



Changing Lives – Building Character

Copyright 2019
Changing Lives Ministry

All rights reserved. Portions of this work may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, as long as attribution is included therein to the copyright owner.

Changing Lives – Building Character

21 Days of Positive Exposures

1. Desire to Win; The Edge
2. Billy Miske; The Desire to Win
3. Ben Hogan; Desire and Persistence
4. The Bumblebee; Intelligent Ignorance - Does the Impossible
5. Henry Ford; Intelligent Ignorance – Does the Impossible
6. General Creighton Abrams; How do you handle adversity?
7. Charles Kettering; When Life Gives You Lemons...
8. Lots of Lemons; Make Lemonade
9. A “sack” of Lemon’s; A “tub” full of Lemonade
10. Japanese-American’s in WWII: Prisoners of War
11. Charles Goodyear; Convict
12. Gene Tunny: Boxer with two broken hands
13. The Wisdom of the Ages
14. Drudgery to...?
15. “Not Just raising crops...”
16. Smoky Mountain Hogs
17. “Mr. Edison...how does it feel to fail...10,000 times?”
18. “Demosthenes, who could not speak”
19. Prime the Pump
20. Pump Hard to Get the Water Flowing
21. Chinese Bamboo

Day 1 – Desire to Win; The Edge

Desire is that little extra that gives those who have it the edge. It’s like the edge of the blanket that hangs over the bed-that’s what keeps you warm. It’s like the little extra that turns water into steam. At 211 degrees, water is hot enough for you to use to shave or to make a cup of coffee. Add one more degree and that hot water changes into steam, which will power a locomotive around this country or propel a steamship around the world. That “little extra” is what will send you to the top of the ladder. Ty Cobb, the great Detroit Tiger baseball player, had an enormous amount of desire. Grantland Rice, recognized as one of the finest sports writers of all time, relates this desire to us as he says, “I recall a day when Cobb played with each leg a mass of raw flesh. He had a temperature of 103 degrees and the doctors ordered him to bed for several days. His team was playing that day; however, and, as far as Ty Cobb was concerned, that meant he would play. He did play, and got three hits, stole three bases, won the game-and then collapsed on the bench.”

When you think of desire, you could think of another baseball player. Pete Gray is an immortal who might well belong in Baseball’s Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. As a young man, his overwhelming desire was to play major league baseball. “I’m going to make it all the way to the top,” he repeated over and over again. His crowning ambition was to play a game in Yankee Stadium. In 1945, Gray made it to the major leagues with the St. Louis Browns. He only played one year in the majors, was not a regular and never hit a single home run. Nevertheless, Pete Gray is an immortal because he reached his goal despite the fact he had no right arm. He didn’t look down at what he lacked. Instead, he looked up with what he had. Success in life is not determined by having been

Changing Lives – Building Character

dealt the good hand. Success is determined by taking the hand you were dealt and utilizing it to the very best of your ability.

Day 2 – Billy Miske; The Desire to Win

The desire to win enables many people to win, who at least theoretically shouldn't. Billy Miske was such a man. He was a fighter from the old school, and a good one at that. He once fought Jack Dempsey for the heavyweight boxing championship of the world. At 25, when he should have been at his peak and headed for even greater heights, he was hospitalized with a serious illness. The doctors told him to quit the ring. He should have, but fighting was the only thing he could do. By the time he was 29, his kidneys were failing. He knew he was dying of Bright's disease, and he had only one fight that year. Too weak to go the gym to train, and too sick to seek any other job, he stayed at home with his family until all their financial resources were nearly exhausted.

Christmas was around the corner and his love for his family cried out to him to provide that "Merry Christmas" for them. In November, Miske went into Minneapolis to see his friend and manager, Jack Reddy, to persuade him to arrange a fight. At first, Reddy was adamant in his refusal. He knew of Miske's condition, and he would have no part of such a fight. Miske pleaded his case well, explained he was broke and that he knew he wouldn't be around much longer. He had to have just one more fight because Christmas was on its way and his family was in need. Finally Reddy agreed under the condition that Miske train and get in shape. Miske knew he was too weak to get into shape, but promised he would make a good fight.

Against his better judgment, Reddy finally gave in and matched his old friend with Bill Brennan. The fight was slated to take place in Omaha, Nebraska. Brennan was a tough, hard fighter who had gone twelve rounds with Dempsey. He was past his prime, but he was still a formidable opponent for a dying man.

