

Do What You Do **BETTER**

With
the
7 F's
of
True
Success

FUSION

FUN

FITNESS

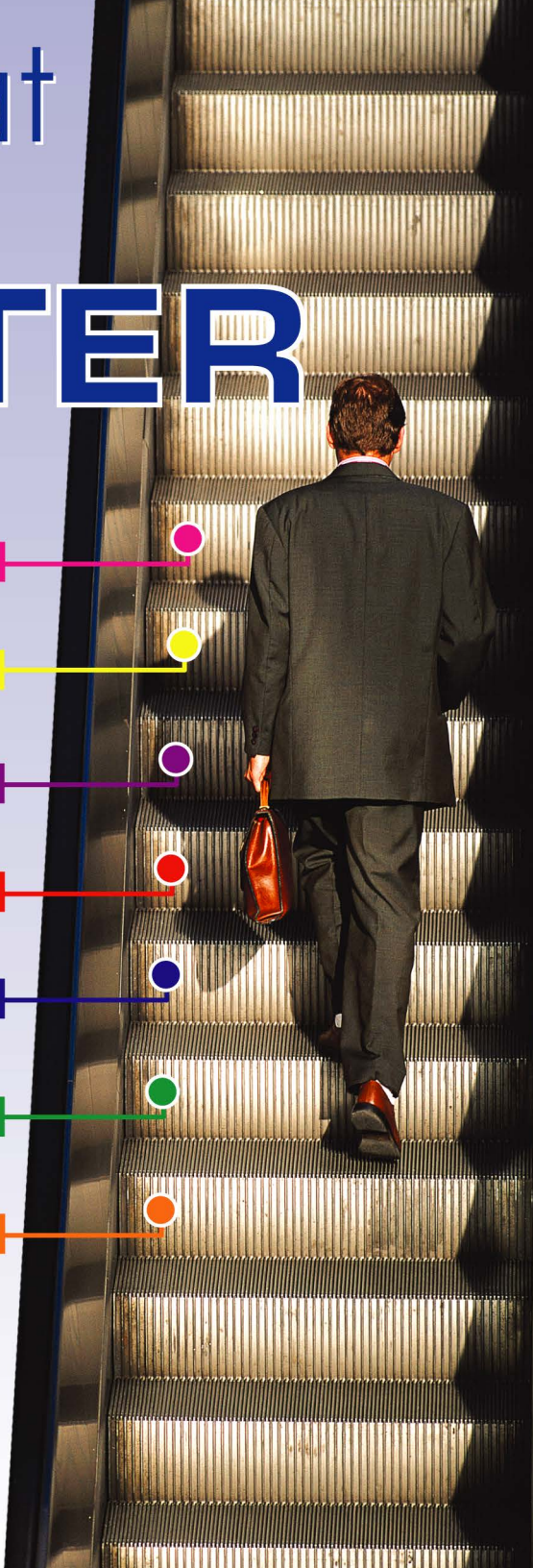
FAITH

FAMILY

FINANCES

FUNDAMENTALS

by Marc A. Corsini



Do What You Do Better™ With the 7 F's of True Success

Copyright 2013 by Marc A. Corsini

All Rights Reserved

No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system without permission in writing from the publisher.

Corsini's Do What You Do Better Publishing
6 Office Park Circle, Suite 309
Birmingham, AL 35223-2542
(205) 879-0432
marc@corsini.com
www.corsini.com

First Printing August 2008
Electronic Printing 2013

Publisher: Marc A. Corsini
Design and Production: Chuck Watkins
Editor: Susan Swagler

Printed in the United States of America

Acknowledgements

Any time you do something significant, it takes a team to make it happen. It takes “angels” to help you **Do What You Do Better**. This book was no exception.

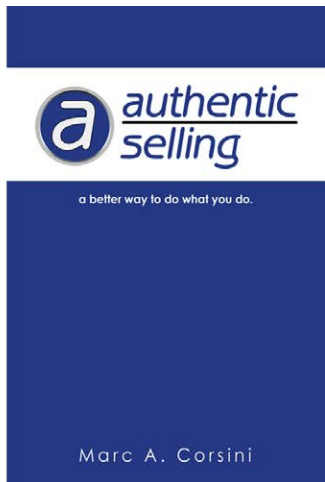
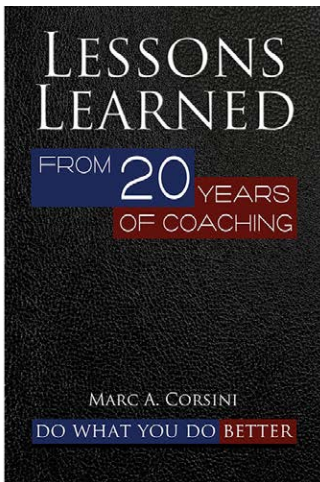
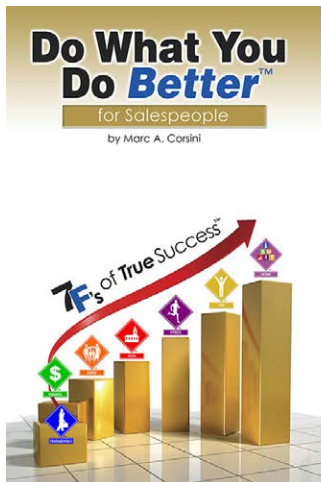
I’d like to first thank Susan Swagler who helped with all aspects of the book. For more than eight years, Susan has been a wordsmith and editor for much of our media, including our weekly newsletter.

I’d also like to thank John Martignoni and Nick Noll for their invaluable insights, edits and suggestions. All three of these “angels” helped greatly in the development of this book.

And finally, I’d like to thank Susan, my wife. Before Susan came into my life, I thought success was measured in dollars and cents and in business power. Now I know *true success* comes not from *what* you have in your life, but from *whom* you have in your life. She and our children fill me up.

Other Books & eBooks by Marc Corsini

Do What You Do Better for Salespeople
Lessons Learned from 20 Years of Coaching
Authentic Selling



Foreword

Do What You Do Better

All of us—no matter who we are or what we do each day to earn a living—can do what we do better. There is always room for improvement.

It sounds simple. But even small levels of improvement require focus; action; and, perhaps most of all, a true desire to do better.

My purpose in writing this book is to help you **Do What You Do Better**—both in and out of your office. There are thousands of business books that spell out how to be more successful professionally. And there are even more self-help books to help you discover and improve the real you. This book is different because its principles should be applied to *both* areas—your professional life and your personal life. It's a whole-person approach to life *and* work, and it's based on what I call **The 7 F's of True Success**.

A Holistic Approach

The **7 F's** model allows—indeed, requires—you to look at the big picture. It's a view that includes you, your work, your family (whatever “family” means for you), your friends and associates, and your faith and secular communities. We focus on seven areas of your life—the **Fundamentals** of work, **Finances** (and your financial legacy), **Family** (and friends), **Faith**, **Fitness** (emotional and physical), **Fun** and the **Fusion** of these things. I want you to take a good, long look at each of these areas of your life. Then I challenge you to formulate a workable vision for doing what you do better in each of these areas.

Based on Experience

The ideas in *Do What You Do Better Using The 7 F's of True Success* were born in my business-coaching practice and then honed through more than 15 years of experience. I've helped some of the country's top businesspeople achieve success in their offices and outside them as well.

This experience has taught me that if you want to achieve true, tangible success, you have to take a whole-person approach. To simply concentrate on achieving professional success without any regard at all for the other areas of your life is ultimately unfulfilling and unsustainable. However, a holistic approach to life will not only result in long-term business success, but it also creates strong, healthy families and communities. I believe this makes our world a better place.

The Corsini Challenge

This is a business book, so I am going to challenge you to **Do What You Do Better** professionally. But I am also going to challenge you to **de**-compartmentalize your life. **I want your success at work to be only one of the successful areas of your life.** You will see that happiness and contentment in one area will lead to success in the others.

The 7 F's of True Success helps you move from intentions and words to actions and results. With all these various aspects of your life considered, you'll know where you're going, and the 7 F's gives you a plan, a game plan if you will, for how to get there.

This isn't a workbook; you are not in a class. There will be no test other than the self-evaluation you do when you take measure of your own 7 F's. What I'm giving you are the tools you need to truly succeed.

In the first pages of each chapter, you'll find descriptions for each of the 7 F's and explanations about the importance each plays in a truly successful life. This is followed by a series of related stories, vignettes and relevant points to help you discern where you are today and what you want to become tomorrow. The stories illustrate and reinforce the importance of paying attention to more than just work if you want to be *truly* successful.

With a focus on **The 7 F's of True Success**—the **Fundamentals** of work, **Finances**, **Family**, **Faith**, **Fitness**, **Fun** and the **Fusion** of these things—I'm offering you examples and life lessons that help you **Do What You Do Better**—no matter what you do.

The Fundamentals of Work

The real “ah-ha” of business success comes not from complex, sophisticated business models, but from basic, day-to-day work **Fundamentals** that, if replicated well, produce success.

After 25 years of business experience—and more than half of that as a business coach—I’ve **concluded that the basics add up to a successful whole.**

Time and again, I’ve watched individuals, teams, organizations, etc. achieve outstanding success by focusing on the fundamental parts of the job. In sports, the outcome often depends on how well an individual or a team can handle the fundamentals of a position time after time, play after play, game after game. The same is true in business where ultimate success depends upon the ability to handle the fundamentals of a job one quarter, or season, after another. All players and parts matter—from the CEO to the receptionist, from the annual financial reports to daily paperwork.

Think about the fundamentals of your job. **What are the basic activities that make you successful?** The key is breaking down a goal into its fundamental parts and performing well in each area.

As an example, let’s look at an outside salesperson’s work fundamentals. While the fundamentals vary depending on the industry and position, **we can pinpoint some *basic, daily* tasks** such as:

- making face-to-face sales calls on clients and prospects,
- gathering information and creating presentations,
- presenting proposals,
- winning new clients while retaining existing clients,
- adding to the total number of names in what I call the “Best Bets Pipeline Inventory”;
- drip marketing to the Best Bets Pipeline,
- getting referrals, etc.

All of these fundamentals must be focused on the *right* clients and the *right* prospects in order to achieve the *right* results. How well this is done determines wins and losses. But all these actions are fundamental to the salesperson’s success. Not one can be ignored.

These fundamental, daily activities (with goals set and regularly monitored in each area) contribute to the achievement of larger goals such as 30-day

and quarterly result objectives like revenue and/or profits. Meeting the big, annual goal ultimately depends on meeting the day-to-day fundamental goals.

So here is the conclusion: **Focus on the fundamentals, and become skillful at the day-to-day activities that are part of your job. Establish challenging business goals, and continuously measure your progress toward those goals.** That's how you become successful—one fundamental at a time.

Corsini's Point

The most successful people we've coached have discovered that true and lasting achievement touches many different parts of their lives. **The 7 F's of True Success** outlines the overall big picture, and the **Fundamentals** help bring that big picture into focus. Whatever your business, make sure you understand and are skilled at the fundamentals of your work. Consider breaking down your duties into critical areas of success. Then figure out how best to perform these fundamentals. Make *them* work for you. If you are having difficulty determining these basics, try a different approach; write down the things that people do that make them *unsuccessful*. Then work to do the opposite. It's all about working smarter; and it starts with the basics.

“Focus on the fundamentals of your profession each and every day. Fulfillment and a successful business legacy will be the byproduct.”

— Coach Corsini

Creative Thinking

Thinking that is “out of the box” involves reaching deep down for ideas and using a thought process that might be outside your normal comfort level. It requires a willingness to have new perspectives on your day-to-day work. It means being open to doing things differently. This is the kind of thinking that pushes envelopes and breaks barriers.

It's the kind of thinking that makes things happen. And it is the kind of thinking that is a **Fundamental** part of doing your job well.

