



# weLEAD Online Magazine

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A Short Story of  
**Personal & Organizational  
emPOWERMENT**  
Creating Company Environments that **ROCK**

## **Part 2**

To read part 1 of this story [click here!](#)

By Michael Shenker

## **2 Creativity vs Competition**



Opening the door at precisely 8 AM, Myron broke out into his pirate laugh and cheerfully welcomed me in, "Ah, good morning lad. Anticipating your promptness, I have already prepared some tea for us." He looked up at me slyly as I entered, "How have you and Mr. Wattles been getting along?"

I sighed, "Myron, why in the hell do I need to know all this just to read this book?"

"Do you want a little cheese with that wine?" He closed the door and motioned for me to take a seat as we both took our respective places on the sofa and chair. "The truth of the matter Robert, is that what you understand to be reality is hogwash. You don't know what you don't know. In order to understand a book on reality in its true state, you have to know what the hell reality is. If I'd known you were looking for something easy, I would have sent you packing the first time I'd laid eyes on you. What we're going to be doing over the next few weeks is simple but not necessarily easy. Remember, you called me. If you want to walk around with your head in the sand for the rest of your life fighting one problem after the other in your competitive world, it's no skin off my nose. Just walk out that door and we'll call it quits."

Here was my opportunity to make life easy and leave. After all, I had a successful company, a good marriage and my kids liked me. But something was missing and a little voice inside was telling me that if I stuck it out with Myron I just might find out what it is.

With all the face saving energy I could muster, "You're right Myron; I'm here to understand reality so let's go to work. But tell me, why is "truth" or *objective* reality such a mystique? I mean, shouldn't reality be obvious? Right off the bat you hit me with a concept that is so totally contrary to everything I've learned in school and in life."

"Robert, there's an old adage that when the student is ready the teacher will appear. Up until now you weren't ready to know reality. Besides, in order to know the truth, you first have to know the lie because everything is relative. Can you write with white chalk on a white board? No. Can you distinguish the summer without winter? How about day without night? The fact that you don't like what I'm telling you is irrelevant to me and just demonstrates the necessity for you to listen with the mind of a student with no expectations."

"But Myron, how can you prove what this Wattles' character is saying? You know, I've read his words over and over and what I got out of it was simply that creation begins with a thought and if you continue that thought you can create what you're thinking."

"Bravo, you've got it!"

"I've got it? I've got what? I've had high hopes and expectations as to what success was going to bring me for the last ten years; like more time with my family and the opportunity to pursue my hobbies and travel but when my dreams met reality, reality usually won out and I just kept on working harder each year."

"Robert, let's take it one step at a time. I think you'll find that you yourself are the proof of what Wattles is saying. Let's take a look at what primarily occupies your thoughts each day. Like most people, you think about what you need or what you don't have; is that right?"

Although I didn't care for the way he worded the question I had to agree, "I suppose."

He leaned closer as if speaking about something that was only meant to be heard by me, "One of the tendencies of the unempowered is to link their dreams and desires with fears, doubts and insecurities about their abilities to achieve their dreams. Every time they think of something they want they subconsciously begin having corresponding feelings of doubt and insecurity about their ability to get it. Since feelings trump thoughts, their mind cuts them off in their tracks and nothing manifests other than more insecurity. Based upon what Wattles purports and science has proven, your thoughts and

your focus always provide you with exactly what you focus on. As you told me the first time we met, you're constantly dealing with maintaining market share, your competitors, shrinking margins and increasing the value of your stock. Since your mind is designed to bring you whatever it thinks you want and is totally ignorant of your intentions due to its extremely literal and simplistic interpretation, it can only bring you more competition, shrinking market share, etcetera. Once you understand how the mind works and are respectful of its power, everything will begin to change.”

“OK, I think I’m starting to get this. I see what you’re saying. So if I want to get ‘X’, then ‘X’ had better be what I focus on irrespective of my current reality,” I smiled, nodding my head in agreement and feeling a little more confident.

“Exactly,” he smiled back, like a teacher whose student was showing signs of progress.

