

**THE
MILLION DOLLAR
KNIGHT-TIME
STORY**

Print-on-demand Publishing Services by Lulu.com

THE MILLION DOLLAR KNIGHT-TIME STORY*Priceless enlightenment for all, including the rich & famous!*

Print-on-demand Publishing Services by Lulu.com

Cover/Back-cover Design by John M. Bartosh

Orders: <http://www.OneSuperBook.com>

Copyright © 2009 by John M. Bartosh

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission from the author, except for the inclusion of brief quotations or brief excerpts in a review.

ISBN: 978-0-557-08720-4

First Edition 2009 (Trade Paperback)

Printed in the United States of America

TO DANIELLE, a former co-worker from Evergreen, Colorado. Danielle, who read an earlier draft of this book, inspired me to rewrite portions of the book, edit it and do everything within my ability to get this encouraging, publicly beneficial book published.

About the Author

A NATIVE OF COLORADO who now resides in Evergreen, John M. Bartosh graduated from Golden High School in Golden, Colorado in 1965. Then he attended Mesa Junior



College in Grand Junction and received an Associates Degree before he transferred to Colorado State University in Fort Collins. John later completed his schooling at Metro State College in Denver, where he received a B.A. Degree in Psychology in 1971. With respect to other than his formal education, John said, “More important, as so many

people who have made their fair share of mistakes in life, I also graduated with honors from the ‘school of hard knocks.’”

John’s business background includes twenty-eight years of retail furniture sales and management. Along the way, he worked as a store manager and management-training manager for Furniture Row Companies, one of America’s largest privately owned furniture companies. John has authored and successfully marketed two self-published books on the subject of business leadership: *The Heart of Management* and *Practicing Dynamic Leadership in the Workplace*.

At the ripe age of sixty-one, John has learned that the most effective way to teach various aspects of self-improvement is to employ subtle, self-instructing, motivational techniques. The author said, “The elements of tact and humor in conjunction with the practice of basic or reverse psychology are also important. I tried to combine all of these factors in writing this book.”

As to what motivated John to write and complete *The Million Dollar Knight-time Story*, he said, “I began writing the book just

over ten years ago, right after the tragedy at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado on April 20, 1999. Largely because I grew up just a few miles from Littleton, the appalling event really hit home with me. I became insistent from that day forward to do everything within my God-given talent and ability to do my part to insure that any such future senseless catastrophe, anywhere else and at any time, could be avoided. The deplorable and ill-fated incident at Columbine High School was in the forefront of my mind as I deliberately wrote each subsequent word of this socially important self-help book.”

The author added, “Few people in the world truly make an effort, almost daily, to help others. Oprah Winfrey and ‘Dr. Phil’ McGraw are two such people. Much of what I wrote in this book was inspired by the continuous psychological and motivational efforts of people like Oprah Winfrey and Dr. Phil McGraw. I sincerely thank all of those individuals who have been a positive influence in my life; particularly, I want to thank Oprah and Dr. Phil!”

Finally, John said, “I wasn’t born with a natural gift to write, particularly fiction. When I first started to put my pen to paper in writing this book, *eye strugguld wit bowth tha basik elements an tha fein pointz a wel grammir*. Or perhaps that should be: *I struggled with both the basic elements and the fine points of good grammar*. Anyway, I was saved, for the most part, when I purchased a handy little book titled *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Grammar and Style*, written by Laurie E. Rozakis, Ph.D.

“For some unknown *idiotic* reason, and as compared with *The Chicago Manual of Style* or Kate Terabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, I easily understood Rozakis’ rights and wrongs of sentence structure, word usage, spelling, punctuation, etc. For that valuable reference book, whether it was written for literary scholars or for ‘idiots,’ I am eternally grateful. Now, I hope that you will enjoy reading and learning from *The Million Dollar Knight-time Story* as much as I enjoyed and learned from writing and editing it.”

Foreword

Does anybody in his or her right mind really believe that any just-published book could be worth a *million dollars*? Try to look at it this way: Any one of a multitude of material things—a precious gemstone, a valued work of art, a tract of undeveloped real estate, a luxurious home, a fancy yacht, etc.—is commonly purchased at a price of a million dollars or more. An unparalleled and superior new book might also be so treasured, particularly if that book would be of personal benefit, to some greater extent, to each and every human being on the face of the planet. Such is the case with *The Million Dollar Knight-time Story*.

Many years ago, Barney Visser, founder and CEO of Denver-based Furniture Row Companies, once told me, “John, I don’t completely understand what makes you tick, but you are the best leader of people that I have ever known.” Well, I’ve otherwise seldom been complemented for being in my “right mind,” so why should anybody be surprised that I am trying to sell up to twenty-five, *registered*, hardcover copies of *The Million Dollar Knight-time Story* on eBay, on my business website or elsewhere with the list price for each copy (book-collectors’/extravagant-gift-shoppers’ edition) set firmly at \$1,000,000?

Most of those who really know me would tell anybody who doesn’t know me either one or both of these things: First, “There’s generally a method to John’s madness.” Second, “Those who believe that the older-looking, bearded spokesperson for the popular Dos Equis beer commercials is ‘the most interesting man in the world’ haven’t as yet met John Bartosh.” By the way, I don’t always drink beer. But when I do, I prefer an ice-cold mug of *Bud!*

In this particular publishing endeavor, there *is* a method to my madness. On the bottom line, *The Million Dollar Knight-time Story*—the most comprehensive, the most educational and the most inspirational self-help/character-education book written to date—

will never be read by other than a handful of my relatives and friends unless I do something out of the ordinary to bring *public awareness* to this truly outstanding self-improvement book.

Today, editors from major publishing houses and legitimate literary agents are usually not interested in reading manuscripts, particularly fiction works, written by previously unpublished authors whose names are not already publicly recognized. Due largely to high printing/manufacturing costs, book editors want “sure things,” and they rarely gamble on the possible success stories of new, unknown writers. Those same standards hold true for literary agents.

If a talented and promising author has a series of books in mind, an editor or an agent may send out a positive response to that special writer’s query letter. Overall, however, it would be easier for a previously unpublished, aspiring author to walk on water than to have so much as one paragraph of his or her first manuscript, especially a fiction manuscript, read by a respected literary agent or an editor from a major publishing house.

If you don’t believe me, just ask J.K. Rowling, author of the *Harry Potter* books. After receiving rejection slips from twelve publishing houses over nearly a two-year period for *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, her first manuscript, she nearly threw in the towel with respect to her dream of becoming a published and renowned author. Then Rowling finally found the needle in the haystack when Bloomsbury Publishing, a small London-based publisher, gave her a nominal advance to publish the novel.

In 1998, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* was auctioned to Scholastic Inc. in the United States for \$105,000. Since that time, seven *Harry Potter* books have sold over 400 million copies, worldwide. The British woman, who was living on welfare as she wrote her first novel, went from rags to riches within five years, and Rowling has earned about \$798 million in book royalties along the way. What’s my point? Sometimes, even highly qualified, experienced, literary agents and book editors fail to capitalize on golden opportunities with respect to new writers.

Generally speaking, unless someone—an actor, a professional athlete, a politician, a talk-show host, a media personality, etc.—already has a “household” name, he or she will likely, as in my case, have to resort to self-publishing to kick-start his or her writing

career. I won't bore you with the details of my marketing plan for *The Million Dollar Knight-time Story*. Suffice it to say that, if you don't personally know me and if you are reading this "Foreword," much of my marketing strategy has become public knowledge, and there actually *was* a method to my madness.

Tragic events such as those that took place in New York City, in Washington D.C. and in Pennsylvania on Tuesday, September 11, 2001 could happen anywhere, at any time. Ditto for tragic events such as the one that occurred at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado on April 20, 1999, whereby two high school boys shot and killed twelve innocent students and one teacher/coach. Other appalling events, such as sexual assaults and/or murders of adults or sexual assaults and/or murders of children at the hands of pedophiles or other criminals, can also happen at any place and time.