How do you learn to think creatively? Well, for one thing, it takes focus. You have to work at it. To make it easier and to get you started, I'm going to share some **Creative Thinking Tips** that I've learned through experience and from several successful people I know.

When faced with a problem, **focus on the solution—not the problem.** It sounds simple, but I've seen so many businesspeople get seriously

bogged down when they spend more time talking about their problems than brainstorming to come up with viable solutions.

If you really want to think creatively, **challenge yourself to come up with 20 to 40 solutions for a specifically difficult situation or big problem.** The first 5 to 10 are relatively easy, but as you get past that, it becomes more difficult. But the next solutions are the ones that really tap your creativity. They get you thinking in a creative and effective way.

Ask yourself, ***“If money wasn’t an issue, what would I do in this situation?”*** Freeing yourself of financial concerns allows for free-flowing thought. This results in solutions without boundaries. Then, because we do have boundaries in real life, you can adapt the solution to fit your situation. You’d be surprised at what you can come up with when you remove the edges of your “thinking sandbox.”

If you are having trouble finding solutions to a problem, **table the thought. Take a break. Sleep on it.** Numerous studies have shown that your subconscious often will work things out while you’re sleeping. Look for clarity and direction over your morning cup of coffee.

Challenge others to think. Get the “collective mind” working. In James Surowiecki’s book *The Wisdom of Crowds*, he says that the collective mind usually is more capable than even the smartest single member of any group. Have a group brainstorming session when faced with dilemmas. Tell your folks to spend 10 or 20 minutes and come up with at least two or three solutions.

Surround yourself with people who think creatively. The old term “birds of a feather flock together” rings true. The principle of association teaches us that the more creative your environment and the people you associate with, the more creative you will become.

Read unusual books and magazines. I’ve learned that creative ideas often come from unlikely sources. Read magazines you don’t normally read. Look for unusual tips and techniques that others are trying or using. Next, challenge yourself to apply these ideas to your situations. For instance, reading a magazine targeted to working moms gave me some great ideas on time management and delegating that I put to use in some of my executive coaching sessions.

Reduce your stress and anxiety. Few people think creatively while anxious. Allow yourself the ability to think creatively by producing a state of mind that promotes inspired thinking. Chill out, go exercise, try yoga, and then work on finding your solutions.

I once attended a class called *Thinking Beyond the Boundaries*, and I remember two statements that they presented to us in the initial session. First, ***“I am open to possibilities”*** and second, ***“I am committed to action.”*** These two declarations will take you far. Challenge yourself to

embrace them.

Have fun. The more creative thinking you do, the easier it becomes and the more fun you'll have with it. As George Zimmer, the founder of Men's Wearhouse, says, *"I guarantee it."*

Corsini's Point

Think. Creative thinking is one of the **Fundamentals** of your work. Push yourself to find new ways of seeing the world. Have a willingness to explore. And recognize that new ideas need nurturing and support. Embrace this mindset, and challenge others to do the same thing. You'll **Do What You Do Better**, and you'll have a lot of fun along the way.

"The only reason some people get lost in thought is because it's unfamiliar territory."

— Paul Fix

Where Do Babies Come From?

I think almost all parents dread the proverbial "big question." But sooner or later, we're sure to hear a sweet, little voice ask: *"Where do babies come from?"*

While watching the Disney movie *Dumbo* for the 239th time, my oldest son asked me, right out of the blue, "the question." Well, perhaps not quite out of the blue. You might remember that in the beginning of the movie, storks were flying to the circus to deliver a new baby to each breed of animal.

Well, right off I set my son straight on the stork thing. I told him, *"No, babies don't come from storks."* Then I reminded him that just a few months ago, in fact, his little brother came from Momma's tummy. I told him that babies are gifts from God, not birds. He said, *"OK"*, and we watched the rest of the movie— again.

This whole idea of storks and babies (very strange when you stop to consider it) got me thinking: **"Where do good ideas come from?"** Good, usable ideas are absolutely **Fundamental** to your work. The key is to have them often.

For years, while coaching executives, professionals and salespeople, I've told them that **their offices probably are among the least productive places they can be when trying to come up with really big ideas.** Never mind that that's where they "work." Think about it. An office or "official work space" is a place of phone calls, emails, meetings and, really, one interruption after another.

I'll even go so far as to say **the office is your least productive place for creative thought**. It is the place where you'll have the fewest really big ideas but the most distractions and interruptions.

Our days often are consumed by routine tasks that allow little or no time for critical thinking. For many of us, **work, unfortunately, is about execution not thinking**. It's about checking off our lists of things to do with emails, voicemails, problem-solving meetings, etc. And to make matters worse, we used to be able to think while driving in our cars. Now, thanks (or no thanks) to cell phones, our cars have become mobile offices.

This doesn't mean you get to stop being creative. On the contrary, you just have to be more creative about how you do it.

Most really good ideas come to people while they are on vacation, at the gym, at church or synagogue, on the golf course, even while in the shower or sleeping. When we are relaxed, our minds open up and we are able to daydream and "mentally doodle." We often think best when we are free of all "the stuff" that happens at that place we call work.

Here's how to harness that creative energy: **Carry a digital recorder, a small notebook or even a 3 x 5 index card to immediately capture good ideas as they come to you.**

I use this concept all the time with my weekly motivational e-newsletters to clients. By taking notes religiously as good ideas occur to me, I often end up with scores of potential concepts. I'm in the habit of thinking creatively about what I do, and capturing my ideas pays off.

So, work where you work. But explore your creative options all the time. And be ready to act when the great ideas come.

Corsini's Point

If your job requires you to be creative; innovative; and full of bright, new ideas (and I hope everyone's job involves at least some of this), don't depend on "work time" for generating the creativity. Next time you're on vacation, at the gym, out for a run or in the shower, focus on coming up with one or two ideas for a specific opportunity or challenge you've encountered. Incorporate this behavior into the **Fundamentals** of your work. At least once a week, place yourself in a brainstorming/day-dreaming environment. It will help you **Do What You Do Better**.

"You see things as they are and ask, 'Why?' I dream things as they never were and ask, 'Why not?'"

— **George Bernard Shaw**

Mexican Cornbread

Sometimes I eat lunch in a little restaurant at a local grocery store. It's fast and convenient to both my running route and my office. But when I stopped in a while back, I got more than just a quick meal.

I had one of those oh-so-enlightening “ah-ha” moments.

Over the past few years, I've come to know “Joyce,” the cashier and a part-time server in the cafeteria-style line. Joyce is grumpy, but essentially she's a likable person. You know the type—they complain a lot, but, in spite of the attitude, you like them.

One day as I was getting my food, Joyce asked me: “*Would you like cornbread or a roll with your meal?*” And, in turn, I asked her: “*Do you have Mexican cornbread?*”

She sounded quite frustrated when she replied: “*Everyone asks me that. We have **never** had Mexican cornbread.*”

And then it hit me: **If everyone is asking for Mexican cornbread, then why don't they have it?** It's actually very simple. If Joyce really wanted to help her customers, she could take steps to see that this in-demand item made it to the menu—she could mention the requests to her manager; she could talk to the chef about adding it.

Now some people might say, well, Joyce is the cashier—not the storeowner, not the manager, not a market-research person. Changes like this are not up to her, some would say. They are up to management.

True and false. I believe all employees are responsible for helping their company delight its customers. If you see an opportunity, seize it. Make the effort. Consider this one of the **Fundamentals** of your work.

Joyce might not be the big boss, but she does have power. She is on the front lines every day. She's the one talking to the customers. She's the one I know and talk to when I go in to spend my money. She's my line of communication.

All this made me start to think a little differently about our consulting firm, my own clients and how we all do business. How many times have we missed an opportunity to satisfy a client's needs? How many times are we given a chance to delight a customer? What are your employees asking for that you are too busy to hear? Think about it.

Corsini's Point

What “Mexican cornbread” opportunity are you missing? If you don't satisfy your clients' needs or listen to what they want, your competition will. That's a **Fundamental** truth. If you are an executive, make sure you have some type of system in place to get feedback from your employees and customers. If you are on the front line, I challenge you to challenge your company to

give the customers what they want. It's ironic. Companies spend millions of dollars on market research when often times their employees know just what needs to be done.

“Creative minds have always been known to survive any kind of bad training.”

— Anna Freud

The Search for Perfection

Several years ago, I read a story that made a big impression on me. The author was explaining why he had never married. It went like this:

“Why have I never married? In my youth, I was in love with a beautiful woman, but she was unkind. Then I met a wonderful woman who had a great soul, but we had nothing in common. I met several other women who seemed just right, but there was always something missing. Then one day I met her. She was beautiful, generous, intelligent and kind. We had everything in common. She was perfect. And you ask why didn't I marry her? Well, it seems she was looking for the perfect man.”

You might have heard that (or something similar) before. Someone shared that story with me years ago when I was single, and it helped me. Of course, this idea of an endless search for perfection fits other situations, too.

Take jobs, for instance. I think we often focus on what is not right with our job versus the blessings, joys and affirmations we get from what we call “work.” The right attitude is **Fundamental** to your success.

With work in mind, let's look at the story again and modify it a little:

“Why have I never found the perfect company or employer? My first manager was fair, but he didn't motivate me. Then I worked for another company that had some great people, but the office wasn't very nice. Next, I went to work for a company with terrific benefits, but my boss was always telling me to come in early and stay late. Finally, after changing jobs over and over again, I found the perfect company. It offered great benefits, and the company culture was exactly what I was looking for. My manager gave me just enough freedom to make my own decisions and to do what I wanted to do. It was perfect. So, why am I looking for a job today? Well, it seems that they were looking for the perfect employee.”

Corsini's Point

Don't hold your employer to unrealistic expectations. You should most certainly have high standards, but be realistic. Don't set yourself up to fail or fall short of your goals. Doing so will only cause you grief and anxiety.

Approach each day with a “do-what-you-do-better” attitude. This attitude can—and should—be **Fundamental** to your work.

“Sometimes only a change of viewpoint is needed to convert a tiresome duty into an interesting opportunity.”

— Alberta Flanders

Juice or Joy?

At some point in our lives, we all need an outside perspective to help us **do what we do better**. I rely on a life coach to help me sort through my full work schedule; live up to my role as an active dad and good, attentive husband; and fulfill my desire to carve out some exercise time in my busy days. My coach helps me set priorities and figure out the **Fundamentals** of my own success both in and out of the office.

Once during a session, my life coach asked me: “*What brings you joy?*” I quickly responded, “*Speaking in public.*” I had just given a series of talks about my business-coaching and strategic-planning business, and so I was excited and energized about the success of that.

“From what you’ve told me,” my coach said, *“speaking gives you juice not joy. Public speaking gives you adrenaline, but I haven’t seen where it brings you much real joy.”*

There was an awkward silence in the room. She’d just hit a nerve—one that had become desensitized from the “juice” or “rush” that I’d been getting from the well-received speaking engagements. This was disappointing because, at the time, I really didn’t know what brought me joy.

I thought it was public speaking, and that’s certainly something I enjoy. But we’re talking about *real* joy, and that’s something different. That’s something deeper and more profound. And I had just realized that public speaking didn’t bring me any joy really. It was just a fun distraction in a life riddled with anxiety and frustration.

So over the next few months, my coach and I concentrated on what really does bring me joy—not just juice. And today I have a much clearer understanding of what brings true joy to my life—coaching (helping people grow and succeed), teaching, family (my wife and children), God and fishing. (I should point out that I’ve known for a long time that God brings me joy; my introspection merely reminded me of that.)

Today I recognize the differences between what “juices me up” and what brings me true joy. And understanding these differences has reduced my stress and anxiety and helped me enjoy life more fully. This recognition has become fundamental to my success. Do you really know what brings you joy in your life? It took me 45 years to figure it out, but it’s worth any effort.