“And what about the residual doubt and fear that I experience about my ability to get ‘X’?”

“Here, my friend is where faith comes in. Now this may seem a little odd because this is a scientific process, so why do we need faith? The answer is that in the initial stages of working with this new technology, irrespective of Wattles or science, you don’t know it works. The only way to compensate for this is through faith. Over time, you will see that this process works like gang busters and you won’t have the necessity to have ‘blind’ faith. You will, however, develop ‘true’ faith as you begin to successfully manifest what you want.” He sat back with confidence and sipped his tea.

“I have to admit, this is pretty interesting stuff.” I was now getting energized as it began to make some sense for the first time when another thought occurred to me. “But what about the real world problems and challenges that need handling every day? Should I just ignore them and focus on getting ‘X’?”

“Quite the contrary, as Ramdas says, “Being-Here-Now” is the name of the game. Do all that you can do each moment to deal with the challenges of the day to the best of your ability while at the same time maintaining a positive, confident vision of what you want in the future.”

“Well, I can see that this isn’t going to be a walk in the park, but whatever it takes to master this technique, I can make it happen.”

“That’s what I like to hear. You know, people who embark upon this type of work are called *warriors*, in that they are constantly dealing with the conflict of perceived reality - what they have, for actual reality - what they want.”

“So is that it? Is that all there is to it?”

"Close but not quite. Being-here-now in dealing with the challenges of the day and being vigilant of your thoughts of the future is a good start, but that's just the first of many aspects to this process. For example Robert, what do you want, what is your vision for the future?"

"You know, the usual; continued success, the ability to spend more time with my family... to be happy."

"That's what everybody wants, but what is your definition of success, and how much more time with your family do you want and what would you do if you had it and what exactly makes you happy? Remember the mind is simplistic and literal and you don't want it to have to guess for you. What you want needs to be spelled out in great detail using as many of your senses as possible."

"Then I guess I don't have a specific, detailed vision for the future."

"And that's what next week's assignment is all about. In preparation for that, I want you to write down what your life looks like in detail in a perfect world. This is a no holds barred description of your perfect life including where you live, who you are living with, what kind of house you live in, what kind of car you drive, what color it is, how much discretionary time do you have and how do you spend it, etcetera, etcetera. Keep it as short and concise as possible with as much detail as you can."

"Anything I want no matter what?"

"Anything, providing 1) it's physically possible and 2) it's what you really want and not what somebody else wants for you and *please* Robert, GO BIG, and have fun with it. Don't write down what you think you're capable of having, write down what you want as if anything were possible and you couldn't fail and I'll see you next week."

As I left Myron's house my head was swirling. I'm amazed I have been able to accomplish as much as I have. I can't imagine what I'm going to be able to accomplish using these tools, but I guess that's what this week's assignment is all about.

### **3 The Quest for a Worthy Ideal**

The week seemed to fly by and before I knew it I was walking up to Myron's front door. I took a deep breath and knocked. The door opened a few moments later and there stood the strange little man who I have started to become so fond of.

"Good morning Robert. Have you come with a vision, or are you still flying blind?" He let out one of those great pirate laughs and then motioned for me to come in as we both made ourselves comfortable in our respective seats.

"I've been working very diligently on my vision and am looking forward to discussing it with you," I said with some degree of pride.

"So, you've decided what you want and what your vision is, but are you passionate about it?" He reached over to the teapot sitting next to him and began to pour the tea into two cups, passing one to me.

"Yes and yes," I chimed in like a kid winning a spelling bee. "What's weird is how much work it took to get clear on what I really wanted. Even though I have projections and goals for my company, I realized that on a personal level I was pretty much reacting to life as opposed to it responding to me."

"Excellent observation," Myron said as he took a sip of tea and pondered for a moment as if deciding whether or not the flavor suited him. "Over the years I have had the privilege of speaking to many business leaders and inevitably many of them acknowledged the same situation and consequently agreed that they were unsatisfied and unfulfilled even though they were financially successful," he raised a knowing eyebrow at me.