To a greater extent, people commit horrific crimes either because *they don't like themselves* or because *they don't feel good about themselves* to varying degrees. When people sink into deeper depths of personal despair or when they experience total losses of personal hope, increased self-hatred and hatred of others can build up to unbearable levels of frustration, severe depression or personal anger. Highly negative thoughts and pent-up emotions can trigger actions of aggression, hostility, rage, road-rage, suicide or other socially unacceptable patterns of behavior. In extreme cases, people can "snap," mentally, and commit almost unthinkable, deplorable acts of violence. And people who are driven by radical religious beliefs or individuals who are mentally ill may also commit horrendous crimes.

As long as human beings may harbor self-hatred or feelings of revenge in their hearts, civilized people will be at risk. Violence in schools or elsewhere has no single solution. It simply isn't realistic to think that all or even most of the weapons in the world could be eliminated. *Only with more effective character education, through time, will it be possible to measurably reduce incidents of crime and violence in America and elsewhere.* More people should put their best efforts toward trying to take *all* weapons out of people's hearts!

With fifty character-building, life-improving lessons in living, *The Million Dollar Knight-time Story* still won't be a cure-all for all

of the ills that are affecting society today. And it won't stop all of the incidents of innocent people being killed at the hands of murderers, all of the incidents of innocent citizens and/or military personnel becoming victims of terrorists' actions or all of the incidents of kids killing kids in schools or elsewhere. Nor will this book be a cure-all for all of the incidents of alcohol/drug-related fatal automobile accidents, all of the incidents of innocent people being critically injured or losing their lives in automobile accidents attributed to careless/reckless driving or the multitude of circumstances of other abhorrent criminal behavior.

However, the thoroughly entertaining, thought-provoking, episodic narrative will boost attentive readers' self-confidence and self-esteem. Consequently, those individuals will *feel better* about themselves. And almost anyone who truly feels good about himself or herself simply does *not* have the personal desire or the personal incentive to smoke, drink excessively, use illegal drugs or engage in any form of criminal activity. If this literature helps to improve the attitude, the character and the lifestyle of just *one* serious reader, the entire literary project will have served its primary purpose.

Imagine for a moment the following scenario: Authors, comedy writers, educators and leading politicians (representing all political parties) would be locked up in a room and asked to write *one* book—a light-hearted, more appealing, self-help book that would address the issues of character, morality, ethics and interpersonal communications. We would also ask that such a book should be strictly *nonpolitical* and *nondenominational*. The proposed book would neither promote any political viewpoint nor would it promote any particular religion or religious philosophy. Possibly, the world's leaders would combine their best efforts to write a book very much like the one that you are about to read.

The Million Dollar Knight-time Story contains an underlying, nondenominational, spiritual theme. But the book is *not* really about religion. Various religious founders are occasionally quoted, but their words of wisdom serve only to support many of the fifty nonfiction food-for-thought messages set forth in this otherwise fictional fable. The book is about *you!* It is about character education and self-improvement for all teenagers and adults, including publicly known athletes, pop stars, models, entertainers, politicians, etc. The book is also about using good common sense

and acquiring sound psychological principles for better living. In addition, the book is about reducing the incidents of crime and violence, worldwide. *The Million Dollar Knight-time Story* represents my best individual effort to take *all* weapons out of people's *hearts* and help readers to become the *very best* that they can be!

They say that almost everybody has a good personal story to tell. If this were a contest for the world's all-time best "knight-time" tale or for the world's all-time best self-improvement/inspirational-fiction work, *The Million Dollar Knight-time Story* would be my entry. The book may or may not win any awards for scholarly writing, but it should win a Pulitzer Prize in fiction for *literary value* with respect to its socially significant content.

Table of Contents

Prologue . . . 18

Events Prior to My Wacky Adventures . . . 21

My Wacky Adventures . . . 48

Episode One:

**How My First “Knight” Out
Ended Up in the Crapper . . . 48**

Lesson in Living: *Releasing Harmful Emotions*

Episode Two:

Crossed Wires and Smoke Signals . . . 60

Lesson in Living: *Overcoming Resistance to Positive Change*

Episode Three:

**“You’ve Got to be
the Wackiest Knight from Camelot!” . . . 73**

Lesson in Living: *Replacing Aggressiveness with Assertiveness*

Episode Four:

“Stick ‘em Up!” . . . 82

Lesson in Living: *Improving Your Luck*

Episode Five:

Reminiscent of “Eddie the Eagle” . . . 90

Lesson in Living: *Decision Making*

*Episode Six:***Standing in Line for *One Million Years B.C.*
Was Well Worth the Wait . . . 94**

Lesson in Living: *Patience and Persistence*

*Episode Seven:***“I Want My Mummy!” . . . 98**

Lesson in Living: *Accepting Personal Challenge*

*Episode Eight:***“Don’t Blink or You Might Get
My Sweat in Your Eye!” . . . 104**

Lesson in Living: *Working Hard to Get What You Want*

*Episode Nine:***How I Won a Game of Beach Ball with “the Babe” . . . 108**

Lesson in Living: *Relieving Tension*

*Episode Ten:****It Happened in Paris* . . . 113**

Lesson in Living: *Positive Thinking*

*Episode Eleven:***Gandhi Would Have Laughed at this Little Joke . . . 116**

Lesson in Living: *Loving Yourself*

*Episode Twelve:***Two Bulls and the Louisville Lip
Made Me Yell “No Mas! No Mas!” . . . 119**

Lesson in Living: *Taking Control of Your Life*

*Episode Thirteen:***“I’m Having *Sweet Dreams* About YOU!” . . . 128**

Lesson in Living: *Overcoming Obstacles*

Episode Fourteen:

**Why, Instead of Howling,
I Cried on the Night of a “Bad Moon Rising” . . . 132**

Lesson in Living: *Solving Problems*

Episode Fifteen:

***All the President’s Men—and Women* . . . 138**

Lesson in Living: *Your Right to be Wrong*

Episode Sixteen:

From a Knight to a “King” . . . 146

Lesson in Living: *Bouncing Back*

Episode Seventeen:

Time Out for “R & R” . . . 150

Lesson in Living: *Rest and Relaxation*

Episode Eighteen:

My Knight Wings Left Me *Moonstruck* . . . 152

Lesson in Living: *Setting Lofty Goals*

Episode Nineteen:

**“Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star;
Oh, I Wonder Who You Are?” . . . 156**

Lesson in Living: *Learning*

Episode Twenty:

All Cigarette Lighters Should Be Knight Proof . . . 159

Lesson in Living: *Inspiration*

Episode Twenty-one:

“Knightmare” on Fremont Street . . . 161

Lesson in Living: *Wealth and Prosperity*

Episode Twenty-two:

An Evening “In” at “Knight-in-the-Box” . . . 169

Lesson in Living: *Creativity*

Episode Twenty-three:

It Came Down to Sir Lancelot and Me . . . 173

Lesson in Living: *Striving for Personal Excellence*

Episode Twenty-four:

Shrimp Cocktails—Giant Dreams . . . 179

Lesson in Living: *Achieving Your Dreams*

Episode Twenty-five:

This Story’s a “Real Croc”! . . . 185

Lesson in Living: *Cooperation and Open-minded Thinking*

Episode Twenty-six:

**The Slap Shot that Broke the Ice
Between the “Great One” and Me . . . 189**

Lesson in Living: *Good Sportsmanship*

Episode Twenty-seven:

**My Knight Blues Left Me
Singing the “Jailhouse Rock” . . . 193**

Lesson in Living: *Escaping from Loneliness*

Episode Twenty-eight:

A Truly Divine Idea . . . 197

Lesson in Living: *Being “For” Instead of “Against” Things*

Episode Twenty-nine:

How I Turned My “Brown Eyes” Blue . . . 205

Lesson in Living: *Humility*

Episode Thirty:

**Two-stepping My Way Across the Deck of this Boat
Nearly Drowned Me in the “Sea of Love” . . . 208**

Lesson in Living: *Finding True Romance*

Episode Thirty-one:

Knight Vision Isn’t Always 20-20 . . . 220

Lesson in Living: *Giving Yourself a Pat on the Back*

Episode Thirty-two:

**Three Charming Knight Angels
Who Helped Me “See the Light” . . . 226**

Lesson in Living: *Sensitivity*

Episode Thirty-three:

“Sometimes, It’s Fun Being Me!” . . . 233

Lesson in Living: *Enthusiasm*

Episode Thirty-four:

