizing this exercise, Mr. Nicklaus has had tremendous success. But at any time that a particular shot is different than his first vision, then the adjustment for the next shot is an easier process. Because he has envisioned each shot, evaluation is easier and then adjustments are easier. The thing I like in the process is with an easier evaluation and adjustment process, corrections are less intimidating. Corrections are a natural part of the process. These processes we teach, coach, and speak continually.”

“Yes,” I nodded. “Anything else to share?”

Mrs. Kendall stated, “Another important factor is to teach and coach employees to continually speak their vision. We work individually or in workshops, and our team environment grows as employees encourage each other. This builds on our team aspects and also creates employees challenging other employees, which creates higher expectations and accomplishments. What I like most is employees helping each other and sharing in the accomplishments.”

“What do you do about your visions for individuals and your visions for this department

or business as a whole?” I asked.

“It is much the same way. I share and define my visions with tangible breakdown. I speak with the end in mind and everything that leads to it. So, whether it is on an individual or on our department, I communicate the vision continually. It is our job as managers to help the focus of our employees. We must coach, teach, and communicate continually to achieve the goals that determine that vision. We must communicate adjustments and corrections along with the sharing of feedback, which is invaluable. One year we set a vision to win a company-wide award. We spoke the vision, we utilized the process and defined goals and objectives that would lead to that vision’s success. As a team, managers and employees worked to maintain focus on obtaining each goal and in making adjustments and corrections. As a team we took ownership and responsibility. That year we had tremendous success, but we did not win the award. Now our success was evident, and we very easily could have been the recipients, but because we were such a strong team through this process, we kept the vision and the focus and won the following year. From that time forward, we have maintained strong consistent success. The process has taught us and developed our behaviors. Our true vision is our success, individually and as a team.”

“It seems like the award was confirmation on the process, but truly your continued success, I believe, confirms that more,” I said.

“Absolutely, and that is how we see it, teach it, and speak of it. You see, if the award were the only goal, we would have won and then possibly would have slipped in our performance. Now the vision of winning assisted in determining goals, etc., but we spoke and learned that continual success is the ultimate goal. That’s the difference from a dynasty to a one-time winner.”

“Good point. I’m reminded of my old high school tennis coach constantly sharing his vision of our team and breaking it down individually. We developed into a strong team and won our league. When I look back at it, I remember how the whole process was motivating and how his words had power.” I smiled.

“Yes!” Mrs. Kendall replied. “What we communicate and speak has power. As we speak and define our visions continually, they then become embedded in our minds. Hearing that we can accomplish goals and obtain our visions helps us grow to believe them.”

“Can you now take me through the diagram on gratitude, thankfulness, and appreciation?”



“It’s really very simple. You see our whole process on how we manage leads to this. We want to show appreciation to the point that our employees know and believe in its legitimacy. Our goal is for our employees to feel the same. In thinking about appreciation, we then ask, how do we obtain it? Our vision would be to have management and staff that show and share their gratitude through thankfulness with the culmination being our employees feeling appreciated. We back up and break it down. If appreciation is the effect we want, then let’s break down its cause. Gratitude is the feeling and thankfulness is the expression. We draw it as a circle as it evolves one to the other continually. The more gratitude I feel, then the more thankfulness I express. As these factors rotate, what builds is our appreciation. This is a continuous cycle that builds and spreads.

“Each day we look for things to be grateful for. We teach others to do the same. With our gratefulness, we then express our thanks continually. Many bosses don’t realize that a simple ‘Thank you for your work today’ goes a long way. It is the least expensive way of team building, yet the most effective. Of course we expect hard work, and we get it. The power of thankfulness builds spirit, morale, trust, and ultimately appreciation. Simple things can make a huge difference from an enjoyable day to a tiresome day. We say thank you daily and often to our employees. Our staff and employees know Mr. Scott appreciates them, and his expression of thankfulness is genuine.”

“I wish to express my thankfulness to you, Mrs. Kendall. I have asked each manager to sum up our meeting with four things they would like to leave me with. What four things would you like to express?” I asked.

Mrs. Kendall said, “There are some added points I would like to include in our conversation. I’ll review my messages on the wall with my additional comments.”

“Great, I appreciate that.”