Wanting Myron to hurry up and review my vision for the future I eagerly responded, "Should I go ahead and show you what I've come up with?"

He let out another one of his pirate laughs and smiled, "Sure, on one condition." He then looked me in the eye, "That you are willing to give up your life for what you want."

"Give up my life? You never said anything about that!"

"Well of course not. I wanted you to think through what you wanted first. Now that you've done that, it's time to put it in perspective. Remember when I said, 'go big?'"

"But I never thought you were talking life and death big."

"Well what did you think I was talking about? A big house, an expensive car, massive amounts of money? That's not big in my book. Big is that which you are willing to give up your life for because

that's what you're actually doing each day – giving up your life for what you want. Every day you spend working for something is a day of your life you've traded in the process.”

As Myron spoke, I sank lower and lower into his couch as if it were eating me for breakfast. Just when I think I understand what he's talking about, he pulls the rug out from under my feet and I'm back to square one, but perhaps that's just part of the learning process. As I was folding up my goals and putting them back in my pocket, Myron let out another hearty laugh.

“Robert my boy, don't be discouraged. This 'E' ticket ride you're on is guaranteed to take you places you didn't even know existed and will change your life forever. You'll not only know how to read the book, you'll be able to write your own. The key to not being upset or discouraged is to not have any expectations as I've cautioned you about before. Eastern philosophy teaches that without expectations, you're never upset, but we'll discuss that more in depth next week.”

He walked over to one of the book shelves, combed the titles with his index finger and removed one. Holding it in his hand he turned to me and started walking back. “For now, I want you to upgrade your goals to what Earl Nightingale calls a '*Worthy Ideal*' in his definition of success; **Success is the progressive realization of a worthy ideal**. Naturally, in order to do this, you have to have a Worthy Ideal which works as a compass in setting lesser goals. You do know who Earl Nightingale is, don't you?”

“Of course, he's the cofounder of the Nightingale-Conant Corporation. They publish all kinds of personal development materials.”

Myron sat back down in his chair and cleared his throat, “Now, what does Nightingale's statement mean to you?”

“OK, well, let's see, *Progressive* means the feeling of moving forward and getting closer to what you want. *Realization* is the act of bringing into concrete existence. *Worthy* is having some moral worth and/or deserving respect and *ideal* is an idea or image with heart, soul and passion – something of true worth or value.”

Myron slapped his hand on the side of his thigh and grinned widely, “Give that man a cupie doll! As you develop your Worthy Ideal, you'll find that it will be driven by an unrelenting force and a passion that cannot be denied and will provide you with a level of inspiration like nothing you've ever experienced. By living according to your Worthy Ideal, your business will grow at a faster rate, your relationships will be strengthened and what you thought you wanted out of life will pale in comparison to your reality.”

He picked up an ornate piece of stationery, “Here are some clues that will assist you in developing your Worthy Ideal,” as he handed it to me. I began to read it.

1. Your Worthy Ideal is soaked with emotion, powered by passion, driven by destiny and forged with the fire of the heart.
2. You’ll know when you have discovered your Worthy Ideal (or *heart’s desire*) because you’ll feel it in your guts.
3. Your Worthy Ideal will inspire you to accomplish tasks well beyond what you have achieved in the past.
4. Your Worthy Ideal will afford you the opportunity to become more aware of your true nature.
5. No matter how difficult your challenges, your Worthy Ideal will provide you the encouragement to carry on.
6. A Worthy Ideal will have great spiritual value to the extent that you’ll be willing to trade your life for it.

I put the paper down and slowly looked up at Myron.

He started to rise, “Now before my couch totally consumes you, let’s call it a day.”

As I left Myron’s house that morning, a feeling of excitement mixed with wonder was surging throughout my entire being. I was beginning to feel something; a change. It wasn’t like anything I had ever experienced, yet it somehow felt strangely familiar, like something that I had once known but forgotten a long time ago.