**A Knight to Forgive
and a Night to Forget . . . 239**

Lesson in Living: *Forgiveness*

Episode Thirty-five:

**While Working on this “Planet,”
I Saw Lots of “Stars”! . . . 243**

Lesson in Living: *Practicing the “Golden Rule”*

Episode Thirty-six:

“Book ‘em, Danno!” . . . 250

Lesson in Living: *Going by the Heart*

Episode Thirty-seven:

To Love and “Bee” Loved . . . 255

Lesson in Living: *To Love and Be Loved*

Episode Thirty-eight:

**Hollering in a Knight’s Ear
Can Make Him Go Deaf! . . . 258**

Lesson in Living: *Listening Attentively*

Episode Thirty-nine:

How I Got It Off My Chest—and Hers! . . . 262

Lesson in Living: *Getting It Off Your Chest*

Episode Forty:

Super Knight . . . 267

Lesson in Living: *Teamwork*

Episode Forty-one:

This “Knight-time” Tale

Makes a Lot of Horse Sense! . . . 271

Lesson in Living: *Giving Effective Instructions*

Episode Forty-two:

If He Was Such a Nice Guy,

Why Did They Call Him “the Man in Black”? . . . 274

Lesson in Living: *Exercising Your Power of Persuasion*

Episode Forty-three:

“Harry, this Bud’s for YOU!” . . . 277

Lesson in Living: *Motivating Others*

Episode Forty-four:

“Stop! You’re Killing Me!” . . . 281

Lesson in Living: *Leadership*

Episode Forty-five:

Bobbing for Apples—

Coming Up with Egg on My Face . . . 284

Lesson in Living: *Dealing with People*

Episode Forty-six:

A Little Gift—to Help You

Get Through Your Days and “Knights” . . . 288

Lesson in Living: *Artistic Expression*

Episode Forty-seven:

Down and Almost Out

Until I Took My First Ride on a Harley . . . 291

Lesson in Living: *Friendship*

Episode Forty-eight:
**Leave It to Me to Start
with the Only Exception to this “Rule” . . . 294**
Lesson in Living: *Looking for the Good in Others*

Episode Forty-nine:
From “Knight Rider” to Knight Writer . . . 297
Lesson in Living: *Sharing and Giving*

Episode Fifty:
**The “Knight” that Was Darkest
Right Before the Dawn . . . 306**
Lesson in Living: *Illuminating Your Dark Side*

Epilogue . . . 320

Acknowledgments . . . 322

Ordering Information . . . 325

Prologue

*Barnes & Noble Booksellers;
Caresville, California; November 15, 2011*

SOME 200 PEOPLE WERE ON HAND for my scheduled book-reading and book-signing engagement at Barnes & Noble Booksellers in Caresville, California. Almost every seat in the bookstore's spacious public-events room was occupied.

Richard Johnson, the bookstore manager, who had been sitting beside me before the proceedings began, stood up and announced, "Good morning, everyone! Today, it is my pleasure to introduce all of you to a very special guest. As many of you already know, this young man is from Camelot. He has recently been visiting a number of bookstores all across our country and throughout the world. His autobiography, *The Wacky Adventures of Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife*, has been at the top of the *New York Times* best-seller list for the past fourteen weeks. We are both privileged and honored that he has accepted our invitation to come here and speak to us in person. Ladies and gentlemen, let's show our utmost appreciation and extend our warmest welcome to *Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife!*"

As I walked up to the podium, I received a thunderous, standing ovation. I tried to relax and better prepare myself to address the highly receptive audience. Except for my helmet, which I had placed under the chair when I first sat down, I was dressed in my full suit of armor.

After the applause died down, I said, "Thank you! And I'd like to thank Mr. Johnson, the store manager, for inviting me here today. Indeed, I am from the Land of Camelot. I'm one of the surviving members of King Arthur's exalted 'Knights of the Round Table.'

"Many of you may be asking how Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife or any other medieval knight could still be living.

Obviously, I'm not 1,400 years old. But the answer is simple: I accidentally discovered a time machine, which has made it possible for me to travel, among other times and places, to twenty-first century America.

"Lately, I've had to remind myself, at times, that I *really am* from Camelot. However, it's been easy for me to adapt to your time and culture. I'm already spoiled by numerous modern-day conveniences.

"Take the Post Office, for example. Just last night, I started to write a letter to a friend of mine in Camelot. After scribbling a few lines, I paused and asked myself, 'How am I going to get a letter delivered to someone who lives approximately *fourteen centuries* from here?' And when I stopped to think about it, I knew that I would have a problem with *postage*. After all, how much would it cost for a *stamp* to send a letter as far as 1,400 years into time? Needless to say, I gave up on the idea of writing a letter to my friend.

"In case you haven't heard about me up to now, I'm not too surprised. Sir Thomas Malory didn't bother to write about me in his *Le Morte d'Arthur*, the most popular account of the Arthurian legend.

"I can't blame Malory for not making mention of me in his historical epoch. During Arthur's reign as King of England, I wanted to stake my claim to fame. But I never really did anything that gave me any public notoriety. More prominent and romantic figures such as King Arthur, Queen Guinevere, and Sir Lancelot captured the lion's share of Malory's attention. Those three characters hogged most of the glory from the Golden-Age-of-Chivalry era in England.

"Shortly after the quirky and peculiar 'life and times' of King Arthur, I found my way under the spotlight. But when the bright beam finally shined on me, the illumination put me in the limelight among onlookers who lived in the future—people from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. I didn't think that any of my friends or knightly colleagues in England would really understand the time-travel-remote device that I found or the freakish chain of events that swept me off my feet and altered the course in my life. So I haven't told anyone who lives back in the Land of Camelot

about my mostly amusing or whimsical episodes, except for Spirit, my loyal talking horse.

“Now that my autobiography has been published and has been so readily received, I am anxious to talk about my generally wacky but personally enlightening adventures with people everywhere. Perhaps millions of teenagers and young adults will be entertained and individually benefit, in one way or another, from my recent travels and personal experiences. In any case, I’d like to share my extraordinary and hopefully inspirational story with you . . .”

Events Prior to My Wacky Adventures

“Stars by Day, Stars so Bright— Show Me a Way to ‘See the Light’!”

The Land of Camelot; near the end of the sixth century

NEARLY THIRTEEN MONTHS HAD ELAPSED following the reign of the legendary King Arthur. All of England was in a state of turmoil. Aristocracy, feudalism, and civil disobedience remained as the cornerstones of a steadily crumbling, struggling, and wanting society. King Arthur’s death had created a vacancy in Camelot’s royal model of Washington D.C.’s White House. *The people of England had long been searching for a new king!*

One pleasant, sunny afternoon in late May, I nonchalantly wandered along the shore of a small lake in the countryside. After a long, cold winter, the surrounding aspen and oak trees were just beginning to put forth buds and sprout mid-spring leaves.

My concentration shifted back and forth between the scenic surroundings of nature and trying to get in touch with my true feelings and emotions. I wasn’t paying much attention to where I was walking. Suddenly, I stumbled on a *funny-looking object*, which was camouflaged in some tall crabgrass.

Encased by my burdensome suit of armor, I lost my balance, tumbled forward, and banged my head into a sawed-off oak-tree stump. For an instant, I couldn’t see anything but stars. I said to myself, “Stars by day, stars so bright—show me a way to ‘see the light’!” Luckily, my helmet absorbed the brunt of the crash. I suffered more from a bruised ego than from the few scratches and scrapes that I received from my mishap with the tree stump.

As I struggled to get up off the ground, I noticed a weather-damaged, partially faded scroll that I had knocked off the top of the stump. The message on the scroll read “HELP WANTED: Anyone who can extract EXCALIBUR from the hand of the Lady of the Lake will become KING!”

The fall and the blow to my noggin must’ve also jarred my memory. I remembered that King Arthur, at the time of his death, insisted that Excalibur be returned to the lake, where the highly celebrated sword of power originally had come. Mortally wounded, Arthur asked Sir Bedivere, one of his few remaining loyal knights, to hurl Excalibur back into the waiting hand of the Lady of the Lake. Bedivere was briefly tempted to keep the treasured weapon for himself. But the faithful knight reluctantly fulfilled the King’s final request.