Since Miske didn't have the stamina to train, he stayed at home to conserve his strength. He went to Omaha just in time for the fight. In those days, boxing commissions were considerably more lenient than they are today, so they passed Miske. The fight drew well, and when it was over Billy Miske picked up his \$2400 purse and went home to his family for Christmas. He spent it all on the things the family wanted and had been doing without. It was truly a happy occasion, the biggest Christmas the Miske family ever had. On December 26th, Miske called Jack Reddy to take him to the Saint Paul Hospital where he died on New Year's Day. The last fight on his record had been just six weeks before, and his friends couldn't believe it. Billy was weak and dying and it would have been easy for him to have taken a dive. However, his pride and desire to be at his best for the family he loved drove him to unbelievable efforts. Billy Miske knocked out Bill Brennan in four rounds. Miske tapped his reserve resources because of his desire to win. Your reserves are available, too-when you have the desire to use them.

Day 3 – Ben Hogan; Desire and Persistence

Ben Hogan rates close to the top of the list in terms of desire. Considering everything, Hogan could well be the greatest golfer who ever lived. He didn't have as much physical ability as many of his fellow golfers, but what he might have lacked in ability, he more than made up for in persistence, determination and desire.

Ben Hogan really had two careers, because at the very peak of his game he was involved in a nearly fatal accident. One foggy morning as he and his wife, Valerie, were driving down the highway; they

Changing Lives – Building Character

rounded a curve and saw the lights of a Greyhound bus immediately in front of them. Ben only had an instant to throw his body in front of his wife to protect her. This unselfish act undoubtedly saved his own life because the steering wheel was pushed deeply into the driver's seat where Ben had been sitting. For days his life hung in the balance before he was pronounced out of danger. However, the doctors unanimously agreed that his career as a professional golfer was over and he would be fortunate to ever walk again.

But they didn't recognize the will and desire of Ben Hogan. As soon as he could take those first few painful steps, he revived his dream of golfing greatness. He exercised and strengthened his hands constantly. He kept a golf club with him wherever he was and practiced his putting stroke at home on legs so shaky he could scarcely stand. At the first opportunity, he was back on the putting green staggering around. Still later, as he worked and walked and strengthened those scarred legs, he went to the practice tee. Initially, he only hit a few balls, but every session he would hit a few more. Finally, the day came when he was able to get back on the golf course. When he re-entered competition, his move back to the top was rapid. The reason is simple. Ben Hogan saw himself as a winner. He had such an overwhelming desire to win; he knew he would make it back to the top. Yes, desire is the ingredient that makes the difference between an average performer and a champion.

Day 4 – The Bumblebee; Intelligent Ignorance - Does the Impossible

You have probably read that the bumblebee can't fly. Scientific evidence about it is overwhelming-the bumblebee isn't supposed to fly. His body is too heavy, and his wings are too light. Aerodynamically, it is an impossibility for the bumblebee to fly, but the bumblebee doesn't read and, in his intelligent ignorance, he flies!

Day 5 – Henry Ford; Intelligent Ignorance – Does the Impossible

Henry Ford was a most unusual man. He was not a financial success until after he was forty years old. He had very little formal education. After he built his empire, he conceived the idea of the V-8 engine. Calling his engineers together, he said, "Gentlemen, I want you to build a V-8 engine." These brilliantly educated men knew the principles of mathematics, physics and engineering. They knew what could and couldn't be done. They looked at Ford with a condescending attitude of "Let's humor the old man because, after all, he is the boss." They very patiently explained to him that the V-8 engine was economically unfeasible and they even explained "why" it couldn't be built. Ford wasn't listening, however, and simply said, "Gentlemen, I must have a V-8 engine-build me one."

They half-heartedly worked for a period of time and reported back to him, "We are more convinced than ever that a V-8 engine is an engineering impossibility." Mr. Ford, however, wasn't easily dissuaded. "Gentlemen, I must have a V-8 engine-so let's go full-speed ahead." Again, they went out, and this time they worked a little harder, spent a little more time and a lot more money. They came back with the same report, "Mr. Ford, the V-8 engine is an absolute impossibility."

The word "impossible" was not included in the vocabulary of the man who had already revolutionized the industry with assembly-line production, \$5.00-a-day wages, the Model-T and the Model-T automobiles. With fire in his eyes, Henry Ford said, "Gentlemen, you don't understand; I must have a V-8 engine, and you're going to build it for me. Now, go do it." Guess what? They built the V-8 engine. They did it because one man was intelligently ignorant enough not to know that something couldn't be done-so he did it. We see this every day, don't we? One says, "I can't" and doesn't. One says, "I can" and does.