## 4 Gratefulness

The week was hectic with the usual challenges of running a thriving company and family obligations which always seem to play second fiddle to business. Yet, with all of my responsibilities and time challenges, I still managed to read the Wattles book and think about my *Worthy Ideal*.

On the drive to Myron's house I realized how happy I was. In fact, I couldn't remember the last time I felt this way. Was I feeling happy about going to see Myron or was it something more? As I walked up to his door I realized that yes, I was happy to be seeing my new-found mentor but more so, for the first time in quite a while I was just happy to be me. I was being exposed to a lot of new concepts and I had this feeling of *rightness* which seemed to substantiate Myron's teachings.

At precisely eight o'clock I knocked and as usual I didn't have to wait long before the door flew open and I was greeted by a smiling and eager-looking Myron indicating with a wave of his hand for me to enter. As I passed through the doorway he said, "All right Robert, now that you've had another week to have a go at developing your Worthy Ideal, what have you got for me?"

"Well good morning to you, too," I couldn't help but get in a playful jab.

"Oh, good morning," he replied with a big smile, indicating that he got the hint that perhaps he was rushing into "teacher mode" a little too quickly. As we took our customary places on the sofa and chair he handed me a cup of tea and I leaned back and got comfortable.

"Robert, you seem to be in an inordinately good mood today. May I ask why?"

"Let's just say that the world I'm living in is getting to be a friendlier place", I replied with a smile. I knew Myron was just eating this up.

"Today I've come to discuss my Worthy Ideal which is based upon my values, beliefs and emotions and what I believe to be the primary motivating factor of my life."

"You've got my attention", he smiled warmly.

"First, I realized that my Worthy Ideal was a place to come *from*, not to go *to*. I thought about those times when I was at my best and then I asked myself, 'what was present for me? Then I thought about when I was at my worst and asked myself, 'what was missing?' At the end of all this, I deduced that my Worthy Ideal was to be proud of myself and the work that I do. To make a difference in the lives of those that I love and care about and when I look back at my life at the end of the road, to feel as though the world was a better place for what I had contributed."

"Excellent! Robert. I'm really proud of you. I can tell that a lot of heartfelt thought went into your Worthy Ideal. Now, let's go back to the goals you developed and see how they stack up against your Worthy Ideal." He leaned back, closed his eyes, sipped from his cup and intently listened.

"OK, well, my primary goal is to sell my business for enough money so that I can semi-retire, work on only those projects that I deem worthwhile, spend quality time with my family and travel a little.

“Robert,” he stopped sipping his tea and looked at me. “I think that all of your goals fit right in line with your Worthy Ideal. However, they all break the laws of goal setting.”

He put the cup down and leaned forward as if to make a point. “Remember when I said that your mind is simplistic and very literal? That means that you have to paint an in-depth picture of what you want. If you want to sell your business, you need to specify when and for how much. You’ll need to delineate what projects you might work on after you sell your company, and decide how you will spend your leisure time with your family and to what destinations you will travel.”

“OK, so I have to define the specifics of the ‘what,’ establish the ‘when’ and forget about the ‘how’ because that’s the job of the Universe, right?”

“Not only are you right, I couldn’t have said it better myself. Now Robert, your Worthy Ideal and your goals are living entities which you’ll continuously change as you change. By continuously being cognizant of what you want on a daily basis you will become a veritable magnet for all that you desire, providing you maintain a positive perspective and have a little faith it will happen in its own good time, ergo, no expectations.”

As Myron poured himself another cup of tea, he gazed deeply into his cup as if he was searching for something. “Robert, now that you have created your Worthy Ideal and your corresponding goals I want to talk to you about the concept of *gratitude*. How often do you take stock of all the things in your life that you’re grateful for?”

“Hmm, I don’t know. Who keeps track of such things? When it happens it happens.”

“But how often does it happen, daily, weekly... a couple times a month?” He stopped in mid sip as if waiting for my answer.

My brow wrinkled as I thought about it, “I don’t know, maybe a couple of times a month.”