The mysterious lake was just a few yards in front of me. I looked out over the crystal-clear, sky-blue water. The Lady of the Lake had perceived my presence. She held Excalibur high in her right hand; the polished, distinguished instrument became visible just above the lake’s quiet surface.

The Lady of the Lake appeared to be challenging me. I got the impression that she wanted me to try my hand on the magnificent sword to determine whether or not I was worthy of claiming Excalibur. I thought that I was a noble young knight, deserving of becoming the King of England. So I decided that this was as good a time as any to put my character to the test.

I looked around to see if a rowboat or a raft might be nearby—something that I could use to paddle myself out on the water. After a few minutes, I discovered a small black canoe that had been beached and abandoned. The joints in my heavy, steel-plated wardrobe screeched as I lightly stepped into the sturdy canoe. I folded my lanky, stiff legs and arms and scrunched myself down into the canoe’s narrow and confining configuration. Just in case I might have encountered any adversary out on the lake—a monstrous fishlike beast or any other cold-blooded creature that might surface from out of the depths—I decided to take my sharp-spiked war club and my reliable ax with me. Awkwardly but satisfactorily settled in, I steadily paddled the overloaded canoe out near the middle of the lake.

A dark ominous cloud moved over the area and blocked the direct sunlight; the cloud cast a forbidding shadow across the motionless face of the lake. I laid down my broad-bladed wooden oar, removed my steel-fingered gloves, and leaned over the side of the canoe. Anyone who could've been watching me from shore might've thought that I was about to "toss my cookies" or preparing to "take a leak." As a matter of fact, I had just better positioned myself to try my eager hands on Excalibur.

The mysterious Lady of the Lake slowly emerged from beneath the calm surface of the lake. She made herself partially visible to me, from the waist up. The most attractive, middle-age blonde was dressed in a sleeveless, snow-white gown. Suddenly, she extended her right hand toward me and temptingly offered me the majestic sword.

I tightly wrapped and compressed all five fingers from each hand around Excalibur's brilliant white-pearl handle. Then, with all of the energy that I could muster, I tried to pull Excalibur loose from the Lady of the Lake's teasing but unyielding right hand.

"Lord, please grant me the power to draw the mighty sword!" I exclaimed, as I sapped all of my strength in a second all-out effort to free Excalibur. But the superhuman, godlike figure wouldn't permit me to withdraw the lustrous tempered-steel sword.

My fruitless attempts to unsheathe Excalibur from the unmerciful hand of the Lady of the Lake really upset me. The veins on my forehead had suddenly swollen, and my flaming-red blood vessels now bulged as if they were about to explode. I hollered, "Why do you insist on resisting me? Pay heed to my following advice, you ungenerous protector! Relinquish your stubborn grip on the magical instrument before I reach out and whack you alongside the head with my big fat war club!" My harsh, demanding voice and my threatening dialogue fell on deaf ears. The Lady of the Lake simply glared at me in response to my hot-tempered outburst; the tight-fisted, righteous, holy woman uttered not so much as a word.

I gave up in my struggle to take sole possession of Excalibur. As I paddled back to shore, I deliberated over the entire fuss and circumstance. In retrospect, I shouldn't have been so surprised that I wasn't able to claim the grand prize.

King Arthur had often pulled me aside and spoke with me, privately. Arthur would always compliment me, initially, in some

sincere way, then scold me for my not fully living up to his higher expectations of me. On one memorable occasion, during an exhibition jousting match, I had unnecessarily inflicted serious injury upon Sir Bedivere, one of the King's closest friends.

Shortly after the unprofessional and unethical incident, Arthur sat down with me. As I can best recall, he said, "Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife, you're one of my favorite knights, as you should already know. You're young and you're smart, and you have a tall reputation, overall, amongst the people of Camelot. You also tower above your knightly colleagues in numerous and significant ways; you normally exemplify all that is honest and trustworthy in an individual. Wantsalittle, nothing would make me happier than if *you* were to succeed me as King of England! First, though, you've got to come to grips with your excessive drinking and with your not-so-noble, sometimes-hostile nature."

King Arthur added, "I've also noticed that your generally sexist attitude around the ladies is somewhat less than becoming, especially for a man of your better abilities and knightly position. As you now come across to most women, I don't think that one good and decent woman in the Land of Camelot would have your hand in marriage, even if you *were* the King of England! When you learn to overcome, through personal experience and maturity, your shortcomings in character, you will enjoy success beyond your fondest dreams!"

When I got out of the canoe, I murmured to myself, "*I'm a wannabe-noble but troubled knight. My bad habits of drinking too damn much and being quick-tempered and overly aggressive, at times, along with my sexist-minded attitude, are holding me back and preventing me from achieving my personal dreams.*" Then, loud enough for the Lady of the Lake to hear me, I yelled, "JUST ONCE IN MY LIFE, I'D LOVE TO FEEL AND ACT LIKE A KING!" Finally, I exclaimed, "I'm going on a quest to become more enlightened, morally and ethically. I want to develop a more kinglike character!"

A few moments later, I got curious about the "funny-looking object" that I had previously stumbled over—the little contraption that caused me to fall and whack my head against the oak-tree stump. I strolled over near the stump, and I picked up the strange little gadget.

My favorite spot in the world was at the crest of the hill, about a hundred yards above the lake. Whenever I wanted to get away from it all, I would sit on a log under the big red oak tree at the top of that hill. The view was breathtaking, and it was a tranquil setting—a great place to just relax or to do some soul-searching.

I slowly hiked up the hill and sat down in the shade under that oak tree. Then I began to inspect the almost-flat, rectangular-shaped device that I had found.

Spirit, my talking palomino stallion, grazed on some tall grasses just a few feet off to my left. I said, “Spirit, I’d sure like to know about this gray-colored gadget.”

Spirit raised his head and said, “I would be more curious, too, if it were something that I could *eat!* Anyway, what is that thing? What’s its purpose?”

“I don’t know, Spirit. But I’m going to try to find out the answers to your good questions.”

The instrument was approximately twelve-inches wide, some six-inches tall, and nearly one-inch thick. The front side had five horizontal rows of buttons and bars, including a larger red button, marked “Emergency,” located in the upper-right corner. The first horizontal row had a sequence of ten numbers, reading from “1” through “0.” The next three rows were marked with letters and symbols and words, starting with “Q” on the second row and ending with a “shift” bar on the fourth row. Below that, I saw a long, narrow bar. To the left of the thin bar, I saw two big buttons; a blue one was marked “Enter,” and a green one was marked “Go.” To the right of the bar, I saw a big white button, marked “Return.”

I pushed down on the large blue *Enter* button. A short note appeared in two lines across a little rectangular screen, near the upper portion of the device. The message read “Activating Time-Travel Remote / Enter Destination, Date, and Exact Time of Day.”

I looked at Spirit and shouted, “I think that I found a damn *time machine!*” I was so excited that I dropped the small box on the ground; it landed upside down. When I reached down to pick it up, I noticed a little white label taped to the backside. The label read:

If found, please return to:

Willie C. Light
50 Showmea Way—2
Feelgreat, California (USA)

(To return the time-travel remote, press the *white* button on the reverse side.)

“Spirit, I don’t know where ‘California’ is, but I’ve got a feeling that when I push this big white *Return* button, I’m going to find out.”

A list of instructions in fine print was printed on the bottom of the label. “It says here that anything that’s attached to me or anything that I’m holding in my hands will travel with me. Spirit, I’m going to take you home and pack a bag before I go.”

My unusual, very gifted, articulate horse said, “Okay, master, but what’s the big deal about finding a time machine? And what is a ‘time machine,’ anyway?”

“I don’t have any idea. I’ve never seen a device anything like this one. I’m just going to follow the instructions and go from there.”

I hurried home and packed a bag. Then I grabbed my lance, war club, and ax. I thought about taking my sword, but I changed my mind. Excalibur was the only sword that I really wanted. I was determined to make due with these other weapons until I found the *inner* strength to wield the mighty sword.

A couple of hours later, I turned my trustworthy horse loose out in the pasture, next to my cottage. “Spirit, please take care and stay out of trouble while I’m away.” Spirit nodded and looked at me as if I had just gone nuts. I nodded back.