Changing Lives – Building Character

Day 6 – General Creighton Abrams; How do you handle adversity?

At one point during World War II, General Creighton Abrams and his command were totally surrounded. The enemy was north, east, south and west. His reaction to this news (lemon): “Gentlemen, for the first time in the history of this campaign, we are now in a position to attack the enemy from any direction.” General Abrams not only had the desire to live, he had the desire to win. It’s not the situation (lemon), but the way we respond to it (use we make of it) that’s important.

What is intelligent ignorance? Intelligent ignorance is essentially the way you respond to the unpromising or negative situations in life. It’s that quality that enables you to take the lemons of life and make lemonade. It’s shown in the attitude of two men who had polio. One became a beggar on the streets of Washington. The other was Franklin Delano Roosevelt, President of the United States. Intelligent ignorance is the seed of hope, the promise of good in everything that happens to us. It’s the conviction that regardless of what happens, something positive can come from it, and we can make something good out of it. In short, we can take whatever lemon life hands us and convert it to lemonade.

Day 7 – Charles Kettering; When Life Gives You Lemons...

Charles Kettering had a rather unusual lemon. It was a broken arm. Many years ago he was in his front yard cranking his car and it “kicked” him. For today’s generation, that means the hand crank didn’t disengage, jerked sharply as a cylinder began firing and turned the crank rather than the crank turning the engine. The sudden lurch broke Kettering’s arm. What did he do? First, he grasped his arm in pain. Almost immediately, however, he thought, “This is a terrible thing to happen while you’re cranking a car. An easier, better, safer way to crank cars must be developed or the masses won’t have any desire to own an automobile.” As a result, he invented the “self-starter.” His lemon-a broken arm- is our lemonade today, but was his also since he made thousands of dollars on that invention.

Day 8 – Lot’s of Lemons; Make Lemonade

Jacob Schick’s lemon was a temperature that fell to 40 degrees below zero while he was prospecting for gold. He couldn’t shave with a blade-so he invented the first electric razor which turned into a big enough gold mine to buy lots of lemonade.

Neal Jeffrey, third-string freshman quarterback at Baylor University, had a giant-sized lemon. He stuttered. He told Coach Grant Teaff that his goal was to play first-string quarterback for the Varsity. Neal’s burning desire enabled him to realize his dream, and in 1974 he led Baylor to its first Southwest Conference championship in 50 years. Neal made all-Southwest Conference and was voted most valuable player in the league.

Day 9 – A “sack” of Lemon’s; A “tub” full of Lemonade

At age one, Mike was taken sick and confined to a hospital where he contracted polio. At age two, he was an expert in walking with braces and crutches. By age sixteen, the deteriorating effects of the disease made him a paraplegic and he was confined to a wheelchair.

In August, 1971, at age twenty-one, Mike was laid off from his \$2.99 per hour job as an engineering clerk. As you probably suspect, twenty-one-year-old paraplegics are not in heavy demand in the labor market. However, there is always a demand for dedicated, enthusiastic workers. So in just one

Changing Lives – Building Character

month, Mike was hired as a placement counselor with an employment agency in Rockford, Illinois, which was part of Management Recruiters International, Inc. which employs over 1,300 people.

In March, 1975, at the Sonesta Beach Hotel in Bermuda, Mike Weldon was honored as his company's Counselor of the Year. Believing you can have everything in life you want if you help enough other people get what they want. Mike is devoting his life to helping others. He doesn't believe he has a disability, and everyone agrees he doesn't have a "loser's limp." Mike figures since life gave him a "sack" full of lemons, he might as well make a "tub" full of lemonade.

Day 10 – Japanese-American's in WWII: Prisoner's of War

Let's go back to World War II for a moment. Most of us know the war began when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. What many people have forgotten is that many loyal Japanese-American citizens were just as upset over Pearl Harbor as any American citizen could have been. Many of these Japanese-Americans were treated shamefully and placed in detention camps in the United States. The United States government assumed, erroneously, as history has proven, that these Japanese-Americans were or might be disloyal. Finally, after much persuasion and soul-searching, many of these Japanese were given an opportunity to enter the war and prove their loyalty by fighting for America.