“Well Robert, as a *warrior*, it is imperative that you write down and consider all that you are grateful for on a *daily* basis. In order to appreciate the value of this, let me give you some background on its significance to your success.” He took a slow sip and then continued.

“You see, I have known many great business leaders in my time who never reached their true potential. They worked hard, read veritable libraries of books on success and business, joined all the right organizations and kissed all the right fannies,” he let go with a hearty laugh, “but never achieved what was possible. And why you ask? Because of a lack of adherence to the *Law of Gratitude*.” He picked up the Wattles book, opened it to a passage and read, “According to Wattles:

*There is a Law of Gratitude, and it is absolutely necessary that you should observe the Law, if you are to get the results you seek.*

*The Law of Gratitude is the natural principle that action and reaction are always equal, and in opposite directions.*

*The grateful outreaching of your mind in thankful praise to the Universe is a liberation or expenditure of force; it cannot fail to reach that to which it is addressed, and the reaction is an instantaneous movement towards you. 'Draw nigh unto the Universe, and It will draw nigh unto you.' That is a statement of psychological truth.*

*And, if your gratitude is strong and constant, the reaction in Formless Substance will be strong and continuous; the movement of the things you want will be always toward you. You cannot exercise much power without gratitude; for it is gratitude that keeps you connected with Power."*

He closed the book and slowly looked up at me, "So what do you get from this?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, I don't know what in the hell he's talking about. I mean 'Draw nigh unto the Universe, and It will draw nigh unto you.' What's that all about?"

I could see that Myron had some appreciation for my lack of understanding as he sat back and smiled. "You know Robert, I have read *The Science of Getting Rich* so many times, I have forgotten what a pain in the butt the early 1900's jargon is to someone just starting to read it. Years ago I took the trouble to edit Wattles book, bringing it up to contemporary standards. I'll give you a copy of my edited version before you leave today." (NOTE TO READER: If you're interested in reading the edited version, e-mail me at [mshenker@a-teams.us](mailto:mshenker@a-teams.us) or go to my website at [www.a-teams.us](http://www.a-teams.us) and click on "Free Today" and download it.)

"For right now, however, let me break it down for you. The Law of Gratitude states that 'action and reaction are always equal and in opposite directions.' Giving thanks or being grateful to the Universe for what you have today and what you want to manifest tomorrow creates an *action*. The Universe then responds in kind with a *reaction* which causes you to receive more of what you are grateful for."

"I'm not sure I understand why I would be grateful for the things that I want in the future."

"You see part of the process for manifesting or creating what you want in the future is giving thanks for it today. This Law of Gratitude is so powerful, that you can do everything else right and by not adhering to the Law of Gratitude, never reach your full potential."

As I thought about it the pieces started falling into place and a smile gradually began to replace my look of confusion.

“Make sense?”

“Actually, it does,” I proclaimed.

Myron then handed me his edited version of *The Science of Getting Rich* and said that next week we'll keep pushing the envelope while lightening the load a little as he abruptly bid me good bye.

“See you next week Robert, you're doing a great job,” he said and patted me on the shoulder.

“Thank you, Myron,” I replied. I felt a new bounce in my step as I walked to my car. This was going to be a great weekend.

## 5 Expectation & Non Resistance

Before I left last week, Myron told me that today's lesson would both lighten my load as well as expand my horizons which would be welcome information to say the least. Although I have tremendous responsibilities and most of the time I'm under a lot of stress, all-in-all I have a great life. My company is successful, my wife and I have two beautiful, happy children, I have great friends and I have good health. So I have to ask myself, why is my relationship with Myron such a boon to my existence?

Over and above trying to understand these new concepts, I'm fifty years old and although I've been extremely fortunate in my life, I'm starting to realize that there is more to life than what I previously believed. I attended a seminar recently and the person leading it had us do an exercise whereby we closed our eyes and pretended we were lying on a hospital bed. The lights were turned down low, we were to pretend we were all alone and had only three minutes to live. We were asked to quickly review our life and the question was then posed, “how do you feel about it?” And you know what? I didn't feel so hot. In fact, tears welled up in my eyes when I thought about all the things I wanted to do but never got around to it. I thought about all the places I wanted to take my family but was too busy building my business and I thought about the dreams I once had when I was younger which seemed to fall by the wayside as I had gotten older.