Corsini's Point

There is a definite difference between what brings most of us “juice” and what brings us true joy. Recognizing this difference is **Fundamental** to your happiness—in and out of your office. Are you able to discern that difference? Are you filling your life with adrenaline rushes that juice you up for the moment but leave you feeling spent and empty by the end of the day? Doing things that bring you true joy results in true contentment. Your life is fuller, you are happier. You **Do What You Do Better**, and people want to follow your leadership. Know the difference between juice and joy. It will make all the difference in the world.

“Happiness is not a destination. It is a method of life.”

— **Burton Hills**

What Does That Cost?

I recently traveled out of the country, and I noticed that shopping isn't always the same as it is at home. Because prices weren't always clearly marked, I found myself repeatedly asking, *“What does that cost?”*

There are other kinds of costs in life. Sometimes it pays to question the cost of our actions—and our inactions. What if you could check the price (consequences) of every scenario before making a decision? What if you made this sort of safeguard **Fundamental** to your work?

I'd like to recommend that you evaluate the costs involved in all the major decisions in your life. Don't just focus on the short-term opportunity, monetary gain or power you might initially receive; think about how the long-term outcomes of a major decision will affect your business, your career and your personal life. Then ask yourself: ***“Does the gain justify the cost?”***

Many years ago, I was working in Columbus, Georgia, when a good friend and co-worker got an opportunity to move to Boca Raton, Florida. The job sounded great, and the location was even more exciting since he was a huge fan of boating, diving and the beach. The way we saw it back then, it was an easy decision—go!

Today, I look back and wonder: *“What did that cost him?”* Now that I have children, I can only imagine some of the consequences that occurred. He was divorced and had to move away from his own two small children to take that “dream” job. Was it worth only being able to see his kids twice a year? Was it worth missing the chance to watch them grow up to be young adults? At the time, we only thought about the benefits of his move—we didn't consider the costs.

While I remain a proponent of being the best you can be at work, I also

know that **success comes with a price. That's why I encourage my clients to find a workable balance in their lives.**

There are other ways of figuring the costs of your actions.

There is a hidden price for not living up to your potential. I love to coach overachievers. On the other hand, I dread coaching people who hold back, who go through life on “auto pilot.” If you're coasting at work—and not achieving your potential—let's look at what that could cost you.

Let's say you worked somewhere for five years. You've known since the first year that you dislike your job, but since you can't think of anything else you'd like to do, you stay put. And you coast. You don't earn any additional industry or job certifications. You don't take advantage of any of the free continuing education or technology training offered by your company. You are simply an average performer, and you keep to yourself rather than having deep, meaningful relationships with your co-workers.

After five years of this, you decide to leave. Either you are under management pressure to perform, or you're worried about your job security. During an interview with another company, you realize the person interviewing you knows one of your co-workers. When she calls him to ask about your performance, he says: *“Yes, he has worked here for five years. And he does just OK. I don't think he likes the job; I know he has a negative attitude. I think he's basically an unhappy person.”*

Wow! At this point, your decision four years ago to stay put (and stay unhappy) has cost you a great deal—your reputation. Most of us are well aware that being successful has its costs, but many of us don't think too much about the costs of underachieving.

Corsini's Point

When making big decisions, ask: *“What's the cost?”* Weigh each decision for negatives as well as positives. Make this type of consideration a habit—a **Fundamental** part of your work. Whatever you do at work—and in life—look at decisions with the costs as well as the benefits in mind. Everything you do or don't do has an outcome—positive or negative.

“The opportunity of a lifetime is seldom so labeled.”

— American proverb

The Rule of 3 and Other “Pearls”

Who doesn't like finding a pearl? I know someone who is inordinately lucky at finding tiny ones in the occasional oyster she eats. But I'm talking about pearls of wisdom. Pearls can be principles that help us move forward in business. They can be suggestions that make life more enjoyable. Often

these pearls help us simplify life and make sense of things. Sometimes they can turn out to be **Fundamental** to your success.

One pearl that quickly comes to mind is the **Rule of 3**. The **Rule of 3 involves reducing things to a manageable number—in this case, three**. Businesses use this principle all the time. For example, Domino's Pizza has its employees remember the **3 F's: Fast, Friendly and Free** delivery. For years, companies have offered, "Good, Better or Best" pricing options for everything from cars to service plans to house layouts.

Studies show that when people are offered three options, most folks go with the middle one. You can pretty much bank on this. That's the power of the **Rule of 3**.

You also can use the Rule of 3 to simplify your life. If you are a perfectionist and you have the tendency to check a document over and over before you let go of it, limit yourself to three edits. Then send it on. If you are working on a big presentation, practice the presentation only three times before you go live with a potential client. Continuing to rehearse actually results in diminished returns. It just isn't worth the energy, effort and time it takes to continue to practice.

The Rule of 3 is all about limiting options to only what you need in order to get the job done. It's about simplifying things so that they are easy to remember, easy to communicate and easy to do.

Another pearl is **Pareto's 80/20 Rule**. **The 80/20 Rule states that 80 percent of the results come from only 20 percent of the effort.**

For instance, according to Pareto's rule, we wear 20 percent of our clothes 80 percent of the time. So why are most closets too full and far too messy? I took this "pearl" and did something with it—I gave away 50 percent of the clothes in my closet. (Giving away more—the full 80 percent—caused me too much anxiety, but I'm going to get there.)

Corsini's Point

Look for and then use "pearls"—tried and true bits of wisdom—to make your life easier in and out of the office. Think of these pearls as ways to reduce your stress and help you work smarter, not harder. Incorporate them into the **Fundamentals** of your work. The Rule of 3 works well to define a company's mission and goals, limit waste (of time, effort and resources) and put things into perspective. Pareto's 80/20 Rule illustrates why you should simplify your life. Both pearls can help you **Do What You Do Better**.

"Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not one bit simpler."

— Albert Einstein

Finances (and Your Financial Legacy)

Let's talk about **Finances**. I'm not going to walk you through the mechanics of developing a budget and preach about the value of sticking with it. Using your money wisely and living within your means are crucial to true financial success, but I'm going to look at the bigger picture.

A long-term financial strategy not only offers you personal security and comfort, but it also can provide a lasting legacy for your family and even your family's family. **It's pretty exciting to think about how your actions today can benefit your children's children 30 to 40 years from now.**

In order to leave a legacy, you must accomplish something significant. It will take planning, smart decisions and hard work. This sort of achievement doesn't happen overnight. It evolves over time.

Your financial legacy could grow from something as simple as an educational savings plan for your child for which you put aside \$50 each month starting the very month the child is born. If you did this—utilizing one of the many different types of educational investment programs available today—you'd have a substantial amount by the time the child is ready for college.

Or let's say you are just out of college yourself, and you decide to purchase a rental house every five years until you reach retirement age. (This might mean you defer living in a home you actually own for a period of time while your earnings and/or savings accumulate enough to allow you to purchase your own home.) If you purchase your first rental home at age 22, by the time you are 52 you'll have seven rental houses that can provide an ongoing stream of income for you.

Both these examples start with a simple idea. They involve a series of small steps, and they evolve into a large, long-term plan.

Smart, goal-oriented financial planning yields more than monetary results. **It allows you to create your financial legacy.** Second, **it provides your children with a model for establishing their own spending and saving habits.** You are leaving not only a legacy of wealth, but also one of knowledge about financial stewardship that could impact many generations.

You might not have a family, or you might not want children. Perhaps you could be the wealthy uncle or aunt who helps nephews and nieces earn a debt-free college degree. You might want to extend your legacy to those outside your immediate family by giving to your place of worship or favorite charity. Whatever you do with your wealth, you still could set a positive money-managing example for others. And you will have achieved the financial freedom that is part (notice I said "part") of a *truly* successful life.

Corsini's Point

Good **Financial** habits don't just happen. Financial legacies aren't established by chance. Financial legacies are created through planning, discipline and action. They can take a long time to become significant. But it won't happen if you don't take charge. Do something financially significant, and create your own financial legacy. It's part of doing what you do better.

"No good man ever became suddenly rich."

— **Publius Syrus**

A Valuable, Viable Financial Strategy

If you are overachieving professionally and financially at work and you don't have a sound financial strategy in place, it's like running water into a bathtub without a plug in the bottom. All you do is make noise and waste water. Without a plug in place, you'll never fill that tub. This, of course, makes no sense. You wouldn't think of purchasing a tub without a plug, yet lots of people treat their **Finances** this way. They make a good living and generate a lot of cash, but there's no control on where it all goes.

I call that "renting" the money you earn. Not having a solid financial plan means that instead of having something to show for all your hard work, you've spent and consumed your way to not much of anything.

The bestselling book *Rich Dad, Poor Dad* by Robert Kiyosaki does a great job of showing the vastly different outcomes that result from having a financial strategy and having no strategy at all.

Finances, of course, are one of **The 7 F's of True Success**, along with the **Fundamentals** of work—those most basic, and often daily, tasks that help you **Do What You Do Better—Family, Faith, Fitness, Fun and Fusion** (balance in life). You must pay attention to each of them if you want to achieve true and meaningful success.

I want to be authentic here. The subject of financial planning is something we all need to explore, but by itself it's not all that exciting. What is exciting is to realize what you could leave for your family. That's why we focus on the **financial legacy** part of **finances** in our coaching model.

Let's get practical. Talking about a financial legacy won't put your grandchildren through college. You have to plan strategically. If you don't already have a working financial strategy in place, I challenge you to do it now.

First, determine your current financial situation. Second, plan for the future. Third, set goals on how you will spend the extra. Lastly, discipline your spending habits according to your plan.

Once you set financial goals for yourself, you'll need to review those goals—and work toward them—on a regular basis.

Get a handle on how much money is coming in and how much is going out. You can determine your current financial situation by creating a spreadsheet for your last three months of financial records. The purpose of this is to specify what you spend and where you spend it.

Once you realize how you spend your money, then you can begin planning for the future. Two of the most basic ways to do this are insurance and investments.

While most people hate to think about the possibility of their demise, facing it head-on is the thoughtful thing to do for those you love. It is the first step to safeguarding your estate and providing for your family after death. Along with help from a rabbi, priest or minister and one's own faith, the financial security that comes with life insurance can be the one bright spot during a sad time.

Determine how much of your monthly income will go toward your investments and your retirement plans. Calculate how much you will need for your children's or grandchildren's educational savings plans. Your financial plan might involve creating wealth through real estate, investments in the stock market, etc. Our libraries are full of books on creating wealth.

Planning means being intentional, not accidental, about your finances. This will result in *true* success in this area of life.

Of course, the earlier in life you begin implementing a financial plan, the better. But no matter how old you are, it's not too late to begin creating a financial legacy for you and your family.

Corsini's Point

True success touches all areas of your life. Developing and implementing sound **Financial** strategies is an important key to success in and out of the office. If you don't already have a financial plan in place, start today to make it happen. Take those first steps. Take them now. Consider meeting with a financial planner, advisor or debt counselor. Set monthly goals, and roll them into larger goals. Your financial legacy can—and should—be a priority in your life. Just knowing where your money goes will make a world of difference.

"Misers make terrible parents and wonderful ancestors."

— Fortune cookie message

Mind Equals Money

I believe that **mind equals money**. This goes directly against the concept many of us were taught as children—that **time equals money**.

I first learned that **Financial** concept growing up in Macon, Georgia. I remember asking my parents for some money to go to the neighborhood 7-Eleven for a Slurpee. Their answer was always the same: *“You want some money? Do some work, and I’ll give you some money.”*

My first jobs were the same as those for most young boys. I became quite proficient at lawn mowing, driveway sweeping and car washing. The going rate was generally \$5 an hour.

And so it began—this idea that time equals money. I’ll give you my time; you give me your money. My parents’ parents taught them that time equals money, and they passed that lesson on to me.

Today, I know better.

What my parents *could* have been teaching my brother and me is this: No skill, less money. They could have encouraged us to find a better and more efficient way to do our jobs and then rewarded us accordingly.