*50 Showmea Way—2; Feelgreat, California;
May 20, 2010; 12:15 P.M.*

After I hit the white *Return* button, another message on the time-travel remote read “Feelgreat, California; May 20, 2010; 12:15 P.M.” Reading that message was the last thing that I remembered until I found myself standing on Willie’s front porch.

I lifted the visor on my helmet and pounded on the door. In a matter of moments, the door swung open. “Are you Willie C. Light?”

“Yes, what can I do for you?”

Willie was about six-feet tall and weighed about 190 pounds. He looked to be in his late forties. Still, he appeared to be in very good physical condition for a man who was almost twice my age. With a simpering smile, I said, “I believe that this gadget belongs to you.” After I handed him the strange-looking box, I laid my bag down and took off my helmet.

Willie stared at me for a couple of seconds and said, “Oh! You had me fooled for a moment. Just seeing your face through the opening in your helmet—well, your facial features and voice are similar to that of a good friend of mine, Tobey Maguire.”

“Who is ‘Tobey Maguire’?” I inquired.

“Tobey is one of Hollywood’s most talented and brightest young stars. He became famous by playing the part of Peter Parker in the *Spider-Man* movies. Never mind, you wouldn’t know anything about that. But with your full suit of armor and all, I thought that Tobey was trying to play a little prank on me—my mistake! Well, I’ll be darned! You must’ve traveled here from Camelot. Please come in! Come right in! Welcome to my humble abode. Young man, what’s your name?”

Willie’s “humble abode” turned out to be a swank Hollywood estate. In fact, I learned later that “50 Showmea Way—2; Feelgreat, California” was just Willie’s clever, fictional address for his mansion in Beverly Hills!

I replied, “My name is Wantsalittle—*Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife*. Where in the world am I?”

Willie laughed and responded, “Pardon me! Sometimes I forget just how difficult it is, at first, for rookie time-travelers. You’re in Hollywood, USA—an abbreviation for ‘United States of America.’ Most people simply refer to our nation as ‘America.’ Wantsalittle, you are a long way from home. England is several thousand miles from here, clear across America and then across the Atlantic Ocean.”

“I’m not too surprised. I always thought that more land existed somewhere on the other side of that big blue pond. Say, your cottage or ‘humble abode,’ as you call it, reminds me of Castle Joyous Guard, near Camelot. What does a guy do to live in a plush place like this?”

“I’m an actor’s stunt-double and a novelist.”

“Oh! What’s an ‘actor’ or a ‘stunt-double’ or a ‘novelist’?”

Again, Willie laughed. “I’ll explain that later. I realize that you must be a little dumbfounded right now. Relax! You’ll catch on to your new surroundings and to the concept of time-travel much faster than you can now imagine.”

Willie glanced at my lance, war club, and ax. “I see that you brought some weapons. Shouldn’t you also be carrying a sword?”

“This lance, this big war club with sharp steel spikes, and this long-handled ax are the only weapons that I need. I take them with me wherever I go.”

“Wantsalittle, make yourself at home.”

I walked over and hung my helmet on a tall, slender, wooden, treelike piece of furniture that stood by the front door. The skinny, upright stand held a couple of other types of hats, which hung from what appeared to be short and stubby limbs—spikes that protruded from the main post. I asked, “What on earth is this thing?”

Willie chuckled, then he replied, “That’s a hall-tree. When someone comes in, he or she can hang his or her hat and/or coat on the hall-tree.”

Somewhat intrigued by the hat and/or coat rack, I shook my head, from side to side, a couple of times. Then I promptly went over and sat down on the far-left side of the long, deep-seated, tan-leather couch. The weight of my body armor caused me to sink halfway out of sight in the soft and billowy seat cushion. Willie sat on a huge matching chair, just across from me. “This outfit of mine is so heavy!” I exclaimed. “I’m surprised that I didn’t drop all the way to the floor when I first sat down!”

Willie smiled. Then he got up and asked, “Can I get you something to drink? I’ll bet you’d like to have an ice-cold brewski right about now. I’ve got Budweiser, Coors, or a stronger new micro-beer, just out on the market, called *Zapmeister*.”

“Thanks! I’ve never heard of any of those ‘brewskies’ or beers, but that Zapmeister brand sounds pretty good to me!”

When Willie went to fetch the beer, I took off my gloves and laid them on the center cushion of the sofa. Then I got up and looked around the room. A fairly large, odd-looking, box-shaped unit with a dark-glass front was sitting in a huge bookcase, just past the end of the sofa. Below the glass, I saw a “Power” button. I tapped on the little round knob with the tip of my right index finger.

Suddenly, I saw some guy nicknamed “Coach” tell a couple of other guys, “Luther, you and Dauber are making me nuts!” (Author’s note: Craig T. Nelson starred as Coach Hayden Fox on the popular sitcom *Coach*, which aired on ABC for nine seasons, from 1989-1997. The character of Luther Van Dam, the football team’s assistant coach, was played by Jerry Van Dyke. William “Bill” Fagerbakke played the part of Dauber Dybinski, a student/assistant coach.)

Then I saw a smaller black unit with “DVD Player” written on the front of it. The DVD player sat on a shelf, just above the big strange box with the moving picture. I pressed the “Play” button. Suddenly, I saw the words “*Braveheart*” and “Starring Mel Gibson” on the big moving-picture screen. In a matter of seconds, a man appeared on the screen. He looked very much like Willie. Oddly, the guy was wearing knight’s clothing, but he was not dressed in a full suit of armor.

Immediately, I pictured the expression that Spirit had on his face, right before I left Camelot. I said to myself, “Spirit was right. I *am* going nuts!”

Willie, attired in blue jeans and a white sweatshirt that had “DODGERS” written in big royal-blue letters across the front of it, came back from the kitchen. He handed me a bottle of Zapmeister. With a puzzled expression on my face, I pointed at the big moving-picture box and asked, “Willie, isn’t that YOU?”

“No, that’s not me. But I look a lot like Mel Gibson, one of Hollywood’s leading actors. I play Mel Gibson’s stunt-double in most of his movies. So, in a way, I am an actor as well as a stunt-double. Say, Wantsalittle, you’re catching on pretty fast to modern-day technology. Somehow, you were able to turn on both the TV and the DVD player.”

“Yeah, I was just a little curious about those weird boxes. Willie, tell me more about this movie called *Braveheart*. Why is Mel Gibson wearing a knight’s outfit? I’m very confused about this ‘actor’ and ‘stunt-double’ stuff. And you said that you were also a novelist. What does that mean?”

Willie just snickered and said, “I write romance novels. Later, there will be plenty of time to talk about all of that. Wantsalittle, follow me! I’d like for you to see something out in the garage.”

When we entered the garage, I saw an out-of-this-world, glossy, red object. Willie said, “This is what we call a ‘car’ or a ‘vehicle.’ This particular car happens to be a 2008 Chevrolet Corvette. Under that lustrous heat-proof paint, a layer of titanium makes it possible for the car to withstand extreme temperatures—temperatures that occur when the vehicle travels through time.”

“Are you telling me that the car has *another* time machine?”

“Yes, the main unit is installed in the ‘Vette.’ What you found in Camelot was just a *remote control*—a portable limited-ability device that makes it possible to travel into time without always taking the car. The real brains of the time machine are mounted in the vehicle. The remote simply feeds off the main computer module by way of radio waves. Either system works on the idea of displacing and re-energizing molecular structure.”

“All this talk about a ‘computer module’ and ‘radio waves’—it doesn’t make any sense to me. I’ve never heard of such terms. Does every vehicle have one of these contraptions?”

“No, no! You see, I invented this particular time machine from parts that were left over from a now obsolete model, which was called a ‘Delorean.’ A man by the name of Emmett ‘Doc’ Brown (Christopher Lloyd)—well, never mind all of that. It’s a long story. Let me just say that cars don’t come with time-travel modules as optional features. Right now, this is the only time machine currently in existence, at least that I’m aware of.”