My experience at that seminar has made me realize that my meeting Myron was very fortuitous. As I pulled in front of his house, I saw him trimming some bushes which was pretty impressive for a man of his years.

As I approached him he greeted me warmly “Good morning Robert, how are you doing this fine day?”

“I’m doing great, sir. I’m surprised you haven’t hired somebody to do your yard work.”

“Oh hell, I’ve never found anybody that could do the job nearly as well as me. I do all the yard work myself; can’t you see how young it makes me look?” Myron gave me a big smile and let out one of his trademark laughs. I realized that this was the perfect opportunity to ask him something I’ve wanted to know since I met him but felt uncomfortable asking. “Exactly how old are you, Myron?”

He lowered the clippers and looked at me, “How *young* do you think I am?”

OK, I asked for it. How do I tactfully get myself out of this one? “I’m going to say... seventy.” It came out sounding like a question.

“Humph. Not even close,” he said and went back to trimming the hedge.

“Eighty?” I asked, not certain if I done the right thing.

He lowered the clippers once again and turned to me. “You’re getting warmer. I’m going to be ninety-seven years young next month,” he bowed as he said it.

My mouth dropped open in astonishment and all I could say was, “Wow.”

“What are we jawing out here for? Let’s get some tea and go to work.”

As I sank down into that couch which I’d grown to love, Myron poured me a nice hot cup of our traditional green tea.

“Robert, today we’re going to talk about a couple of things that will definitely lighten the load. As a warrior, you might think that life is all about fighting reality, but nothing could be farther from the truth. In fact, a warrior’s life is easier than most because of their perspective.”

Myron then began searching through the hundreds of books that occupied his bookshelf, floor and desk. “Aha, there it is.” Finding what he was looking for he removed an old-looking leather bound book from one of the shelves.

“Robert this little book is called the *Tao Te Ching* which was written by a Taoist sage by the name of Lao Tzu in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC and translated by a brilliant author by the name of Stephen Mitchell. Lao Tzu had never intended to document his wisdom, however, when he was making his way to the mountains to die, he was held captive at the border by the ruler of China until he wrote all of what he knew of life.” He opened the book to a marked section. “His writings contained 81 precepts. In his 2<sup>nd</sup> precept, Lao Tzu writes,” as he reads aloud:

*“When people see some things as beautiful,  
other things become ugly.*

*When people see some things as good,  
other things become bad.*

*Being and non-being create each other.*

*Difficult and easy support each other.*

*Long and short define each other.*

*High and low depend on each other.*

*Before and after follow each other.*

*Therefore the Master*

*acts without doing anything*

*and teaches without saying anything.*

*Things arise and he lets them come;*

*things disappear and he lets them go.*

*He has but doesn't possess,*

***acts but doesn't expect.***

*When his work is done, he forgets it.*

*That is why it lasts forever.”*

He closed the book and looked up at me, “I have read this to you Robert because of two words, ‘*expectation*’ and ‘*non-resistance*,’ which are the bane of our existence. Unlike many western motivational speakers who preach that one should ‘*expect what you want*,’ I can tell you with 100% certainty that expectation will get you nothing but disappointment and heartache. The truth of the matter is that without expectations your life will be much happier and joyful. Now this is not to say that you don’t have goals, because you do, but it’s all about creating them, not expecting them because they will come at their perfect time and you don’t know when that is.”

Myron began to move closer as he continued speaking, “The point here is that instead of arguing with reality or *what is*, you can utilize another Universal Law, the *Law of Polarity*. The Law of Polarity which

is discussed by Lau Tzu states that everything in life is like a coin with two sides; a 'good' side and a 'bad' side and in many instances you don't know which is which. It's kind of like the story about the cat chasing a mouse through a field and the mouse runs under a cow who promptly craps on him. The cat looks around, can't find the mouse so he gives up and goes about his business. A wolf, however, who witnessed the entire incident, strolls over to the cow pie, lifts the mouse out, brushes him off and promptly eats him. The moral of the story is that not everyone who craps on you is your enemy and not everyone who pulls you out of the crap is your friend."

