



Course Corrections

How to Shoot for the Moon

Several years ago, when I turned 40, someone recommended Bob Buford's book *Halftime* to me. The premise is that we all face a half time in our lives in which we look back at the success and failures of the First Half and anticipate what lies ahead in the Second Half. I remember when America was sending astronauts to the moon. The thrilling days of the space race, Apollo, and Neil Armstrong's immortal words, "...one giant leap for mankind." Each moon mission had to make a mid-course correction to adjust its direction toward a lunar orbit. Without it the craft would shoot off course into the vastness of outer space. Are there corrections you need to make to adjust your course in life? Is there a direction change you are going through and you just don't know how to handle it? The following are four course corrections that we all need to make to successfully get to our final destination in a life of value.

1. Commit yourself to a purpose. What are you here for? Most people have no clue what they were put on this Earth to do. They change careers 5-7 times in life looking for something that makes them happy. A friend told me when I turned 40 to use it as an opportunity to discover what I have enjoyed doing for the first half of my life. And find a way to get paid to do it for the second half. Actually that's just what I did. I found that I thrived on speaking and training. Every audience that I got in front of fed my enthusiasm and it became a mutual relationship of giving and taking from each other. I wouldn't trade what I am doing now for anything in the world. It's fun, it pays well and I receive a blessing from inspiring others to be the best they can be.

My advice is to discover your purpose. What would you do if no one paid you to do it? As I quoted Billy Crystal in the article "Living With Purpose, what is the "One thing" that you have discovered that you are here for? What ignites your potential? What do you do that adds something to others loves and makes this a better place to live? Find it and you will begin the Course Correction that leads to a better life. Yes, you may have to quit your day job (I'd be ready, though before you jump out).

2. Rekindle your Mission. How do you do your purpose? I was in a fast food chain restaurant a while back and there on the wall was their mission statement. Sure their purpose is to deliver food, fast, but how do they do it that sets them apart from all the other chains? What do they serve that makes them unique? I read a mission statement in

the Ritz Carlton's Hotel at St. Louis. What does the Ritz-Carlton do that other hotel chains don't do? What amenities do they provide that say, "This is the Ritz. And you are going to be treated differently than if you were at any other place."?

Does your life have a mission statement? What do you do that makes you unique? What is your stamp on life that makes others remark about you? As Seth Godin, the Marketing Guru says, "What makes you 'remark-able'?" In other words, what special product, style or service do you do that makes people remark about it to others? Where does your creativity lie? Most people can discover with a little effort what they love to do. It takes someone willing to go to the next level to say, "How do I do it in a way that no one else does?" This is what separates great products and services from run-of-the-mill, everyday items that are here today and gone tomorrow. You will never find true happiness imitating others. You will never get the respect and recognition they get. How many copy cat books about "The Code" came out after the success of *The DaVinci Code*? None of them are very memorable. Life can spot a fraud easily. Find your purpose then determine your mission in accomplishing it.

3. Plan ahead. Last month I spent two days with Speaker Coach and Mentor Lou Heckler. Lou helps speakers refine their presentations. I have been speaking for over four years and I wanted to go to the next level with my business. I knew to do this I would have to have some training with a master speaker. Lou is just that person. We went into how I live my life, what I have learned from my past and how it impacts my presentations. What we came out with was a totally new slant on my top presentation, *Reaching Beyond Excellence*. I knew that to move to the next level, I had to plan a mid-course correction in advance.

A friend called me recently to get advice on starting his own business. He has been in the same job for over 15 years and now he feels that tug of the Second Half. That small voice that says, "I want to do something different." It begins as a small voice but if you ignore it long enough it gets louder. He is hearing the call and determining what it will cost him and his family. How long will it take him to get his new venture off the ground? What risks will he need to take? How long will it be before he is self-sufficient? The Bible says that only a fool decides to build a house without counting the cost, first. Only a fool goes into battle without determining if he/she can win first.

As you make your mid-course correction, how are you investing your resources? What are you doing to gear your mind and your support for the change you know you need to make? My pastor said recently, "The best investment you can make in the Second Half is to invest in someone else's First Half." Which leads us to...

4. Learn how to equip others. Crosby, Stills and Nash sang, "Teach your children well." John Maxwell says, "There is no success without a successor." Former college and pro football coach Lou Holtz said, "You get ahead by helping others get ahead." In the National Speakers Association there is a spirit of helping others that supercedes ego. Every member's goal is to share their knowledge about how they found success with others and pass it forward. My friend and mentor, Joe Bonura, has only one requirement

for the many hours of advice and counsel he has given me. Pass it on to someone else. Imagine what kind of world this would be if we helped each other out without fear of competition? I know that sounds like a “pie in the sky” vision, but that is the exact vision Cavett Robert had when he founded the National Speakers Association.

Last month I was asked to share tips on successful marketing with new members of NSA in a round table discussion. One New member asked me, “What do we owe you for this information?” Proudly I said, “The same thing I was charged for it. One day, when you find success, you will have the opportunity to pass your style, your method, your expertise along to someone who needs it. On that day you will pay me in full by passing it forward to them.”

Are you teaching others to follow in your success? Are you teaching your proverbial (or actual) children well what you have learned? Earl Nightingale said, “A leader who has no followers is merely taking a walk.” Who is coming on your journey with you?

Recalling the days of the moon missions, I remember when Apollo 8 first circled the moon. It was said that they hit their mark in their lunar orbit within four seconds of when it was engineered to occur. These figures were worked out months before the crew was even launched into space. The mid-course correction was what made it all possible.

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