The 442nd Combat Regimental Team was formed. It was made up of Japanese-Americans. Interestingly enough, this regiment won more Congressional Medals of Honor and decorations than any regiment in the history of the United States. Since the war, this group of Japanese-Americans has had the highest percentage of college graduates of any first-generation American people. They responded positively to a situation that was both negative and highly emotional. They took a lemon and made lemonade.

Day 11 – Charles Goodyear; Convict

Charles Goodyear's lemon was a prison sentence, resulting from a contempt of court citation. In prison, he became an assistant in the kitchen. While there, he continued to work on his idea. In the process, he discovered a method for vulcanizing rubber. His lemon, a prison sentence, became our lemonade. We have better tires, which mean better travel and a better way of life.

Day 12 – Gene Tunney: Boxer with two broken hands

Many years ago Gene Tunney became the Heavyweight Boxing Champion of the World because he defeated Jack Dempsey. When he first started his fistic career, he was a tremendously hard puncher with a knockout punch in either hand. While fighting exhibitions bouts in France, as a member of the American Expeditionary Forces during World War I, he broke both of his hands. The doctor and his manager told him he would never be able to realize his dream to become the heavyweight boxing champion of the world because of his brittle hands. Tunney was not disturbed and said, "If I can't become the champion as a puncher, I will make it as a boxer." History will tell that Gene Tunney was a student of the art of self-defense. He became one of the most scientific and skillful boxers to step into the squared circle. This skill as a boxer enabled Tunney to outbox and defeat Jack Dempsey for the heavyweight championship of the world. Gene Tunney was able to take a lemon and convert it into lemonade.

Fistic experts are in general agreement that Tunney never would have become the heavyweight champion had he not broken his hands. They contend that Tunney could never have stood up to Jack

Changing Lives – Building Character

Dempsey in a toe-to-toe slugging contest and survived. Since Tunney couldn't slug it out, he used his skill and technique as a boxer and became the heavyweight champion. His lemon, two broken hands, became his lemonade, the heavyweight championship of the world.

By now the lesson should be clear. If life hands you a lemon, you'll have the main ingredient for your own lemonade. What happens to us is not the most important thing. With discipline, dedication, determination and desire, we can respond positively, which greatly enhances our chances for victory. Intelligent ignorance, a lemon and a lot of desire will help you get what you want out of life.

Day 13 The Wisdom of the Ages

Many years ago, a wise old king called the most intelligent men in his kingdom together and gave them as assignment. "I want you to compile for me the 'wisdom of the ages.' Put it in book form so we might leave it for posterity." The wise men left their king and worked for a long period of time. They finally returned with twelve volumes and proudly proclaimed that this truly was the "wisdom of the ages." The king looked at the twelve volumes and said, "Gentlemen, I'm certain this is the wisdom of the ages and contains the knowledge we should leave to mankind. However, it is so long, I fear the people won't read it. Condense it." Again, the wise men worked long and hard before they returned with only one volume. The king, however, knew that it was still too lengthy, so he commanded them to further condense their work. The wise men reduced the volume to a chapter, then to a page, next to a paragraph and finally to a sentence. When the wise old king saw the sentence, he was absolutely elated. "Gentlemen," he said, "this is truly the wisdom of the ages, and as soon as all men everywhere learn this truth, then most of our problems will be solved." The sentence simply said, "There ain't no free lunch."

Day 14 – Drudgery to...?

Parents, teachers, clergy and speakers often elaborate on the enormous sacrifices involved in climbing to the top. However, as the years pass, you will realize that most of the men and women who are moving to the top are not "paying a price." They work hard because they truly enjoy their careers and the work involved. The top people in any field get involved in what they're doing, become engrossed, dig it, and their success comes because they love what they're doing. They choose to spend those hours at work. In short, they have a tremendous attitude which often changes a job from drudgery to pure joy.

This little story emphasizes the attitude of "enjoying" the price.

In old age, Pierre Auguste Renoir, the great French artist, suffered from arthritis, which twisted and cramped his hand. Henri Matisse, his artist friend, watched sadly while Renoir, grasping a brush with only his fingertips, continued to paint, even though each movement caused stabbing pain.

One day, Matisse asked Renoir why he persisted in painting at the expense of such torture.

Renoir replied, "The pain passes, but the beauty remains."

Day 15 – "Not Just raising crops..."

A farmer had several boys and he worked them extremely hard around the farm. One day, one of the neighbors pointed out that it wasn't necessary to work the boys that hard to raise a crop. The farmer quietly but firmly responded, "I'm not just raising crops; I'm raising boys."