He winked at me, patted me on the shoulder and said, "See you next week, Robert."

## 6 Personal Freedom

On the drive over to Myron's house I was tempted to pull out my cell phone and cancel our meeting due to the foul mood I was in, but that little voice inside kept nudging me to keep my appointment. I find it funny how difficult I can be at times. I swear, I fought myself all the way up the brick walkway to Myron's front porch until I finally called it a truce and knocked, once again, at precisely 8 AM. The door opened and Myron greeted me with a big friendly smile.

"Good morning Robert, how are you doing today?" and gestured for me to come in.

As I walked past him and into the living room I replied, "Well not so hot." We took our seats as I relayed to him the circumstances over the last couple of days. Myron poured the tea with a wry smile on his face and I wondered what the little elf was up to.

"Robert, one of the subjects I wanted to cover with you today is the works of Don Miguel Ruiz entitled the *Four Agreements*. Based upon what you just shared with me, it would appear that my timing is excellent."

I took my cup and settled back, prepared to hear some new pearls of wisdom I had become so used to experiencing. Myron also settled back in his chair and continued, "Don Miguel Ruiz comes from a long line of Toltec healers and teachers. Although his family anticipated that he would continue on with the family's centuries-old legacy, Don Miguel followed a different path and went to medical school and became a surgeon. After a near-death car accident, Don Miguel switched gears and now devotes his life to sharing the Toltec wisdom. In the interest of teaching mankind a path to personal freedom and not being controlled by your environment, he wrote his first book, *The Four Agreements*."

Although I am only going to discuss the highlights, I highly recommend that you get the book and study it in depth.”

From the table next to him he picked up the book and held it up to show me, then opened it. “The first Agreement is BE IMPECCABLE WITH YOUR WORD.” He looked up from the book and said, “... Which means to speak with integrity. This sounds somewhat simple, but it is actually very, very powerful. Depending on how you use it, your words can change lives for the better which is demonstrated by people like Lao Tzu, Socrates and Jesus or they can destroy lives which is demonstrated by Hitler, Stalin and Saddam Hussein. If you do what you say, you can create a heaven on earth. If you spend your time gossiping or not being true to your word, you render your speech weak and powerless.” He took a sip of tea and looked closely at me. “Is this making any sense?”

“Yes, I replied. “I get it. If we don’t have our word we don’t have much at all.”

“Good!” Myron smiled and returned to the book. “The second Agreement is DON’T TAKE ANYTHING PERSONALLY.” He stops to think for a moment, looks at me and says, “The reality is that whatever someone says or does to you, it has nothing to do with you and everything to do with them. When you become immune to the opinion of others, you become very powerful and enjoy a level of independence enjoyed by few. Just look back on your life and see how often your words and actions were based upon how others would perceive them. Now think how your life would be if you had the freedom to act independently and didn’t take anything personally, would that improve your life?”

That was a powerful question and I had to stop and think about my answer. “Every time I was ever involved in a confrontation whether it was verbal or otherwise, was a result of my reacting to what the other person said or did.”

“Excellent, that’s getting it!” He again read from the book, “The third Agreement is DON’T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS.” He slowly put down the book and looked at me. “Most people spend their entire lives making assumptions of what others say and do based upon their personal view of the world, not how the world really is. So the vast majority of what we believe to be true is false. By asking clarifying questions and not making assumptions, you can get to the actual truth as opposed to your *version* of it. With this one agreement, you can completely transform your life. Are you ready to give it a try?”

“I believe so.” I reconsidered my words, “Yes, I’m ready.”