“I wish to expand on our first message on the wall. ‘If you look at the man in the mirror at the end of the day and feel good about the day, you’ve passed the test.’ This starts in the hiring



process. Ask others to review what they see. As we instill this exercise in employees, we teach to work through preconceived perceptions. Perceptions can alter what you believe you are seeing. In our workshops, we work in pairs or groups to get others' views and perceptions. A view is to describe factually what you see; a perception is the reasoning from a belief on why that view is that way. Because many perceptions are preconceived and set in our minds, it can actually change what we look for in our view. We may see it differently or we actually subconsciously look for particulars. If I have a perception that someone is unhappy, I would look for those signs. Perhaps I would look for how they hold themselves up, a frown, or I would think I would hear it in their speech. This is why our workshops are so valuable. Our workshops unify us as a team and teach us to work together and trust each other. Our environment builds encouragement. So, we start by looking at the man in the mirror, but we help each other also. Do I see in me what you see in me? Why do you see that in me? We realize through our exercises how environment plays a role in our views and also our perceptions.”

“How is that?”

“Think for a moment. If I were to tell you I witnessed a man slashing a woman's stomach with a knife, what would you first think? Then what if I told you that man was a doctor and the woman his patient and that the woman was pregnant and the doctor had to take the baby to save its life. Your view of that man would be different than before. Instead of the man being a bad man, you'd view him as a good man and a hero because the environment and the circumstance change the view. I am sure that just by the environment of me being a manager of a department gives others a preconceived point of view. So, our exercises help find the whole person.”

“Your workshops sound like a valuable tool. Mrs. Kendall, what would be your next point?”

“Our next message, ‘There are two views of success; whose are you looking through?’ My point here would be that as you focus your concern on others' success, this breeds a reciprocal pattern of behavior. By showing my focus and concern on employees' success, their concern grows for mine. People will grow in loyalty and go the extra mile even when it's not

asked of them. They see your concerns and efforts as genuine and become appreciative. Their appreciation builds upon that winning environment. One thing all managers must realize and grasp is that your people are a reflection of you and the environment you've created for them. If you're lazy, they become lazy. Beware of the manager that complains that all his employees are lazy. I remember once being at a conference and hearing a manager from another location complain that his people were useless. This seemed to be a common complaint each time I came into contact with this manager. Now what was that manager saying about himself? Understand, if you desire your employees to work hard, make sure that you're working hard. If you desire their timeliness, then you must be on time. Naturally you'll deal with those that may deviate from your example through behavior modification, but your team as a whole will reflect you."

"I agree," I said. "I remember a manager who would leave early every. Eventually the employees wanted to do the same. This manager became frustrated and pointed out that we were paid to work until a certain time, but the reality was our belief was that he was paid to work till that time also. Our next manager did the opposite; he worked hard and into the late hours. In a short time, the employees naturally progressed to giving a full effort until actual quitting time. The changes just came naturally."

"That's my point," said Mrs. Kendall. "I believe each of us can look at past examples we've had personally. That's a powerful tool."

"Okay, now your third point?"

"The third message, 'If your climb was easy, maybe you've chosen a hill instead of a mountain?' My point here is it's okay to give your employees the answers. Now what we must realize is how to give the answers to where it is constructive and a benefit. For example, my husband signed up for a carpentry class to learn as a hobby. To graduate, there were thirteen tests to pass. The instructor would just give out the formulas required to pass. He stated, 'Just learn the formula and you'll pass the test.' This frustrated my husband because by just memorizing the formula, he did not comprehend why the formula worked. My husband met with the instructor and explained that if he understood the formula's logic or why it worked, he would not have to

memorize it. By understanding the logic, my husband would come to the answer logically and understand the whole equation. Why does it work? What's the logic behind it? Now those are valuable answers. You see, it's okay to give the answers if your objective is to teach. My husband's instructor's objective was for his students to just pass. After his students passed, many still knew little about carpentry. What type of experience do you believe they had? We seek the best possible experience for our employees. If it benefits the learning experience, then it's okay to give the answers as long as you educate the steps to the answer along with the logic and the why."

"But shouldn't people find their own answers?"