The late-model Corvette was one sleek machine—a real space-age exterior design. I walked up to the tinted driver-side window and looked inside. Willie stepped forward and opened the door. “The car is equipped with all of the ‘bells and whistles,’” Willie said. “The Bose premium stereo plays both compact discs and MP3s. Crank up the volume on all seven speakers and you’d think that you were sitting in the front row at a concert. The car has ‘power’ everything, including automatic-climate control, power windows and door locks, dual power-remote outside heated mirrors, and a remote-keyless-entry system.”

“Will you show me how some of those gadgets work?”

“Sure, we’ll go over all of that, later. The Vette also has power-8-way-adjustable, black-leather seats and easy-to-read analog gauges. In addition, the car has tilt-steering and a six-speed, electronically controlled, automatic transmission. All of these

features provide a cozy and practical place to enjoy the sport of driving. To top it all off, the Corvette is powered by a high-revving V-8 engine that delivers 505 horsepower, which allows the vehicle to accelerate from zero to sixty miles per hour in just under five seconds. And the car can cruise along at a top speed of nearly 200 miles per hour. Truly, this is the finest all-around-performance car in the world.”

“When do I get to go for a ride?”

“Later today or sometime tomorrow, I’ll take you for a spin, and I’ll give you your first driving lesson. Wantsalittle, wouldn’t you like to get behind the wheel?”

“Absolutely! I’d love to learn how to drive.”

When Willie and I went back into the house, he said, “Let’s have some lunch.” Willie fixed us a couple of roast-beef sandwiches. We both grabbed another beer. Then Willie opened a sliding-glass back door, and we walked out onto a broad redwood deck, overlooking his spacious back yard.

We sat down on opposite sides of a big, round, wrought-iron, patio table. I poked my fingers through the mesh-like top of the snow-white table. Willie looked up into the hazy sky. He said, “This afternoon, it’s a little humid. We’re not far from the Pacific Ocean. The warm coastal breeze that you feel is bringing in a little dampness off the water. You can smell the salt in the air. You’d probably be more comfortable without that heavy suit of armor. Did you bring a change of clothes?”

“Yes, but I’m acclimated to the humidity. I’m sure that you know that England is encircled by water. The moist, sultry air doesn’t bother me in the slightest. I feel terrific! Willie, how did it happen that you left your time-travel remote in Camelot?”

“The ‘Dark Ages’ and ‘Golden Age of Chivalry’ eras in England fascinate me. I’ve visited Camelot several times. Of course, I went there incognito; nobody ever noticed me. I know quite a bit about King Arthur and his ‘Knights of the Round Table.’ And I think that I saw *you* briefly when you were a squire. Wasn’t Sir Gawain your master?”

“Yes, I can’t believe that you’d know about that!”

Willie took a sip of his bottle of Coors. Then he said, “On my last trip to Camelot, I wanted to see if the people of England had found a new king—you know, someone to replace King Arthur. I

must've accidentally knocked the remote off the car seat when I got in the Vette to return home. I wondered what happened to it. Wantsalittle, tell me something about yourself. Why do they call you 'Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife'?"

I laughed and said, "My birth name was Wantsalittle *Morenooky*." Willie roared in laughter for a few seconds. Then I continued, "When I was about ten years old, one of my friends noticed that I always seemed to 'want a little more from life'—more than most of the other kids and more than most adults, for that matter. Anyway, this friend said, 'Your name should be Wantsalittle Morefromlife!' Since that day, my last name has been *Morefromlife*. And I'm very happy that I *did* change my name at an early age. Can you imagine how embarrassing it would've been for me to go through my teenage years and all of my adult life with a name like *Wantsalittle Morenooky*? Believe it or not, my dad's name was *Wantsalot Morenooky*. And from what I've heard through the years, I think that he tried as hard as he could to live up to his name!"

Again, Willie broke out in loud laughter. Then he said, "Tell me more about your family."

"I never really knew my mother. She died from complications that she incurred while giving birth to me. And my father was killed in battle a few months after I was born. I didn't have any brothers or sisters or any other immediate family. When I was a baby, I was placed in the open arms of Margo Caredalot. Lady Margo had been my mother's closest friend. Margo couldn't bear children of her own, so she eagerly took me in and raised me like I was her natural son."

"How did you meet Sir Gawain?"

"My foster mother also happened to be the widowed sister-in-law of Sir Gawain. Gawain was King Arthur's nephew. He was generally regarded as a model of knightly perfection. In fact, Arthur considered Gawain to be the standard for all knights to follow."

"Is your foster mother still alive?"

"No, just prior to my twelfth birthday, Lady Margo died from an unknown illness. At that time, Gawain placed me under his wing and guardianship."

"How did you attain knighthood?"

"I served as a page—a boy in service to his master—under Gawain until I turned fourteen. Then I became a squire. I took

training in arms. I learned how to handle a lance, a sword, and other weapons.”

“What else did you do as a squire?”

“Part of my duty as a squire was to stay close to my mentor. I picked Gawain up when he was knocked down on the field of battle. And I tried to learn something from his every move.”

“Did you have any formal education or training other than learning how to handle weapons?”

“Certainly, as every squire was taught, I learned good manners, good conduct, and rules of etiquette. Also, I was advised to be courteous, modest, and helpful. I had some problems with the ‘modesty’ part. At times, many people around Camelot considered me to be cocky, brash, and boastful.”

“Yeah, but almost every teenager goes through a stage like that.”

“I suppose. Like all kids, or adults for that matter, who lack experience and maturity, I went through the typical know-it-all phase. And I’ve carried this sense of righteousness into my early adulthood. Likewise, I just haven’t come to terms with my overly competitive and oftentimes very aggressive tendencies.”

Willie suddenly sprang up and out of his chair. He said, “Hold on for a minute, Wantsalittle. Are you ready for another Zapmeister?”

“Sure! And what’s that you’re smoking?”

“It’s called a ‘cigarette.’ They come in various brands. This particular cigarette happens to be a ‘Tomarlbury.’ I used to smoke ‘Demerits’ or ‘Uncools.’ But I quit smoking, for the most part, a couple of years ago. Now and then, I’ll puff on a cigarette, but only when I’m drinking a beer or when I’m extremely anxious.”

“I’ve never seen a cigarette.”

“It’s just as well that you haven’t. Smoking is a filthy habit, and it can kill you if you do it over a long period of time!”

I replied, “Thanks for the warning. But can I try just *one*?”

“Yeah, but are you sure that you really want one? These things can be addictive and habit forming!”

“I don’t think that I’ll make it a habit. But for now, I’m curious. I’d like to try one of those Tomarlburies.”

“All right, Wantsalittle. Just remember that I warned you about these nasty little things!”

I took my first drag, as Willie called it, on a cigarette. I coughed a couple of times until I got the hang of it. Really, I didn't see any point in smoking anything. It seemed as though doing something that just put up a big cloud of smoke in my face was an unnatural thing to do. Besides, I didn't think that I wanted to smoke if smoking could be hazardous to my health! I already had a bad habit of drinking too much and too often. I knew that I didn't need to pick up another poor character trait.

Willie asked, "At what point did you become a knight?"

"When I turned eighteen, I took the solemn vows for knighthood. After that, my principal responsibilities were to watch over the weak, to right wrong doings, and to fight for the honor of both women and throne. Wherever I went, I was pledged to take with me the three watchwords of being a knight: religion, honor, and courtesy."

"Well, it sounds as though you've become quite a noble young knight. By the way, Wantsalittle, how old are you?"

"I'll be twenty-five in September. I'm not certain about my being so 'noble,' as you just insinuated! Right after my twenty-third birthday, and soon after King Arthur's death, my personality hardened. I became disenchanted with aristocratic leadership. And I despised the feudal system that abused and deprived the common people. I wanted to do more than live my life as just another knight."

"A few minutes ago, you asked me to tell you a little more about Mel Gibson and about his part in *Braveheart*. Now, I'm ready to tell you a little about that film because the movie plot addresses the same social issues—authoritarian and aristocratic leadership—of which you just referred. *Braveheart* is a movie about Sir William Wallace, a thirteenth-century Scottish freedom fighter. Sir William united the land and brought about revolt in Scotland against aristocratic British leadership. Mel Gibson played the character of Sir William Wallace. I played Mel Gibson's part, in my role as his stunt-double, in several of the film's more dangerous battlefield scenes."