Myron nodded affirmatively then went back to the book. “The fourth and last Agreement is ALWAYS DO YOUR BEST.” He smiled, closed the book and looked at me once more. “By following this Agreement you will experience life with a positive intensity which will produce a high self esteem level

and a lot of self fulfillment. By doing your best, which will vary, depending upon how you feel, you will be highly productive while at the same time being good to yourself. The main idea behind doing your best is that your actions are motivated by self love and respect – not for some reward at the end. Actions based upon rewards are hollow and not truly enjoyed.”

He placed the book back on the table and picked up his tea and sipped. “What do you think of the Four Agreements?”

“I love them. If I would have incorporated them into my life prior to yesterday, the outcome of my day would have been entirely different. Up until now, I never even considered the concept of personal freedom and the tremendous impact it would have for me and every person in my life.”

“Well Robert, today is your lucky day. In addition to the *Four Agreements*, I’m going to show you an exercise which will give you even more personal freedom.”

“What have I done to deserve all this?” I said jovially.

“Like I said, ‘when the student is ready the teacher or teaching will appear.’ Now I want you to un-button your top button, un-tuck your shirt, loosen your belt a notch or two and lie down on the floor.”

“Are you kidding me?”

“Do I look like I’m kidding, let’s go.”

I followed Myron’s instructions feeling a little bit out of my comfort zone but then, I had to admit, my entire relationship with him has been about getting me out of my comfort zone. I proceeded to lie down on the floor.

“OK, now put this glass of water beside you and I’ll give you little background on Transformational Breathing or TB, which was co-created by Dr. Judith Kravitz. TB is a unique form of breath work that facilitates the natural healing process for all types of trauma and is beneficial in gaining greater physical, mental and spiritual health. It has a number of associated benefits including:

- **Higher energy level**
- **Reduces worry and anxiety**
- **Enhances the awareness of self-sabotaging patterns**
- **Clears past traumas and dramas**
- **Relieves depressive and negative emotions**
- **Improves self-esteem**

In addition to all of this, I do it every day and can personally vouch for the many benefits it has to offer.”

“Wow, that’s pretty impressive. Is it painful?”

“Well,” Myron said with a chuckle, “When I first started doing it I was a little concerned about maintaining my pace for forty five minutes.”

“Forty five minutes, are you kidding me?”

“No, and the beauty is, Dr. Kravitz will guide you through the entire process. So let’s get started.”

Myron handed me a pillow for my head and one for my knees and then a set of head phones and turned on his CD player. As the music played and I breathed, Myron coached me on breathing deeper and deeper. Forty five minutes later, I was about as calm as I have ever been while at the same time feeling rejuvenated. What was weird was it didn’t feel as if I was doing it for forty-five minutes. It felt more like fifteen or twenty. And, I felt myself actually looking forward to doing it again.

When I opened my eyes, Myron was peering down at me with that big smile, “How’d it go, are you gonna live?”

“Wow that was really something.”

“Are you up for doing it again sometime?”

“Absolutely!”

“OK,” He then slipped a piece of paper in my hand with the TB website scribbled on it. “You better gather up your things and I’ll see you next week.”

Still reeling from my Transformational Breathing experience and feeling more relaxed than I can imagine, I waived a faint good bye as I made my way out the door.

***About the author:***

**Michael Shenker, Human Performance Technologies’ founder and President, has been involved with the human potential movement for over twenty five years. He has been a business management consultant, an entrepreneur and has been involved in all phases of personal and organizational development. Michael's clientele ranges from individuals interested in personal growth to Fortune 500 companies like AT&T, Bell Labs, Intel, Planning Research Corp., Pitney Bowes and Coldwell Banker. In his career, Michael has consulted to over 150 companies on organizational development, marketing, sales and creating profitable work place environments. Michael, his wife Susan, of thirty years, son Troy and daughter Samantha reside in Portland, Oregon.**

**The concepts and ideas in emPOWERMENT , Creating Company Environments That ROCK, exemplify the services provided by Michael Shenker and his organization. He specializes in working with business leaders in developing company environments that dramatically increase the ROI of human capital - their employees. For a free consultation, Michael Shenker can be reached by e-mail at [mshenker@a-teams.us](mailto:mshenker@a-teams.us).**

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