"Sure, on many experiences. But if you're teaching a child to stay away from a cliff, you're going to give that child the answer. You'll explain what would happen and the dangers of the cliff. I don't think you'll let that child find their own answer. Many times a manager who never gives the answer is just a lazy and poor manager. Giving the answer allows us to educate and coach. Anytime you create coaching opportunities you win. Your employee grows as well as your environment."

"Wow, I like the concept. What would be your fourth point?"

"My final point really covers all four of my messages. I assume it really covers management and how we manage. My final point is not to allow your prejudices to taint your observation and objectivity. We all have things we like and things we dislike. We have beliefs, needs, and desires, which all come into factor daily. So with that, it is important not to let our prejudices taint our observations and objectivity."

Mrs. Kendall continued, "I'll tell you a story from a book I read by Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek. The book is faith-based, but this example is fun. The story is about sixteen-year-old Johnny. Johnny came down from his bedroom and stumbled into the kitchen to get a bowl of his favorite cereal Alpha Bits. When he got to the table, he was surprised to see that the cereal box was knocked over and the Alpha-Bits letters spelled out 'TAKE OUT THE

GARBAGE--MOM' on the place mat. Recalling a recent high school biology lesson, Johnny didn't attribute the message to his mom. He'd just been taught that life itself is merely a product of mindless, natural laws. Thus maybe the cat knocked the box over or an earthquake shook the house. No sense jumping to conclusions. Johnny didn't want to take out the garbage. He didn't have time for house chores. This was summer vacation and he wanted to get to the beach. Mary, a girl he likes would be at the beach."

Mrs. Kendall continued, "Johnny's friend Scott liked Mary too, so Johnny wanted to get to the beach early to beat Scott there. But when Johnny arrived, he saw Mary and Scott walking hand-in-hand along the shore. As he followed them at a distance, he looked down and saw a heart drawn in the sand with the words 'Mary loves Scott'. For a moment, Johnny felt his heart sink, but thoughts of his biology class rescued him from deep despair. 'Maybe this is just another case of natural laws at work!' he thought. 'Perhaps sand crabs or an unusual wave pattern just happened to produce this love note naturally.' No sense accepting a conclusion he didn't like! Johnny would just have to ignore the corroborating evidence of the hand-holding."

I smiled and Mrs. Kendall went on. "Comforted by the fact that principles learned in his biology class could help him avoid conclusions he didn't like, Johnny decided to lie down for a few minutes to get a little sun. As he put his head back on his towel, he noticed a message in the clouds on the sky blue background. 'Unusual cloud formation,' Johnny thought. 'Swirling winds perhaps?' No, Johnny couldn't play the game of denial any longer. 'Drink Coke' was the real thing. A message like that was a sure sign of intelligence; it couldn't be the result of natural forces because natural forces have never been observed to create messages. Even though he never saw a plane, Johnny knew there must have been a skywriter up there recently. Besides, he wanted to believe this message--the hot sun had left him parched, thirsting for a Coke.

"This story hits home with my final point of not allowing your prejudices to taint your observation and objectivity. In the story, Johnny didn't want to believe what he observed. Johnny lost his objectivity, and his prejudice of what he had believed or been taught is what he held to. You see, it's important that we as managers do not allow our prejudices to do the same. I've witnessed a manager who really liked an employee to the extent that they refused to admit what

they observed about that employee. That manager's desire for that person to succeed allowed that manager to keep that employee longer than they should have. Because this manager lost their objectiveness, an environment developed from the other employees of resentment and lack of trust. The same can occur but with the facts in reverse. I have also witnessed a manager dislike a person for reasons not related to the job task. The important point is to always seek to be fair and objective. We develop strong communication with managers and with employees. It is with this communication that we have been able to build honesty in feedback to each other and to receive that feedback objectively. Once you establish this as a foundation, then it's easier to build and expect the same from each employee. Accountability starts with you first."

"Thanks, I appreciate your insight and your time." I stood up and shook hands with Mrs. Kendall.

"You are welcome, and I thank you. By your interest, I've been allowed to share. Each time I share, I grow. So for that opportunity I thank you."

"You're welcome," I said. I felt funny being thanked, but I also felt appreciative. It made me reflect on the discussion on thankfulness and gratitude. From there I excused myself and headed back to Mr. Scott's office for our closing meeting.