Changing Lives – Building Character

Day 16 – Smoky Mountain Hogs

A number of years ago, some hogs escaped in a remote area of the Smoky Mountains. Over a period of several generations, these hogs became wilder and wilder, until they were a menace to anyone who crossed their paths. A number of skilled hunters tried to locate and kill them, but the hogs were able to elude the efforts of the best hunters in the area.

One day an old man, leading a small donkey pulling a cart, came into the village closest to the habitat of these wild hogs. The cart was loaded with lumber and grain. The local citizens were curious about where the man was going and what he was going to do. He told them he had “come to catch them wild hogs.” They scoffed because no one believed the old man could accomplish what the local hunters were unable to do. But, two months later, the old man returned to the village and told the citizens the hogs were trapped in a pen near the top of the mountain.

Then he explained how he caught them. “First thing I done was find the spot where the hogs came to eat. Then I baited me a trap by puttin’ a little grain right in the middle of the clearin’. Them hogs was scared off at first, but curiosity finally got to ‘em and the old boar that led ‘em started sniffin’ around. When he took the first bite, the others joined in and I knew right then I had ‘em. Next day I put some more grain out there and laid one plank a few feet away. That plank kinda spooked ‘em for awhile, but the ‘free lunch’ had a powerful appeal, so it wasn’t long ‘fore they were back eatin’. Them hogs didn’t know it, but they was mine already. All I had to do was add a coupla’ boards each day by the grain they wanted until I had ever’thing I needed for my trap. Then I dug a hole and put up my first corner post. Ever’time I added somethin’, they’d stay away a spell, but finally they’d come back to git ‘somethin’ for nothing.’ When the pen was built and the trap door was ready, the habit of gittin’ what they wanted without working for it drove ‘em right into the pen and I sprung the trap. It was real easy after I got ‘em comin’ for the ‘free lunch.’”

The story is true and its point quite simple: When you create a dependence, you take away resourcefulness.

Day 17 – “Mr. Edison...how does it feel to fail...10,000 times?”

While being questioned by a young reporter about an invention he had been working on for a long time, Thomas Edison revealed one of the secrets of his greatness. The young reporter asked, “Mr. Edison, how does it feel to have failed 10,000 times in your present venture?” Edison replied, “Young man, since you are just getting started in life, I will give you a thought that should benefit you in the future. I have not failed at anything 10,000 times. I have successfully found 10,000 ways that will not work!”

Edison estimated that he actually performed over 14,000 experiments in the process of inventing and perfecting the incandescent light. He successfully found a lot of ways that wouldn’t work, but he kept at it until he found one way that would. He proved that the only difference between the big shot and the little shot is the big shot is simply a little shot who kept shooting.

Day 18 – “Demosthenes, who could not speak”

Demosthenes, the famous Greek orator, had such a speech impediment that he was shy and retiring. His father left him an estate that made him a wealthy man, but according to Greek law, he had to establish his right to ownership in public debate before he could claim his estate. His impediment, combined with shyness, rendered him helpless and he lost his estate. Then, he went to work and by

Changing Lives – Building Character

sheer, dogged effort scaled oratorical heights never before reached by mortal man. History neglected to record the man's name who took his inheritance, but schools around the world have taught the story of Demosthenes for centuries. It's true: Regardless of how many times you are "down," you are not whipped if you get up one more time than you are knocked down.

Day 19 – Prime the Pump

Several years ago, Bernard Haygood and Jimmy Glenn were driving in the South Alabama foothills on a hot August day. They were thirsty, so Bernard pulled behind an old abandoned farmhouse with a water pump in the yard. He hopped out of the car, ran over to the pump, grabbed the handle and started pumping. After a moment or two of pumping, Bernard pointed to an old bucket and suggested to Jimmy that he get the bucket and dip some water out of a nearby stream in order to "prime" the pump. As all pumpers know, you must put a little water in the top of the pump to "prime" the pump and get the flow of water started.

In the game of life, before you can get anything out, you must put something in. Unfortunately, there are many people who stand in front of the stove of life and say, "Stove, give me some heat and then I'll put some wood in you."