"Do you mean that stunt-doubles are people who fill in for actors who could otherwise get hurt while playing various action parts in their movies?"

"That's precisely what stunt-doubles do."

“Willie, I can’t get that fancy car of yours out of my mind. Will you take me for a ride in the Vette?”

“No, not right now. We’ve just had a couple of beers. Back in medieval times, in the Middle Ages, I’m sure that it would’ve been okay for a guy to gulp down a couple of beers, or whatever alcoholic beverages were available at that time, then have that individual climb on his or her horse and ride off into the sunset or wherever. Here in the year of 2010, however, the roadways are too crowded with cars, and the highways are too dangerous, already. I never drink any type of alcohol and drive while I’m still under that influence, and neither should you!”

“Thanks, Willie, I’ll always pay heed to that good advice.”

“Wantsalittle, what do you plan to do with your life?”

“I don’t know, for sure. I frequently think about Arthur. He was a good king and a great man. At the time, almost anyone in the kingdom would’ve gladly traded places with Arthur, including me.”

Willie and I each lit up another Tomarlbury, and we both stretched out in our chairs. I knew that I shouldn’t have smoked another cigarette. But I said to myself, “I guess that puffing on just a few of these things won’t kill me.”

Willie said, “As I mentioned earlier, I’ve seen Arthur and heard him speak, albeit from a distance. It looked to me as if he had his fair share of troubles.”

“Yeah, Willie, you’re right. Don’t get me wrong. Arthur wasn’t perfect. He had plenty of personal problems. For instance, Queen Guinevere wasn’t faithful to him, as you may already know. She ran off to Castle Joyous Guard with Sir Lancelot, her secret lover. And as you may know, Lancelot was Arthur’s best friend.”

“Didn’t King Arthur also have some difficulties with his sister—what was her name?”

“Ah! Arthur’s sister, Morgan Le Fay, was an evil bitch! She used black magic to trick Arthur into an incestuous affair. That forbidden union produced Mordred, the King’s illegitimate and only child. Later, Arthur tragically succumbed in battle at the hands of his own son. It turned out that he and Mordred killed each other.”

“What was the most important thing that you learned from Arthur’s life and death?”

“In short, I wanted to be more like Arthur, but not at the expense of having to constantly watch my backside—not to mention

all of the jealousy, deceit, and deception that seemed to abound around the royal throne in Cam—”

Willie broke in, “Today, we would call such affairs that took place in Camelot, or nowadays in England, ‘a royal soap-opera!’”

“Well, whatever you would call it these days, I didn’t want anything to do with it! Arthur’s death saddened me and gradually put me in a depressed mental state. I developed a ‘what’s the use’ attitude. As time passed, I began second-guessing myself at almost every turn. I’m still doing that, and I’ve lost a great deal of self-confidence in the process. To be perfectly honest, I don’t feel very good about myself, right now.”

“Aren’t you being a little too self-critical? It sounds to me as though you’ve got a lot more going for you than you give yourself credit for. Wouldn’t you agree?”

“Perhaps, but I’m pretty confused about a lot of things in my life. I don’t know whether to renounce my knightly status and leave Camelot in search of greener pastures or stand my ground and come face to face with my personal problems. That’s what I was trying to decide when I found your time-travel remote.”

“I’m very happy that you *did* find the remote. After all, it’s not often that someone in this day and age gets a chance to talk to a genuine knight. Nobody would believe this!”

“That’s enough about me,” I said. “What about you? Do you have a wife and family?”

Willie scooted his ashtray across the table and rubbed out the last hot ashes on his cigarette. Then he sat upright in his chair, leaned a bit forward, and looked at me, straight in my eyes. Suddenly, Willie spoke with a heavy heart. “I was married for almost twenty-five years to a wonderful woman. Her name was Nancy. We had a falling out over my smoking and drinking problems. She divorced me a couple of years ago. Later, she married another man. I loved her very much and I still miss her, horribly!”

Willie hesitated, swallowed a big gulp of beer, and fought back the tears. I said, “I’m sorry to hear about your sad divorce. Do you have any children?”

“Yes, thank God!” Willie exclaimed, after taking a deep breath and calming down a little. “I have a beautiful daughter. She’s almost your age. She’ll be twenty-four in August. Her name is Marilotta. She’s never been married, and she doesn’t have any children.

Marilotta is a spittin' image of Kirsten Dunst, one of America's most famous young movie stars. I can't wait for her to meet *you!*"

"Marilotta Light' is an interesting name! Where is she?"

"Right now, she's at work. Marilotta's a teacher's aid. She helps teach Psychology at a high school in Burbank, a town that's not too far from here. Marilotta lives with me and helps me take care of this huge place. And I sure appreciate having her stay with me. With Marilotta being so close to me, it saves me having to hire a maid, although money is not an object. I would just like to stay close to her until she finds the right guy and settles down, someday."

"Marilotta is lucky to have a father who loves her as much as you. And she's fortunate to have a dad that's concerned about her personal welfare!"

"Thanks for those compliments! Tell me, Wantsalittle, are you married?"

"No—not yet! My love life, or lack thereof, is a long story. Let me just say that I got close to asking someone to marry me once, but the relationship didn't work out. I've been told, repeatedly, that I'm a little chauvinistic and quite sexist-minded, at times. I'm sure that I'll look for another girl one day. I've got to get my own life squared away, first."

"Well, I wouldn't worry about it, if I were you. You're a handsome guy. You're also very intelligent, and you have a great sense of humor. With those big blue eyes and that dark-brown, full head of hair, plenty of gals will be on the prowl for you. Just make sure that you nab a good one!"

"Willie, how will I get back to Camelot?"

"That's no problem! I'll send you or take you back whenever you want to go. Before you return, though, wouldn't you like to do some sightseeing and exploring around? I thought that knights loved adventure, journeys, quests, and such. What about you?"

"Yeah! As a matter of fact, I had planned to go on a quest soon after I stumbled on the time-travel remote. I want to become worldlier and enrich my character. And I want to feel *and act* like a king!"

"Wantsalittle, that's an admirable personal goal! After I teach you how to drive, you can borrow the Corvette and go wherever you want. I know that I can trust you. In the first place, you're a knight

who has taken the vows. Besides, you already proved yourself when you returned my remote.”

“Okay, but I don’t really know where to start or where to go after that, for that matter.”

“Again, no problem! You can spend several days here with Marilotta and me. We can give you a ‘crash course’ in history, particularly American history. You can get familiar with a lot of important people and events before you begin—or should I say ‘before you continue’—your journey into time.”

“Willie, that sounds like a good idea!”

Then I reached out to pick up my beer. By accident, I knocked it over and spilled nearly a full bottle of the liquid gold all over the table. Most of it poured down through the openings in the table-top’s iron mesh and onto the redwood deck. I said, “I’m sorry, Willie. That Zapmeister is a pretty strong brew. I think that I’m getting a little tipsy.”

As Willie got up to go into the kitchen to fetch a towel, he said, “Tomorrow, I’ll take you on a tour of Hollywood and let you drive the car. After that, we’ll rent some movies. We’ll get you up to date with what has gone on in the world over the past 1,400 years or so. And we’ll do it in short-order!”

After Willie returned with some paper towels, he leaned down to mop up the beer. I couldn’t really help him because I didn’t think that I would be able to get back up. Except for my helmet, I was still restricted by my heavy, awkward suit of armor. I said, “Willie, I enjoyed our little chat. Right now, though, I’m getting kind of sleepy.”

“Yeah, I think that we could both use a nap!”

Willie went upstairs to his bedroom. I stretched out on his sofa. A couple of hours later, he came back downstairs and woke me up.

“Wantsalittle, I’d like for you to meet my daughter. She just got home from work.” As I slowly got up off the sofa, Marilotta Light walked into the room. My eyes were still a little blurry from my long nap. I rubbed on each eyelid, a couple of times, with the back of my right hand. As both of my eyes became focused, I clearly saw Marilotta for the first time. I wasn’t disappointed! With her long, straight, naturally red hair and her captivating, sparkling, blue eyes, she was a most alluring young lady.

Willie said, “Marilotta, this is Wantsalittle.”

“Wantsalittle *what?*” Marilotta asked, in a raised, high-pitched tone of voice. As Marilotta posed her question, she quickly took one giant step back from me, apparently in fear of my intentions. She reflected an alarming, full-facial profile.