Since you really don’t have to use your mind for things like pushing a mower, a wheelbarrow, a sponge or a broom, you get the minimum—as in minimum wage. Most of our parents didn’t dream of their children growing up to be minimum-wage workers, but that is how they raised us. If you are paid by the hour and you use your brain to figure out how to work better, faster or smarter, you get paid less when you should get more compensation for doing a better job faster.

Think about it this way: On a construction site, they pay minimum wage for manual work that requires little brainpower or skill. But if you have a “trade,” you make more money. And that makes sense. You bring more to the job so you should be paid more for the job you do.

When you’re facing surgery, do you think in terms of time equaling money? When our son had tubes placed in his ears, the surgery only took about five minutes. We got the bill and saw that the procedure cost more than \$2,000. But do you think when we were discussing this procedure with the doctor, we asked: *“How much do you charge an hour for surgery?”* Of course not.

We were concerned with other things like why the surgery was necessary in the first place, what the risks were and what to expect from the outcome. We paid a premium for the surgeon’s time because of his expertise, training and skill. We were willing to accept that it took him almost no time to complete the surgery, and we didn’t begrudge him this because he knew how to help our son.

Unfortunately, a lot of us still think in terms of time equaling money. As

a result, we don't challenge ourselves to use our minds at work to solve problems and implement creative solutions. And we miss out on the attendant financial rewards.

Just remember: **More mind equals more money**

Corsini's Point

If you have a "time equals money" mentality when it comes to **Finances**, then you need to change the way you think. Instead of measuring the number of hours you work, measure your contribution to your organization. The more you contribute, the more you can earn. Bottom line: Companies pay a premium to those who can increase sales, cut expenses and offer other creative ideas to help them do what they do better.

"I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestioned ability of a man to elevate his life by conscious endeavor."

— **Henry David Thoreau**

Family (and Friends)

I've heard it said, "*The love of family is life's greatest blessing.*" There's no denying **Family** is important. I'm talking about the families we're born into as well as "families" we create with friends. I include this broad definition because most of us have had at least one true friend who has brought us as much joy and fulfillment and support as any family member could have done.

But how often do we take these family relationships for granted? How many times do we let a day go by without a simple phone call to those we love the most? I believe *true* success is more than simply career promotions and financial achievements. Succeeding at work while your home life suffers might produce a large bank account, but a messy divorce can shrink your hard-earned wealth with the stroke of a pen. This doesn't even take into account the heart-wrenching agony that goes with the breakup of a family.

Sadly, we've all seen people who won the game at work and lost the rest. I've known several divorced dads who tell me the loneliest day in their lives comes around regularly on the Sunday nights that they send their children back to their ex-wife's house.

I remember a television commercial where the young child asks her mom if she can be a "client," too, so they can spend more time together. The look on the mother's face spoke volumes about missed opportunities. Don't fall into the same trap. Treat your family and friends like the important people they are. They are the ones who want (and need) your attention more than anyone (or anything) else.

If your family life is going great, stay the course. You probably know the *real* reason you work so hard. You also know happiness at home is an important part of *true* success.

If you are unhappy at home, make some personal changes. If you don't know how to change, consider getting outside help. Talk to your minister, rabbi or counselor. But do something about it. Do it today.

Corsini's Point

For greater success in the office, work on your life outside the office. Focus on your **Family**. Work hard and smart, and know when to shut down the computer, take off the headset and turn off your portable phone. If you're not happy at home, make some changes. You *can* have it all—it just takes planning and work. It takes "homework."

"If you want an accounting of your worth, count your friends."

— Merry Browne

Little Things Mean So Much

In keeping with a balanced-life approach—particularly the **Family** part of **The 7 F's of True Success**—I'd like to share something a little personal with you.

A friend recently gave me a copy of a letter he'd received from his parents. They had been married for 57 years, and, together, they raised five children. Sometime early in their marriage, the husband began compiling a list that he called *Little Things That Count in a Marriage*. We could tell that he began the list as a young husband and over the years continued to add to it. The list reflected a lifetime of love and devotion and thoughtfulness. And it came with a note—some heartfelt comments from his wife about this most welcome attention.

I was moved by the wife's affectionate words and the husband's thoughtful list. Their wisdom and the exemplary example they set for their family should be passed on yet again. Here is the note:

To all my sons, sons-in-law and grandsons:

The other day when I was helping Dad do some cleaning around here, one of the things he decided he really had to do was to clean out his dresser. He came out of the bedroom laughing his little buns off, and he handed me a piece of paper. Throughout our married life, he has found little ways to make me feel loved and appreciated. The paper he gave me was a list of those things. He started telling me how one day he got to thinking about it all, and he made this list to give to all of you.

I've read it over a zillion times, and I agree with everything he has to say. He really does all of these things. Fifty-seven years later, it still seems to be working.

Love to all of you,

Mom

And here is the list:

Little Things That Count in a Marriage

- Make coffee
- Deliver coffee

- Change toilet paper
- Open car door
- Help make the bed
- Take her to lunch
- Hug her before she goes to sleep
- Always a good-bye kiss
- Assist in putting on coat
- Be a good listener
- Open cans
- Open doors
- Tuck her in at night like a child
- Call when you are late coming home
- Be a man when company leaves—clean up the dishes
- Make up before you go to bed
- Tell her you love her
- Tell her she is beautiful
- Remember: Marriage is a 50-50 proposition

Corsini's Point

A happy **Family** is one of the greatest rewards of a solid marriage. Remember, it is the little things that make a marriage into a grand thing. Don't underestimate the power of doing thoughtful, little things for your spouse. This approach worked well for my friend's parents' marriage, and it will work well for yours and mine, too.

"A great marriage is not when the 'perfect couple' comes together. It is when an imperfect couple learns to enjoy their differences."

— **Dave Meurer, author of *Daze of our Wives: A Semi-Helpful Guide to Marital Bliss***

Do Your Homework

Family can be one of the most complicated, challenging and even exhausting aspects of life. But if you do your homework, it can also be the most rewarding.

I once went on a personal journey to discover my family origins. It wasn't always fun, but it was continually interesting. It also took a lot of time. I followed leads that led me only to dead ends; sometimes I wondered if I would ever reach my goal. But, after a lot of effort, time and help from a few key folks, I finally finished a journey that took me to other places and, even, other eras. I ended up with full family trees—on both my mother's and my

father's sides.

As I gathered information on close and distant relatives, I heard all kinds of stories. Some were good; others were bad. Some were tragic, and a few were downright silly. After it was all over, I felt like I'd been born into a soap opera.

I discovered brothers who hated brothers, fathers who abandoned their children, people who succumbed to substance abuse, and relatives who stopped talking to one another over something that neither of them could even recall. And like all good soap operas, there were passionate love stories—some appropriate and some that shattered families.

The more distant or disenfranchised I was from the relative, the sadder I felt when I heard stories of long-ago feuds that still have negative effects on our family today.

Now, I'm not saying that my immediate family was perfect. At my parents' 50th wedding anniversary, I described our family as "charmingly dysfunctional"—*definitely* a positive spin on our family dynamics.

What I've learned from my research—and from living each day as a husband and parent—is that every family is a little dysfunctional. We've all been born into a soap opera.

Family is one area of your life where you have to "play the cards you are dealt." You can't choose your relatives. You also can't control their actions. **But you *can* control your own reactions. You can't change your family members, but you *can* change how *you* respond to what *they* do.** Rest assured, it takes time and effort. **It takes homework.**

I would like to challenge you to be more accepting of your family members. Forgive those family members who have wronged, hurt or hated you or those close to you. One of our important coaching principles is: **Positive energy breeds positive energy, and negative energy only breeds more negative energy.** Harboring hate or resentment toward a family member doesn't change them, but it *does* hurt you. It saps your energy and wastes your purpose. Stop it. Let it go.

Release your family members from the debt of their mistakes, re-initiate a relationship with them and give them the same grace you would hope to receive if you were in their shoes.

Corsini's Point

For greater success *in* the office, work on your life *outside* the office. Focus on your **Family**. Forgive a family member who might have wronged you. If forgiveness isn't forthcoming from others, move on. *True* success touches all areas of your life—personal and professional. You *can* have it all—it just takes work. Sometimes it takes homework.

“Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family. Whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one.”

— Jane Howard, “Families”

The Story of the Five Balls

Every once in a while you read or hear about something that really sticks with you. In James Patterson’s book “Suzanne’s Diary for Nicholas”, he tells the parable of *The Five Balls*. This immediately reminded me how precious my **Family** is to me. The lesson goes something like this:

*Think of your life as a game in which you have to juggle five different balls. These balls are called **family, work, health, friends** and **integrity**. Your goal is to keep them all in the air. One day you realize that the **work** ball is made of rubber. It’s not nearly as fragile as you thought; in fact, if you drop it, it will bounce right back. But the other four balls—**family, health, friends** and **integrity**—are made of glass. If you drop one of these, it most certainly will be damaged. It might even shatter. Once you understand how to handle the five balls, you are on your way to achieving balance in your life.*

Wow! That is a powerful concept. And it’s quite similar to **The 7 F’s of True Success**—the **Fundamentals** of work, **Finances, Family, Faith, Fitness, Fun** and the **Fusion** of all these. At the same time it’s a humbling thing to consider. Just think how much time so many of us spend coddling, nurturing and focusing on the “work ball” making sure it’s shiny, bright and perfect. All the while, we neglect the other balls that are so fragile, more precious and irreplaceable.

How good a juggler are you? It’s fairly easy to learn how to juggle one, two or maybe even three balls. But how many of us can successfully juggle the five balls in Mr. Patterson’s story?

As a business coach, **I work to help my clients achieve success both in and out of their offices. We emphasize balance as a key to success, and we assist our clients in maintaining equilibrium amongst competing priorities.** At each session, participants score themselves on how well they are “juggling” **The 7 F’s of True Success**. Each is important in its own way. Each is key to your *true* success. Some are more resilient than others. Some require extra attention. Take a moment to examine your own life. How well are you juggling?

Corsini’s Point

Success is not just about who has the most money in their bank accounts, the best perks at work or the biggest house in which to live. It isn’t about

winning at all costs. It is about recognizing what is really important in life—things like your **Family**. In order to have *true* success, you have to juggle a lot of things. But all things are not equal. Remember which balls are “rubber” and which are “glass.” Don’t sacrifice the glass balls for success. Find your own balance; determine your priorities and you will **Do What You Do Better**.

“The secret of a good life is to have the right loyalties and hold them in the right scale of values.”

— **Norman Thomas**

Who’s Watching You?

Several years ago, just as my family left home for vacation, we drove up to one of those “No Right Turn on Red” intersections. I hate those! The light at this intersection is always long, and since we were in a hurry and there was no traffic coming, I decided to go ahead and make a right turn on red. I had done this before, and I had seen lots of other people doing it. My wife and son were behind me in another car, so they followed my lead and did the same thing.

At the next traffic signal, I saw—you guessed it—a police car. The officer pulled us over, and as he approached my car, I was actually wondering what in the world I had done wrong. You see, the fact that I had broken the law just didn’t register with me. After informing me of my error, he said two things that I will always remember:

- **“If we had more positive role models in this community, I would be out of a job.”**
- **“Don’t you think you ought to set a better example for your wife and children?”**

Ouch. He was absolutely right. My **Family** follows my leadership, and it’s up to me to lead in a positive way. I chose a negative leadership role that day, and they followed it. I could just as easily have done the right thing.

What kinds of examples do you set each day for your family? Positive or negative? The examples you set today create your legacies for tomorrow. Will yours be a positive legacy or a negative one? The choice is yours to make.

This concept of positive and negative leadership applies in the office as well—for both business leaders and their employees. How many times do we, as leaders, act without really thinking everything through? And how often do we as employees follow our leaders blindly and without questioning?