Many times the secretary comes to the boss and says, "Give me a raise and then I'll start doing better work and being more conscientious." Often the salesman goes to the boss and says, "Make me the sales manager and I'll really show you what I can do. It's true I haven't done much until now, but I need to be in charge to do my best work. So just make me the boss and then watch me go." Many times the student says to the teacher, "If I take a bad grade home for this semester, my folks will really lay it on me. So, teacher, if you will just give me a good grade this quarter, I promise I'll study real hard next quarter. Experience has proven that it doesn't work that way. If it did, you could easily imagine a farmer praying, "Lord, if you will just give me a crop this year, I promise to plant the seed and work hard next year." What they are really saying is, "Reward me and then I'll produce." But life doesn't work that way. Just like the pump, you must first put something into life before you can expect to get anything out of it. Now, if you'll just transfer this knowledge to the rest of your life, you can solve many of your problems.

The farmer must plant his seed in the spring or summer before he reaps the harvest in the fall. He also "puts in" lots of work before the crop reaches the harvest stage. The student puts in hundreds of hours of work before he acquires the knowledge and the graduation certificate. The secretary of today, who is the office manager of tomorrow, puts a considerable amount of extra effort into her job. The athlete of today, who becomes a champion of tomorrow, "puts in" a great deal of himself in the form of sweat and effort before he reaps the champion's reward. The junior executive of today, who becomes the corporate president of tomorrow, is that individual who puts himself into the job. The salesman today, who becomes the sales manager of tomorrow, is the person who understands the principle of priming the pump. When you put something "in," the law of compensation says you'll get something "out."

Day 20 – Pump Hard to Get the Water Flowing

Now, let's look at something intriguing and obvious. There's no way you can look at the outside of a pump and determine that it will take two more strokes or two hundred more to bring forth the water. There's often no way you can look into the game of life and determine whether or not you'll get the big opportunity tomorrow or whether it will take another week, month, year or even longer.

Changing Lives – Building Character

Regardless of what you are doing, if you will pump long enough, hard enough and enthusiastically enough, sooner or later the effort will bring forth the reward. Just as you add nothing to the score in baseball if you stop on third base, you can't quench your thirst with the water that almost comes out of the pump. Fortunately, once the water starts to flow, all you have to do is keep some steady pressure on the pump and you'll get more water than you can use. This is the story of success and happiness in life.

The message is clear. Whatever you're doing, work at it with the right attitude and the right habits, but above all, keep at it with bulldog tenacity and persistence. Just as the flow of water is often one stroke away, the sweet taste of success and victory is often just over the hill or around the corner. Whether you're a doctor, lawyer, student, housewife, laborer or salesperson, once you get the "water" flowing, it's easy to keep it flowing with a little steady effort.

The story of the pump is the story of life and the free enterprise system because the pump has nothing to do with age or education, whether you are black or white, male or female, overweight or underweight, extrovert or introvert, or whether you are Catholic, Jew or Protestant. Success has everything to do with your God-given rights as a free person to work as long as you wish, as hard as you wish and as enthusiastically as you wish to get everything in life you really want.

As you move to the top, remember the story of the pump. If you start pumping casually or half-heartedly, you will pump forever and nothing is likely to happen. Pump hard to begin with and keep it up until you get that water flowing. Then a great deal will happen. Once the flow of water starts, just maintain that steady pressure, and the time will come when the rewards will be so enormous that you'll have what you want instead of having to want what you have.

Day 21 – Chinese Bamboo

Everyone needs to learn the story of the Chinese Bamboo Tree. Joel Weldon, an outstanding speaker from Phoenix, Arizona, tells the story. The Chinese plant the seed; they water and fertilize it, but the first year nothing happens. The second year they water and fertilize it, and still nothing happens. The third and fourth years they water and fertilize it, with no apparent results and sometime during the course of the fifth year, in a period of approximately six weeks, the Chinese Bamboo Tree grows roughly ninety feet.

The question is, did it grow ninety feet in six weeks or did it grow ninety feet in five years? The obvious answer is that it grew ninety feet in five years because, had they not applied the water and fertilizer each year, there would have been no Chinese Bamboo Tree.

All of us have had those "Chinese Bamboo Tree" experiences. We might have had a difficult assignment in geometry, physics or chemistry. We worked and could not get the answer. We worked again and no answer; again, we worked and still no answer. Finally, we go to the teacher and say with a big grin, "Teacher, I've figured it out! The book is wrong!" The teacher looks at us, smiles, and says, "Give it one more shot." This time we go back and we come up with the answer. As a matter of fact, the answer, once we've found it, is so simple and obvious that we're astonished we did not discover it before. We came up with the answer not because of our intellectual brilliance but because of our persistence.