Corsini's Point

Whether you are an executive or an intern, your actions speak for the type of leadership you provide—be it positive or negative. Never minimize or trivialize the importance of your actions. The same holds true in a **Family** situation. Be positive and ethical, and **Do What You Do Better** each and every day. Remember, someone somewhere is always watching you.

“Leadership is a combination of strategy and character. If you must be without one, be without the strategy.”

— **General Norman Schwarzkopf**

Faith

Early in my own business career, I got so wrapped up in becoming successful professionally that I pretty much did what I wanted to do without stopping to consider how my actions related to my **Faith**.

My faith was a Sunday-morning thing, and my work was a weekday thing. They were definitely separate and not too equal. God on Sunday and an anything-goes attitude at work pretty much defined how I operated in those days. I seldom reflected on whether my actions were right or wrong. And that was wrong. As I've gotten older, I've come to fully appreciate my faith as a daily, living thing; it's not just for Sunday anymore.

Today, when I am faced with some hard choices—in or out of the office—I ask myself three simple questions to see if my planned course of action passes my own litmus test and aligns with my faith's beliefs:

- ***Would my parents be proud of me?***
- ***Would my spouse respect me?***
- ***Would my children look up to me?***

If the answers are “yes,” then I know that my faith and my actions support each other. If I have to answer “no” to any of these three questions, then I realize I should rethink my plans. The final test, of course, would be to ask myself: ***Will God be smiling at me, or will He be saddened by my actions?***

If you are going to practice your faith in the workplace, following this simple directive can make doing business more rewarding for everyone involved. The following ideas will help, too.

Know your faith's commandments, and follow them. Also, remember that if you publicly profess that your faith is important to you, others will judge you according to your professed standard. Fair or not, it's true. You gotta walk the talk.

The holy book of my faith says: *If you say you have higher standards than others as a godly man, then I'm going to hold you accountable to that higher standard.*

When making decisions, always ask yourself, ***“What is the right thing to do?”*** Remember, **there is no right way to do the wrong thing.** And in the end, you usually will have to do the right thing to clean up the mess made by doing the wrong thing. So you might as well do things right the first time. Don't settle for anything less than the truth—from others and from yourself.

Make all decisions as if they are going to be posted on the company Website or break-room bulletin board. Remember that “the troops” always know what's going on in a company. Who's been

hired, who's been fired and what the next strategic move is often are more commonly known than you might realize. **When more than two people know something, chances are, it will soon be public knowledge.** Act in a way that will stand up to any scrutiny.

Do what you say you are going to do. Do not over-promise; instead, over-deliver. Remember, you can always come back and do more. Keep notes regarding what you say you'll do, and then keep your word. And remember: **Over time, people often forget what you said and evaluate you based on your actions.**

One of the few things you own in life is your reputation. Keep yours spotless. When it comes to mistakes, promises and making commitments, people have very long memories.

Corsini's Point

Your **Faith** can be a wonderful daily tool not only for your personal life, but also in your professional life. Your faith can keep you grounded and help you do the right thing. Use your "spiritual muscles" daily, or they will atrophy and, perhaps even disappear. Live a good, godly life in and out of the office. Do it every day. St. Ignatius of Loyola might have said it best: *"Work as if everything depends on you; pray as if everything depends on God."* To help you stay on track, consider holding yourself accountable to some type of spiritual advisor or group. That is a sure way to Do What You Do Better.

"Preach the gospel at all times. If necessary, use words."

— St. Francis of Assisi

The Power of Faith

Don't worry. I'm not going to get too "preachy," but I am going to point out the awesome power of **Faith**. We've all read stories about people who endured and survived hard times by relying on their faith for strength and hope. And you might have heard the timeless adage: *"There aren't any atheists on turbulent airplanes."*

But why wait to make faith important? Why not acknowledge it as a part of your everyday life? What I'm suggesting is to not wait until you are in one of work's or life's "gutters" to realize the importance of faith. Instead, **establish a background of faith in your life, and you just might stay out of those gutters in the first place.**

Most faiths focus on doing the right thing. And all the great, enduring faiths have some version of "the golden rule" in their teachings. **To live a faith-based life, you have to treat others right**—it's as simple as treating others the way you want to be treated.

So what's the connection between faith and business?

Faith provides guiding principles to help you make decisions in life. Having a set of solid, faith-based principles gives you a “litmus test” for those decisions—especially the difficult ones.

I encourage you to exercise your faith not just on your holy day, but also as a **foundation for life every day.**

It's interesting to take a look at famous people and see what sometimes happens to them when they achieve fabulous success. I remember when actor Fred Berry died. He was best known as “Rerun” on the 1970s TV show *What's Happening?* But that's not really what I recall about him. Berry achieved a fair amount of success (he knew the **Fundamentals** of his work on his television show, and that resulted in **Financial** gains). But then he became addicted to drugs, and that caused professional failure and financial woes. In the end, **Faith** rescued him. Buoyed by his faith, he cleaned up his life and became a pastor in rural Alabama.

After having it all and then losing it all, Fred found his faith and devoted the rest of his life to it.

Then there's Charlie Sheen, one of the most infamous bad boys of Hollywood. For a while, you only had to glance at the tabloids while in the grocery line to know something of the ups and downs in his life. A poster boy for self-indulgence, he lived life fast and hard.

In a *Parade Magazine* article, he spoke of his fast life and of his road to sobriety and family. Here's what he offered about faith:

“... I think I always did have faith, but I never knew its true power until it was revealed in my darkest times. I had a hole in me that got bigger and bigger the more I tried to fill it with people and expensive things and drugs. Then it was all stripped away, and I learned you couldn't fill the hole inside that way. It has to be filled with something else—with faith and love and humility.”

Corsini's Point

Focus on your **Faith** every day. Don't wait until you're in trouble before you learn to look to your faith. Use your faith and the principles it brings as guides for making decisions in and out of the office. Practice your faith—make it a part of your everyday life—and you won't get in trouble in the first place.

“Man is what he believes.”

— **Anton Chekhov**

You Get What You Give

In a recent coaching session, a client told me of a valuable, **Faith**-based lesson he has learned as he's gotten older. It's the importance of helping others.

He was talking about how **he has realized the magnitude of helping people who are in need—especially people who are asking for a favor.** He talked about his helping someone who was out of work. In the past, he said, he might have just ignored a request like this or, at best, put it at the bottom of his list of things to do.

I knew exactly what he was talking about. I had gone through a similar phase at one point in my life. When I was in my 20s and 30s, I often was annoyed by calls for help from a business acquaintance, friend from church, neighbor, former client, etc. I can remember thinking, *“Just what I need—someone who wants to take up my time. I’ll do it later.”* And for the most part, later rarely came. If it did, I grudgingly spent my time helping them. **My life was all about me.**

But I know now how selfish and downright wrong that was. I know now that life is not all about me. **I know that one day my good fortune might run out, and I’ll need help from someone else.**

As my client and I talked, I couldn't help but think about a line from *The Godfather*. This 1972 Francis Ford Coppola movie is a classic. Remember the opening scene where Don Vito Corleone (Marlon Brando) was holding court on the day of his daughter's wedding? One character said, *“No Sicilian can refuse any request on his daughter's wedding day.”* So one by one, people came to “the Don” to get help in some area of their lives.

Corleone listened somewhat attentively to each of their requests. And he granted them. But there were conditions. At one point he told the character Bonasera: *“Some day, and that day may never come, I will call upon you to do a service for me. But until that day, accept this justice as a gift on my daughter's wedding day.”* And in the movie, the senior Corleone often did collect on these debts.

At one time or another, we are all going to be called upon to help someone else. Some of us will answer that call and lend our assistance; others will ignore it altogether. But it's important to realize that **what you do for others will probably determine what others will do for you.**

Corsini's Point

Realize the importance of helping others. Life isn't always about us. We need to help others when they are in need because it is the right thing to do. It's as simple as this: *Follow the Golden Rule.* There's no clearer guideline when it comes to living your **Faith**. And remember, what goes around

comes around. If we don't "answer the call," then we can't expect others to help us when we're in need. Think about that the next time someone calls.

"So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets."

— **Matthew 7:12**

Why Worry?

Worry. We shouldn't, but we all do from time to time. Problems at work or at home percolate in our imaginations and can become worse than reality. Worry can erode our **Faith** and cause debilitating doubt.

Even the very act of worrying is cause for worry.

Every system in your body is affected by worry and the stress it brings on. In addition to raising blood pressure, medical studies show worry can prompt your liver to produce more cholesterol, and this can raise your risk of heart attack and stroke.

Stress-related muscle tension can lead to headaches, back pain and other body aches. Worry can also trigger an increase in stomach acid resulting in heartburn and other woes.

Worry and the preoccupation it brings on lead to decreased productivity at work and conflicts at home. That leads to more worry, and it becomes a vicious cycle.

Not to worry; **there are many ways to cope.**

- **Talk to someone.** Sharing your fears or concerns often can shine the light of reason on the problem.
- **Take action.** Make a plan to address and solve what's worrying you, and follow through with that plan.
- **Learn to let go.** Recognize the difference between a situation over which you have control and one over which you have no control. If there is nothing you can do, acceptance might be your course of action.
- **Do something you like.** Take time for an activity you enjoy. Better yet, do something kind for someone else.
- **Exercise.** Exercise relieves stress, burns calories, decreases depression and clears your mind. Get moving.
- Another antidote? **Laughter.**

Consider this Irish story about worry:

There are only two things to worry about: Either you are well, or

you are sick. If you are well, then there is nothing to worry about. But if you are sick, there are two things for you to worry about: Either you will get well, or you will die. If you get well, then there is nothing to worry about. If you die, then there are two things to worry about: Either you go up, or you go down. If you go up, then there is nothing to worry about. But if you go down, you will be so busy shaking hands with old friends you won't have time to worry at all.

Corsini's Point

It's only natural to worry; it's a byproduct of having an imagination. But you shouldn't let it get the best of you. There are ways to cope, but it's up to you to follow through with them. When you do, you can actually make worrying work for you—by causing you to take action and figure out a workable solution to your problem. Use your **Faith** as a tool against worry. If you're having trouble letting go of worry, give your worry to God and let Him work on solving it.

“Worry is the interest paid on a debt you might not owe.”

— Anonymous

Are Your Words and Actions Aligned?

Lots of people talk about having a **Faith**-filled life. They think of themselves as leading a life worth imitating. **The finest testament of a true spiritual life is consistency between words and actions.** In other words, you walk the talk.

Let me make my point. This principle is beautifully illustrated by this humorous story.

There was once a self-righteous, boastful Sunday school teacher who was preaching to his class on the importance of exemplary living. With head held high and chest thrust outward, he strutted boldly back and forth across the room, while saying arrogantly, “Now kids, why do people call me a Christian?”

There was a momentary silence. Then one of the boys slowly raised his hand. “Yes?” boomed the teacher.

The boy responded, “Probably because they don't know you.”

Who was teaching whom? Perhaps a better question would be, did the boastful teacher get it? So many times we tend to get caught up in outward appearances. We're so concerned with what others think that we lose sight of the real motivation to do the right thing. This inspiration should come from within. It should be a true part of who you are as a person. It should be genuine. That's how you lead an authentic life.

Corsini's Point

Having a **Faith**-filled life is not just about saying all the right things. It's not only about how much scripture you know. And it's not about just attending your local church, temple or mosque on a regular basis. It's about walking the talk. It's about aligning your actions with your words. It's like St. Francis of Assisi said, *"Preach the gospel at all times. If necessary, use words."*

*"Remember, people will judge you by your actions, not your intentions.
You might have a heart of gold—but so does a hard-boiled egg."*

— **Anonymous**

Fitness

You might be wondering why a *business* coach would include **Fitness** in his program. It's because good health—*emotional* as well as *physical*—is key to *true* success. When you have good health, you not only are able to achieve your goals, but also you're in a better position to really enjoy them.

This Arabian proverb says it best: *“He who has health has hope; he who has hope has everything.”* Being fit is crucial to achieving your “everything.”

Now I know it's difficult in our complicated lives to make time for regular exercise. But here's yet another reason we should: Exercise has benefits beyond just the physical. Studies show that people who exercise regularly are happier and less stressed. They can reason more clearly and are better at problem solving. When you're on top of your game intellectually, you are able to work smarter, not necessarily harder. Think of it as the ultimate way to multitask.

True and total fitness takes into account mind, body and spirit. It's about feeling good and feeling good about you. And this frame of mind influences so many things: our work, our family relationships and our ability to enjoy life. Fitness is absolutely key to achieving success through the 7 **F's**.

Corsini's Point

Make personal **Fitness** a priority in your life. Get moving, and get fit. But don't stop there. Take a mind, body and spirit approach to fitness. Address the things that are bothering you. Find ways to decrease your stress. Laugh. Create and practice more productive work habits. You'll work better and smarter, and you'll feel good about it, too.

“The first wealth is health.”

— **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

Get Fit

Good health is vitally important to happiness. And I'm here to tell you that the better shape you're in, the happier you'll be each day. **Fitness** is a cornerstone of success. Physical fitness, however, is only part of it. Emotional fitness also is essential to *true* success. The *truly* successful person considers personal fitness—mind, body and spirit—to be another worthwhile goal on par with securing promotions at work and a happy home life. After all, what's the point of achieving success if you aren't in any shape to enjoy it?

Making time for physical fitness seems to be an ongoing problem for many of us. The bottom line is: You do have to work at it. Our mostly sedentary lifestyle makes sure of that.

Just think about how folks spent their days 100 years ago. For previous generations, people had to be physically active just to make it through the day. Transportation involved more walking. Eating required more work, as people gardened and then canned the food they grew. Fast food? Hardly. Even most jobs called for active labor. Think industrial assembly lines, farming and mining. Being active was a requirement, not an option.

Today, **just about everything is automated, electronic and easier.** Most business people work in services-related jobs that require little, if any, physical labor. Our workdays are full of stress—constant emails, breakfast meetings, lunches on the go—but we have fewer opportunities to work off that stress with physical activity. I’m convinced a lot of us have sleeping problems because **we are mentally exhausted but not physically tired.**

So I’m challenging you to do something about it. Get going, and give your body a break. **Make time in your day for some type of physical activity.** I know, I know, you’re wondering where to find that time. Well, read the newspaper while you ride a stationary bicycle. Spend a lunch hour taking a walk; you can eat a power bar along the way. Squeeze in some exercise wherever you can. Park in the farthest space from your office door, and walk briskly to the building. Then use the stairs, not the elevator. Take the shopping cart back into the grocery store instead of leaving it in the “cart park” in the lot.

There are countless ways to get fit. But you have to want to do this. You need to have a plan, and you have to make physical fitness one of your goals in life. **You have to make fitness a habit.** Consider getting an exercise partner. This person will bring a sense of accountability to your efforts; this goes a long way toward helping you stick with a fitness program.

Corsini’s Point

God created our bodies to be physically active. Our bodies work best when we ask more of them, and consequently, we work better, too. Establish a **Fitness** plan for success, and make exercise a habit. Pick activities that you enjoy—if you really don’t like to run and yet choose running as one of your fitness activities, I guarantee that you won’t be running 60 days from now. Each and every day, make the effort to squeeze in extra exercise like taking stairs instead of elevators. Weight Watchers teaches clients that **to be fit for life, you have to exercise regularly.** And that’s about the size of it.

“It’s better to wear out than to rust out.”

— *Anonymous*

What’s in Your Diet?

Everyone has heard the adage: *“You are what you eat.”* As a child, I’ll bet you were sometimes asked, *“What’s your favorite food?”* (The adult version

of this is, “*What’s your favorite restaurant?*”) Then, as now, the answer not only indicates the type of food you like, but it also offers clues to your level of sophistication, your background and maybe even your financial situation.

In the workplace, the things that motivate you—the actions and results that fuel your success—also contribute to your *emotional* diet. And this is yet another important part of overall **Fitness**.

I once was at a company “state of the union” meeting where, at one point, participants shared something they’d learned about themselves from a mistake made during the preceding six months. It was a fascinating exercise to watch these people open up and be vulnerable with each other. Their candor was refreshing and uplifting—and informative.

One woman said that she’d learned that she had an appetite for pleasing others. She was like a “professional chef” when it came to doing for other people—going to great lengths to “prepare” items of work that other people wanted. But she was making all these preparations and going to all this trouble for the wrong reasons. She wanted to be liked, and she thought that by pleasing others, it would bring her admiration and friendships, and ultimately, joy.

But it didn’t. It had the opposite effect.

Yes, the other people admired her effort, but that was basically the extent of their feelings. Meanwhile, she felt resentment because there was a disconnect between the level of admiration given and the amount of time and energy it took to maintain it.

That got me thinking about wants, needs and motivation in the workplace. What makes up our work diet? What motivates us each day?

There are lots of people like this woman; they work on a steady diet of pleasing or helping others. Some people manage to survive on controlling their co-workers. For others it’s money or power. And for some people, serving the greater common good keeps them going.

So what feeds you? Are you thriving on things that ultimately will create problems and even failure? Or are you enjoying a healthy diet? Are your motivations good for you and for those around you?

Corsini’s Point

It’s crucial to understand how your emotional diet—what feeds you and motivates you—relates to your overall **Fitness** in life. Do you know what you crave at the office? Is what you want good for you and your long-term success? Take some time, and try to understand exactly what it is that sustains you. Understand that, and you’ll know yourself better. You’ll know what motivates you. Decide if you have the proper “diet” for *true* success. If not, make some healthier choices.

“We are indeed much more than what we eat, but what we eat can nevertheless help us to be much more than what we are.”

— Adelle Davis

Life’s Zingers Expose Your Character

The older I get, the more frequent the “ah ha” moments I have in my life. One of these most recent revelations involved an unexpected challenge. All of us face unexpected challenges (I call them “zingers”) at some time or another in our lives. These zingers can take the shape of an aged parent losing his health; a high school student whose grades take a dive; the loss of a job; the loss of a key client; or a million other non-planned, unexpected, unwelcome events. How well you handle these zingers is related, I believe, to your personal level of **Fitness**—in this case, your *emotional* fitness.

Your initial, intuitive reaction to any unfortunate turn in life depends a great deal on your own character. And your character depends upon a healthy degree of emotional fitness. It’s also interesting to note that your actual response tells *others* more about your character than just about anything else you can do or say.

One particular “ah ha” moment led me to believe that planning isn’t the most important ability that an executive, professional or salesperson needs in a time of trouble. Rather **it is your ability to react *well* to the unforeseen things in life that is more important. This ability—which draws on solidly good character—is what separates successes from setbacks.** This holds true even in the face of tragedy.

Don’t misunderstand me; planning is crucial to success, but it’s only *part* of the formula. Often you have to dig deeper—especially when dealing with life’s zingers.

One day I learned that one of my highly successful, young client managers had had a stroke. This stroke was totally unexpected. Of course it was a major setback for him at the time, but it also had implications for his company. There was, as you would expect, a huge outpouring of love and support for him and his family. But also critical to his good outcome was how well his company’s executives and their families responded to his situation. Their quick and positive reaction did a great deal to get this young man back on track—in and out of his office. And today he is 100% healthy and back at the office.

I’ve observed, a bit closer to home, how strong character can win in the face of tragedy. I saw this when my dad responded to the three strokes my mother experienced over a 10-year period. Each stroke left her more paralyzed, and she required physical therapy and rehab for an extended period of time. She also needed round-the-clock sitters. When the “*what-*

are-you-going-to-do-with-this-unplanned-event” spotlight shone on my dad, he responded with love, honor and steadfast devotion. He was a husband committed to doing whatever it took to give my mother dignity and as much independence as possible.

His strong and excellent character sustained them both. His emotional fitness was the underlying support for it all.

Character is what you do when *nobody* is looking. When you're alone on a four-day business trip 1,000 miles away from home and you have zero accountability, what do you do?

But I think **character also is what you do when *everyone* is watching.** It's what you do when life or work hands you a zinger. Do you admit defeat and opt out? Or do you rise to the occasion (even a bad one), and do the right thing?

Corsini's Point

The longer you live, the greater your chances for one of life's zingers. These things tend to strike without warning, and they often happen when you are least prepared to handle them. **How you respond to non-planned, unwanted events at work or in the rest of your life will demonstrate to others your character—or lack of character.** This character—and subsequently your ability to react with grace, dignity and results—depends upon your emotional **Fitness**. Just remember this: When faced with one of life's unexpected and unwelcome intrusions—a zinger—don't react until you ask yourself, ***“What's the right thing to do?”***

“Character is like a tree and reputation like its shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing.”

— Abraham Lincoln

Fun

Let's talk about **Fun**. Not the giggly kind, but the kind that brings you a *true* sense of pleasure. It's important to set aside time for diversions, hobbies and recreation, but having fun at work is just as important. You can—and should—find joy in your profession. Not only will it bring you happiness and contentment, it is also crucial to achieving *true* success.

Consider your job: If you're like most folks, you spend the better part of each day doing it. Next time you're in the middle of a workday, sit back; close your eyes; and ask yourself one, simple question: "*Am I having fun?*"

So, what's the answer? Are you having fun? Do you really enjoy what you do on a daily basis? Does it bring you joy, or does it stress you out?

Know this: **Work doesn't necessarily have to be work.** But from my day-to-day observations, it looks like a lot of people are not having fun at what they do. Read the business section in most newspapers, and you'll likely find a story that cites one study or another showing that businesspeople are increasingly stressed, anxious and downright exhausted by what they do each day.

Most of us are so busy, we don't take time to consider this—much less measure it. But I have an easy way for you to take stock of your own situation. Put a blank piece of paper on your desk. Draw a line down the middle. One side is for fun; the other is for frustration. I want you to recognize and record how many times you find something to laugh or smile about during your workday. I also want you to record how many times you find yourself frustrated and frowning—or worse. This simple exercise can help you realize whether or not you're really having fun in your workplace. It might help you determine whether or not you enjoy—or better yet, love—what you do.

Over the years, I've come to the conclusion that **you *have* to love what you do professionally.** You must find enjoyment and real fulfillment in how you earn your living. Those people I've coached who love what they do are incredibly positive people. And what's more, their **positive attitudes rub off on those around them—coworkers as well as clients.** Positive people accomplish things. They do it more easily because people want to help them in their efforts. Employees want to follow them. Employers want to reward them.

On the other hand, there are plenty of people who are not having fun at what they do; some are even in the worse situation of actually hating their jobs. **Bad attitudes also can be passed along.** The negativity these unhappy people bring to the job has costs. There's lost productivity and decreased morale. And I'm convinced that **a negative attitude leads to a less fulfilled life**—it might even lead to a shorter lifespan.

We've all heard people utter variations of, "*I hate my job, but I stay there*

because ...” And then they offer some sort of justification for not taking control of their lives. The truth is, your life is your own, and it’s up to you to discover—and then do—what makes you happy. If you’re not happy, you really have no one to blame but yourself.

I know some people disagree with me on this; they might say that the costs are too great to leave their current situation—no matter how unhappy they are. My reply is: **The costs are too great—in and out of the office—to stay where you are miserable.**

Corsini’s Point

You have to enjoy what you do. You spend more time working than at any other activity in your life. (Sleeping comes in second, and personal time is third.) That is why I say you have to love what you do. You have to have **Fun** your job. Having fun and finding joy in what you do positively impacts all the other important aspects of your life—in a big way.

“Real success is finding your lifework in the work that you love.”

— **David McCullough**

All Work and No Play Causes Problems

Fun might, on the surface, sound like the most lighthearted aspect of **The 7 F’s of True Success**, but it’s actually very serious business.

When I talk about having fun at work, I’m not speaking of creating a “party-like” environment or one where you don’t take your job seriously. The fun I’m talking about is simply enjoying what you do. This is fun in the sense that you smile on Mondays when you go to work. (People who don’t like what they do only wear that smile on Fridays when they head home for the weekend.)

I’ve coached lots of people who love what they do, and, believe me, they have fun at work. **Work energizes them. They thrive on the work they do.** You know these people—they are those individuals whom you enjoy just watching at work. You can see the creative and productive juices flow. **The more they work, the more enthusiasm they have for their jobs. They make work fun.**

I once coached a guy who owns a store specializing in fine men’s clothing. I still love to go into this store and watch this guy in action. He sells a high-end brand of men’s khakis. When you hear him talk about these pants, you would think he was describing a work of art. In an expressive and detailed manner, he talks about the deep pockets and the quality materials. He’ll tell you about the expert U.S. craftsmanship that goes into each and every pair of these pants. In the space of five minutes, what you might at first regard

as just another pair of functional khakis becomes something you just have to have.

You can tell this guy has fun at what he does. He clearly knows his merchandise, and he's interested in both the products and the people who buy them. He treats his customers with the respect normally reserved for English royalty. His energy, knowledge and his vision for what a truly successful man should look like are definite. Bottom line: **He's good at what he does because he *likes* what he does.**

On the other hand, we've all experienced working with or being around people who don't enjoy what they do. How does it make you feel when you go into a restaurant and the server acts like he is doing you a huge favor just by bringing your food to the table?

Bad service isn't the only fallout from a lack of fun at work.

One of my clients recently told me about a less-than-stellar stay at an upscale hotel. He described the service there as "graciously indifferent." It didn't make him happy at all.

Indifference—gracious or not—can be just as unpleasant as bad service. In fact, it might even be worse. Think about it. You don't normally pay premiums for bad service—that often comes with low prices. Gracious indifference usually happens when you're paying medium to high prices. And being gracious doesn't make lackadaisical service any easier to take. If the people responsible for this kind of service had fun at work—if they truly enjoyed what they do—I'm willing to bet that this wouldn't even be an issue.

So, are you having fun? Do you enjoy what you do? If you can answer "*yes*," then keep up the good, fun work. You're in a prime position to harness the creative energy of other happy folks around you to make your fun workplace even better. If work isn't fun for you, maybe it's time to either have an attitude check or dust off the résumé. Momma used to tell me: ***"If you love what you do, you'll never have to work another day in your life."***

Corsini's Point

Work should be enjoyable. It should be **Fun**. If you're going to spend that much time at something, you ought to love it. I mean that. Why would you work 40 to 60 hours each week doing something you don't enjoy? *Love what you do*. I heartily encourage you to be the "fun one" at work. Be the one with the positive attitude, the one who energizes others. Be the one known for loving the job. And if you don't (or can't) love what you do, quit and go climb some other mountain.

"Be glad of life because it gives you the chance to love and to work and to play and to look up at the stars."

Finding Your Sound

I loved the movie *Bridget Jones's Diary*. I'm a fan because I'm a pushover for a good romance movie — one where the plucky female lead struggles to overcome life's setbacks and find happiness. I couldn't care less about watching horror flicks or mysteries. Seeing a romantic comedy that contains a life lesson is something I do for **Fun**. Give me a movie that touches my emotions and inspires me. I always want the good guys to win in the end.

Speaking of inspiring stories, one of the movies that has had the biggest impact on my life is *The Glen Miller Story*. This film has a life lesson that relates to one of our **7 F's**.

In this movie, Jimmy Stewart acts the part of Glen Miller, a trombone-playing bandleader most popular in the 1930s and early 1940s. In this film, Glen is trying to “find his sound.” The movie chronicles his struggles and missteps as he tries to become a successful leader of a popular big band.

At first, Glen tries to imitate the leaders of some of the other bands popular in his day. **This brings only limited success**, so he continues to search for “his sound.”

There were years of failed attempts, heartaches and challenges, but **he continued to pursue his own brand of music**. Then one day during rehearsal, he had a band member who couldn't play the instrument originally intended for an arrangement. So Glen tried out a new configuration of musicians. He experimented with this new and unique sound at a ball, and the crowd loved it. **Glen became wildly successful, but perhaps most importantly, he found his own sound. He realized his dream.**

A lot of us can relate to Glen Miller's story. **Most of us are trying to find our “sound” in some area of our lives**. You might be struggling to find a career that makes you happy and fulfilled or a company where you are challenged and content. Your greatest test might involve becoming a better parent or a more supportive spouse. Or it could be determining ways for your spiritual life to integrate with the other areas of your life.

I challenge you to take a moment and decide if you are playing your true “sound.” Are you really doing what brings you joy in life? Are you having **Fun** at what you do?

Ask yourself some pointed questions:

- If tomorrow you inherited a boatload of money, what would you do with your time and talents?
- What is your mood on Mondays during your morning commute to

work, and how does that compare to your Friday afternoon commute home?

- Do you feel anxious most of the time, or are you energized about what you do in and out of the office?
- How do you feel about the amount of time you spend with your family?
- If you found out that in heaven they are playing a baseball game tomorrow and you are the starting pitcher, are you ready spiritually?

Finding your “sound” provides you with all the motivation you will need for a successful and happy life. **Those people I’ve coached who knew what they wanted in life and were focused on that journey have been the most positive, engaging people I’ve ever met.**

So go find your own “sound.” You might have to change jobs or industries or even move to a different city. **Do whatever you need to do because your happiness is up to you.** Do as Glen Miller did. He continued to pursue his dream until he realized it, until he found his “sound.” And the rest is musical history.

Corsini’s Point

I challenge you to find your own “sound” in your life. At work and in life outside the office, figure out what you do best and concentrate on doing what you do better. Be the best you can be in your industry. Be the expert. And do what you love. Doing what you love certainly makes work less like “work.” I know. Momma was right. Since I started loving what I do, work is **Fun**.

“Success is not final, failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts.”

— Winston Churchill

From the Good-Stuff File

Several years ago, I received a clipping of an article called *Benjamin Franklin’s 13 Virtues*. It had—and continues to have—a powerful impact on me. I saved it in the “Good-Stuff File” that I’ve kept for more than 20 years. (The file is now actually four very thick folders and an electronic file; and it includes wonderful articles, clippings, tips, suggestions and quotes.)

Just thumbing through my Good-Stuff File, I see so many references to **The 7 F’s of True Success**. There are articles that relate to all aspects—the **Fundamentals** of work, **Finances**, **Family**, **Faith**, **Fitness**, **Fun** and **Fusion** (the balance of all these things). I think Ben Franklin’s ethical experiment comes under the **Fusion** heading; but read on, there’s an aspect of **Fun** here, too.

Benjamin Franklin's 13 Virtues

While still in his 20s, Benjamin Franklin set out to be a good man. In his biography, he wrote, *"I conceived the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection."* With this in mind, he chose 13 virtues that he would strive to practice each day.

Here are the virtues that he found important and imperative, along with what he called *"a short precept which fully expressed the extent I gave to its meaning"*:

- 1. Temperance:** *Eat not to dullness. Drink not to elevation.*
- 2. Silence:** *Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself. Avoid trifling conversation.*
- 3. Order:** *Let all your things have their places. Let each part of your business have its time.*
- 4. Resolution:** *Resolve to perform what you ought. Perform without fail what you resolve.*
- 5. Frugality:** *Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; i.e. waste nothing.*
- 6. Industry:** *Lose no time. Be always employed in something useful. Cut off all unnecessary actions.*
- 7. Sincerity:** *Use no hurtful deceit. Think innocently and justly; and if you speak, speak accordingly.*
- 8. Justice:** *Wrong none by doing injuries or omitting the benefits that are your duty.*
- 9. Moderation:** *Avoid extremes. Forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.*
- 10. Cleanliness:** *Tolerate no uncleanness in body, clothes or habitation.*
- 11. Tranquility:** *Be not disturbed at trifles or at accidents common or unavoidable.*
- 12. Chastity:** *Rarely use venery but for health or offspring—never to dullness, weakness or injury of your own or another's peace or reputation.*
- 13. Humility:** *Imitate Jesus and Socrates.*

Franklin saw ethics like these as a means of achieving happiness. And it worked, to an extent.

After just a few months, Franklin abandoned his project of moral transformation. He wrote: *"I soon found that I had undertaken a task of more difficulty than I had imagined."* But, he added, *"Tho' I never arrived at the perfection I had been so ambitious of obtaining but fell far short of it, yet I was by the endeavor a better and a happier man than I otherwise*

should have been.”

If you haven't yet started your own Good-Stuff File, I highly recommend that you do so—and soon. Get your “good stuff” wherever you can. Whenever your creativity is down, this file is a good logjam breaker for any kind of mental block. What's more, it's **Fun** and fun to read.

Corsini's Point

Create a Good-Stuff File. Fill it with **Fun** things. Look for articles that touch your heart, mind and spirit and inspire you to **Do What You Do Better**. Seek out ideas to improve your life both in and out of the office. Refer to the file often for big ideas, positive thinking and motivational reminders. For most of us, that means slowing down long enough to take the time to identify good stuff. Then you have to save it. You can do it. It's worth the effort.

“To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe.”

— **Anatole France**

Fusion

The dictionary defines **Fusion** as the “merging or blending of two or more things.” I regard fusion as the culmination of your work on the first six areas of **The 7 F’s of True Success**. Fusion is what happens when you focus on and integrate the **Fundamentals** of your work with sound **Financial** strategies, attention to **Family** and friends, a life based on **Faith**, time for personal and emotional **Fitness** and a real sense of **Fun**. **Fusion** is, in fact, the seventh element in the **7 F’s** equation. Let’s take a closer look at fusion and how it is crucial to achieving *true* success.

I hope it’s obvious by now that our consulting and coaching model is a **whole-person approach to life that leads to success both in and out of the office**. People today want success at work, happiness at home and a relevant place in the world around them. They want it all, and who can blame them? But success in all these areas requires a sense of balance in one’s life. That’s the idea behind fusion.

Fusion, for the business professional, means balancing a great many things. Because there are only so many hours in a day, this requires planning. You have to work to find this balance. And then it takes continued effort to maintain it.

For the smart and committed businessperson, the real goal is bigger than the next promotion, it happens during the 8- to 10-hour workday and also in the other hours of each day. It involves people other than just themselves. I’m talking about success and happiness in *all* areas of life.

The 7 F’s of True Success—the **Fundamentals** of work, **Finances**, **Family**, **Faith**, **Fitness**, **Fun** and the **Fusion** of these things—covers a lot of ground. The **7 F’s** model offers a guideline for you, a handy checklist of areas that need your attention. Take stock *regularly* of how you are doing in each of the **7 F’s**. Know what works and what needs improvement. Then act. Your actions are the fusion that brings it all together.

Corsini’s Point

True success comes from balance in all areas of your life. That balance comes from focused **Fusion** of your work **Fundamentals**, **Finances**, **Family**, **Faith**, **Fitness** and **Fun**. Fusion is a day-to-day opportunity and struggle. Outside accountability from others can help you achieve fusion. Know this: Through perseverance, application and a clear vision of all the important aspects of your life, you *can* Do What You Do Better.

“You can’t do anything about the length of your life, but you can do something about its width and depth.”

— Evan Esar

Balancing Act

We're drawing to a close with our discussion of **The 7 F's of True Success**—the seven areas of life that are crucial to achievement in and out of the office.

As we mentioned earlier, the dictionary defines **Fusion** as “the merging or blending of two or more things.” **Fusion** for the business professional means balancing the **Fundamentals** of work with sound **Financial** strategies. It means being someone your **Family** can count on, living your **Faith** daily, finding time for **Fitness** and making work **Fun**. All these things come together in what I call **Fusion** to help you achieve the *true* success you're seeking.

Because there are only so many hours in a day, this requires planning. **You have to work to find balance. And then it takes continued effort to maintain that balance.**

By now, it should be clear that our business-coaching model is a **whole-person approach to life. It's one that leads to success at work and at home.** It's about leaving your legacy in all areas of your life.

In our coaching sessions, we sometimes take cues from the success strategies of professional athletes; then we modify these ideas for business. Think about it. Professional athletes know the value of all-around, all-inclusive training. They rely on experts to keep them in tip-top shape during and *between* games.

Take golfers, for instance. In addition to the obvious technical work on their swings and the practice time they put in, they might also work with a sports psychologist, a nutritionist, an agent, financial advisors, a publicist and a physical therapist—just to name a few.

Likewise, the savvy businessperson who is **a true high-performance individual knows the value of balance in life—the value of Fusion.**

Of course, things don't always go as planned. Sometimes, just when you think you have it all under control, one of life's little (or big) surprises hits you square in the face.

You can't keep bad things from coming your way, but you can, and must, take back control when they do. You have to work on the fusion in your life with renewed focus on *all* the things that matter to you.

For the smart and committed businessperson, the goal isn't only about how successful you can be at work; **it's also about being successful—and joyful—in all areas of your life. In and out of the office. Focusing on all of The 7 F's of True Success can take you there.**

Corsini's Point

True success comes from having balance in your life. That balance comes from the **Fusion** of the 7 **F's**. It leads to success at the office, in our homes, with our kids, at the gym, at our church or synagogue and in financial matters. Fusion is a day-to-day struggle. But through perseverance, focus and a clear vision of all the important aspects of your life, you can achieve it. Outside accountability from others can help. I visit my own coach monthly. And together, we focus on what matters and make that all-important fusion happen.

"We cannot live only for ourselves. A thousand fibers connect us with our fellow men."

— Herman Melville

Wham!

There is an art to finding—and then maintaining—balance in life. What I call **Fusion**. This is no small thing. **It's hard enough to find the "sweet spot" in life. Keeping it sweet is a constant challenge.**

But it *can* be done. I know because I have been at the point in my career when I realized that I was there. With my coaching program at a productive peak, I'd just decided to develop an enhanced version of my sales-coaching model. I was looking forward to the discovery/research part of planning this new sales process. My four-day-a-week exercise program had become an anticipated habit; my spiritual life was at a new high because I was giving it more attention, too. And with our third child about to be born, I made family time a priority. I was able to be home by 5 p.m. to relieve my wife and spend quality time with our boys each night.

Life was good. Then wham!

Life threw us a curveball. I was taking my "adopted mom" (who happened to be an older neighbor) to church. We walked into a room before services when she tripped, hit a desktop and landed headfirst on the corner of a metal cabinet. It knocked her out, and she suffered a bad cut and a broken bone.

Suddenly and without warning, I felt like I was in a television medical drama. Within 10 minutes, we were at a local hospital (thanks to the paramedics and firemen), but the odyssey was only beginning. My next few weeks were spent trying to maintain my routine, work each day and sustain a normal family life in between hospital and rehabilitation-center visits to this "momma" whom I love.

But this real-life "wham" experience taught me a few things about priorities and self-preservation. In the beginning of all this, I was frustrated and

anxious when I tried to complete all the things I normally did each day in and out of my office. But once **I finally came to realize that “normality” and the “sweet spot” of a routine were out of the question, I set some proper—and realistic—expectations for myself.**

I sat back and thought about how to get through this without driving myself crazy. I thought about what things I could—and should—accomplish that would keep me in line with my values and address my most important commitments. One of these things was a daily hospital visit to my dear friend. Some other things had to be sacrificed for a while. So I decided that my “wham schedule” would only include three main activities:

Keeping up with my coaching sessions.

Seeing my friend in the hospital.

Getting home by 5 p.m. to be with my family.

Everything else—exercise, following up with potential clients, etc.—would have to go on hold for a while.

Once I allowed myself that limited, new routine, my stress level went way down. **My expectations were realistic—they were simply in line with the amount of available time I had to get things done.** And I was absolutely there for my family—real and adopted—at a time when they needed me.

Corsini's Point

Things don't always go as planned. Sometimes, just when you think you have true **Fusion**, “wham”—you get hit with one of life's unexpected (and unwelcome) surprises. When that happens, don't try to keep your normal schedule or maintain the usual expectations for yourself or for others. Take a moment to figure out exactly what you have to do to keep at least some of your **7 F's** on track and survive the temporary bad situation. Keep your values in mind, and let them help you set new priorities. Once the crisis is over, return to your daily routine following **The 7 F's of True Success** armed with the knowledge that strength is the product of struggle. Every once in a while it isn't about doing what you do better, it's about doing what you *have* to do and doing that well.

“Tough times don't last. Tough people do.”

— Anonymous

The Newlywed Game

How well do you know yourself? How well do others know you? Do you have any idea how you are perceived at work? Should you care?

If you live a life of balance, a life of **Fusion**, with all of the **7 F's** in mind, you'll know yourself quite well. And you'll know how others view you because you know exactly what they see. Your success is deliberate. You make it happen with close, careful attention to all the various important parts of your life.

Some of you are old enough to have watched the classic American game show *The Newlywed Game* in the 1960s and 1970s. Others of you might fortunately (or unfortunately) get The Game Show channel on cable and so are familiar with the format. Bob Eubanks (and in the 1990s Gary Kroeger) would ask questions of recently married couples to see how well they really knew each other. Contestants got points for correct answers, and at the end of the game the couple with the most points won. (You might also remember that generally if the questioned spouse got it right, the couple hugged. If not, the unwitting spouse was hit over the head with the answer board.)

Using *The Newlywed Game* format, **what would happen if we asked your peers, investors, vendors, clients, friends, etc. questions about you?** What if we said, "Complete the following sentence: 'As it relates to work (or finances, family, faith, fitness, fun or fusion), (your name) is the most _____ person I know.'"

Just how would folks answer those kinds of questions about you? Would they describe your work habits as organized or lazy? Would you come across as a loyal friend or an untrustworthy acquaintance? A devoted family member or someone who avoids responsibility? A spendthrift or a guy who is financially savvy?

When I think of some of the executives, professionals and salespeople we work with, descriptions such as "imaginative leader," "rainmaker salesperson," "true professional," "most respected person in his industry," and "big idea guy" could easily fill in that blank for a number of people. Of course there are other folks in this world who would qualify for descriptions such as "negative," "outdated" and "unplugged."

Which descriptions do you merit? If you live and work with the **7 F's** in mind, others will most certainly see you in a favorable light. Life according to the **7 F's** isn't something you can do halfway. It takes commitment, and you have to pay attention to every aspect. You have to put it all together.

Corsini's Point

If you have no idea what people would say about you then you probably don't know yourself as well as you should. If you don't *like* to think about what people would say, then maybe it is time to change. On the other hand, if you're confident of praise, then congratulations. Keep doing what you're doing; keep working on your **Fusion** daily. But no matter what, remember **it is never too late to be what you might have been.** And that's a 7

F's life lesson for all of us.

"I have always said that if I were a rich man I would employ a professional praiser."

— Osbert Sitwell

Your Best Is Good Enough

Henry Ford was a pioneer in so many ways. He automated the automobile industry making it possible for people from all walks of life to purchase cars. He's associated, perhaps most notably, with the assembly-line process. His commitment to lowering production costs led to numerous experiments and innovations, as well as the franchise system that put a dealership in nearly every city in North America and in major cities on six continents.

He also is credited with lots of wise sayings and ideas. Pick up any book of quotations; I'll just about guarantee he's in every one of them.

If I could sit down with Henry Ford, I believe we could have a spirited and worthwhile conversation about **The 7 F's of True Success**. I think he would know that **real success is all encompassing. It involves work and family and quality time for oneself. It's more than just a big promotion and a hefty bank statement. It means living a life of balance.** Henry Ford, I think, would understand the concept of **Fusion**.

One of my favorite quotes from Henry Ford sums up how I want to run my own life in and out of the office. This is how I hope, and strive, to coach others:

"Believe in the best; think your best; study your best; have a goal for your best. Never be satisfied with less than your best. Try your best, and, in the long run, things will turn out for the best."

Corsini's Point

Remember: Positive energy breeds positive energy. Strive to do your best and do the right thing—in all situations. Every day. If something is worth doing, it's worth doing well. Live your life with all of the **7 F's** in mind. Hone your skills regarding the fundamentals of your work. Keep a handle on your finances. Be someone your family can rely upon. Remain faithful to your faith. Be good to yourself and stay fit. Have some fun each and every day. Pay attention to all of these things, and you'll have your **Fusion**. This, my friend, is how you **Do What You Do Better**.

"Every time you wake up, ask yourself: 'What good things am I going to

*do today?’ Remember that when the sun goes down at the end of the day,
it will take part of your life with it.”*

— Indian proverb

Some Final Thoughts

Our time together is almost completed. And yet *your* journey using **The 7 F's of True Success** has only just begun.

What you've discovered in this book is a healthy, holistic approach to life and work. The **7 F's** principles apply to your professional *and* personal life. Our model allows—and better yet, requires—you to consider the “big picture.” Once you do, you'll realize the importance of setting and achieving goals in each of the key areas of your life.

Our coaching experiences have taught us time and again that this kind of holistic approach to life will create long-term success. It's the way to achieve business success and a strong, happy family at the same time. It can help you build a significant financial legacy, too. Attention to your own well-being results in improved health—physical as well as emotional. It leads to stronger faith and deeper happiness. It creates an amazing positive energy that, in turn, generates more and more positive energy to touch all areas of your life.

In the very first chapter of this book, I issued **The Corsini Challenge**. I challenged you to Do What You Do Better professionally. But I also challenged you to **de**-compartmentalize your life. I challenged you to strive for success at work and in all the other areas of your life. I hope you accepted this challenge. And I trust you will continue the good work.

True Success is taking a whole-person approach to your life. *True* success isn't measured by money alone. You really *can't* buy happiness.

True Success comes from being skillful at the **fundamentals** of your work and exercising those skills each and every day.

True Success means creating a **financial legacy** for yourself, your children and your children's children.

True Success means being there for your **family** and friends—in good times and in times of need.

True Success is walking the talk of your **faith's** principles.

True Success is a lifelong commitment to emotional and physical **fitness**.

True Success is having **fun** in and out of the office.

True Success results from focused **fusion** in all areas of your life.

True Success is about **doing what you do better** every single day.

About the Author

Marc Corsini is the founder of Corsini Consulting Group, LLC, a business-coaching and strategic-planning consulting firm based in Birmingham, Alabama. For over 15 years, he and his staff of coaches have helped thousands of executives, professionals and salespeople do what they do better using **The 7 F's of True Success**. Prior to starting Corsini Consulting, he worked at IBM. Marc is a graduate of Georgia Institute of Technology. He lives in Alabama with his wife and three children.

For more information about Marc and the services his firm offers, visit www.corsini.com or call (205) 879-0432.

Do What You Do TMBETTER

FUNDAMENTALS FINANCES FAMILY FAITH FITNESS FUN FUSION

There are endless and priceless rewards to living a balanced life. But talking about it and doing it are two entirely different things.

Marc Corsini is the father of three children; a devoted husband; and business coach to hundreds of the country's top executives, professionals and salespeople. He knows you have to be intentional about life to achieve *true* success — that is, success in and out of the office. Marc shows you how to realize your intentions with **The 7 F's of True Success**.

The **7 F's** method is about becoming skillful at the **Fundamentals** of your work, managing your **Finances**, spending quality time with your **Family** and friends, living a life of **Faith**, embracing (and making time for) **Fitness** and having **Fun** along the way.

The seventh F, **Fusion**, is the balance of all this. It is possible to enjoy a life of *true* and all-encompassing success.

You do this by learning how to **do what you do better**. You learn this through **The 7 F's of True Success**.