Willie just laughed and exclaimed, “No, Marilotta! You don’t understand. His name is Sir Wantsalittle *Morefromlife!* He just arrived here a few hours ago. Wantsalittle is a real-life and *live* knight from Camelot. Marilotta, do you remember back, a few weeks ago, when I asked you if you’d seen my missing time-travel-remote unit?”

“Yes, dad. Now I remember that you had lost the time-travel remote. Are you trying to tell me that Wantsa—e-r-r—I should say *Sir* Wantsa—damn, I just can’t bring myself to say that name! Pardon me, Mr. *Morefromlife*. I’ll be all right here in a moment.”

Marilotta turned her head away from me. I heard her giggle for a few seconds. Then Marilotta coughed a little, clearing her throat, as she turned her head back toward me. She said, apologetically, “Excuse me! Please pardon me for my being so inconsiderate and rude. I’m delighted to make your acquaintance.”

As Marilotta reached out to shake my hand, I confidently exclaimed, “Let me assure you, my fair lady, that the pleasure is all mine!” I firmly gripped her outstretched right hand. Then I slowly raised her right hand toward my head, now with a much lighter grasp around her slender fingers. Finally, I planted one little tender kiss, almost dead center, on the back of her soft, delicate hand. I said, almost whispering but most enthusiastically, “I’m more than pleased to meet *you*, too.”

Every time that I had been introduced to someone, especially to an attractive single woman, I was a bit unnerved. My unusual and sexually suggestive first name always made me self-conscious. I couldn’t help but to wonder how Marilotta would’ve reacted if my last name were *Morenooky*, as it was when I was a child. Anyway, I couldn’t blame Marilotta for her initial, simply human reaction.

After I kissed Marilotta’s hand, she smiled and winked at me. I had received her full approval of my warm, affectionate gesture. “Wantsalittle, you must’ve found dad’s time-travel remote somewhere around Camelot. Sometimes, dad takes me with him when he travels into time, but I haven’t been to Camelot as yet. I

didn't expect to meet a genuine knight, particularly a young and handsome knight, such as you are."

"Thank you for those kind remarks, Marilotta."

Willie said, "Let's all sit down, make ourselves comfortable, and get better acquainted." We did just that. For the rest of the afternoon and well into the evening, all three of us sat around and chatted. We all talked about some of our past experiences. All in all, our collective conversation was both entertaining and enlightening.

The next morning, Willie took me for my first ride in his awesome Corvette. We drove all around the Hollywood area and out to the Pacific Ocean, hours of sightseeing and just plain fun. All of the fancy modern-day buildings nearly took my breath away. And I couldn't believe how many people were congregated in this small section of America, many of them wearing very revealing attire. At one point, in fact, I surprisingly witnessed a group of six young ladies, wandering along the beach, all with their shapely breasts fully exposed. At that moment, Willie exclaimed, "Sir Wantsalittle, welcome to California!" Of course, I also couldn't believe the traffic—jam-packed streets and highways, regardless of where we ventured.

Later in the day, Willie gave me my first driving lesson. He pulled the Vette off of one of the main streets in Hollywood and drove into a spacious, empty, parking area, next to a college football stadium. At first, my slightly nervous driving instructor let me cruise around the parking lot. I drove in a circular pattern, again and again and again, just to get a good feel for the car. I tested my skills in operating the steering wheel, the accelerator, and the brakes.

Several minutes elapsed, and I thought that everything was going pretty smoothly. Naturally, a few hair-raising moments occurred—not *my* hair, however, because it was restricted from upward movement by my knight's helmet. But most of Willie's naturally curly, light-brown hair had, on more than one occasion, totally uncurled and shot straight up toward the roof of the car. Because I wore my big steel boots, I had a little trouble, at times, in lifting my heavy right foot off the gas pedal as we entered some sharper turns. Once, Willie made some comment about my having a "lead foot," whatever that meant.

After I had some practice, Willie let me drive on some of the side streets. Again, I thought that I was doing a good job, overall.

But an hour or so later, I noticed that the ashtray, which was empty when we left the house, now overflowed with Tomarlbury butts. None of the smashed, crumpled, cigarette butts were mine!

Willie had told me that he smoked only when he was drinking beer or a little anxious. I discovered that Willie was either a chain smoker or that he was a little more nervous from riding with me than he had previously insinuated. My first driving lesson concluded shortly thereafter when Willie said, "That's about all of your learning-to-drive that I can take in one day. Please pull over, stop the car, and get out. I'll take us home from here. I don't know about you, Wantsalittle, but I could use a cold brewski or two as soon as we get back to my place."

"Willie, that sounds good to me!"

Willie C. Light was true to his word. Over the next few days, he and Marilotta gave me a lesson in American history, filled me in on some world history, educated me on major current events, etc. The whole learning process was a lot of fun. I enjoyed sitting around and watching dozens of movies with his VCR and with his DVD player. Especially, I enjoyed a film titled *The Dukes of Hazzard*, starring the lovely Jessica Simpson. I said to myself, "What a babe!"

Speaking of "babes," I happened to see Carmen Electra on *The Late Show with David Letterman*. That glamour model or dancer or singer or actress was simply the most beautiful woman that I had ever seen. And I hoped that I would see Carmen Electra, again and again and then some more, before I returned to Camelot.

On the eighth day of my visit at Willie's Beverly Hills estate, I was eager to set out on my quest for personal enlightenment. I sat in the living room and thought about the full week that I had just spent in his home. While I sat on the sofa and mused about some of my recent experiences, Marilotta Light came in to talk with me.

"Wantsalittle, dad told me that you were leaving in a few minutes to go on your journey into time. I have to go to a parent-teacher conference at the school. In case you leave before I return, I just want to wish you the best in your upcoming travels. My dad and I have been absolutely thrilled to have you as a *most welcome* guest for the past several days. You are an intriguing young gentleman."

I got up off the sofa and said, “Thanks, Marilotta! Staying here and getting to know both you and your father has truly been a preview of heaven.”

“I’ll be *looking forward* to seeing you when you return from your journey. I hope that we’ll have the opportunity to spend some quality time together—a *lot* of time together—I *hope, I hope, I hope*—before you go back to Camelot, if that’s what you decide to do.”

Marilotta looked at her watch. She said, “Yikes—it’s nearly half past four o’clock. I’ve got to run!”

Before she left, Marilotta came over to me and gave me a huge hug and kissed me, lightly and moistly, on my cheek. I returned her favor. Then I presented Marilotta with a couple of special supplemental kisses—more sentimental, more deliberate, more passionate kisses, creatively configured and delivered so that she would fully remember me! Immediately thereafter, we also exchanged verbal goodbyes, and then she went on her way.

I had spent a considerable amount of time with Marilotta Light, on and off, over the past week. We got to know each other pretty well. I hated to leave. I mean that I *really hated* to leave! She was *very friendly*, and our personalities meshed, almost from the very beginning. Willie was right when he compared the physical similarities between Marilotta and Kirsten Dunst. After I saw Kirsten’s acting performances as Mary Jane Watson in the *Spider-Man* movies, I seriously thought that I had been looking at and talking with Kirsten Dunst instead of Marilotta Light during my stay at their home in Hollywood. At any rate, I definitely looked forward to seeing Marilotta, again, right after my upcoming journey.

I sat back down on the tan-leather sofa. Then Willie walked into the room. He sat down in his favorite matching-leather chair, directly across from me. “Okay, Wantsalittle, do you have any last-minute questions for me before you set out on your quest?”

“Yes, Willie, I’m a little curious about one thing: The other day, while I was watching some of your favorite DVDs, I ran across an interesting film. The movie was a rock-and-roll comedy called *Up in Smoke*, starring Cheech and Chong. Those two very funny dudes unknowingly smuggled a van—a van made entirely of marijuana—from Mexico to L.A. And I’ve also noticed numerous other references to marijuana in other movies that I’ve watched in

the past several days and on TV, etc. Yet, you and Marilotta have never mentioned the term ‘marijuana,’ and neither of you has said anything to me about ‘smoking pot.’ Why?”

“The movie you’ve referred to, *Up in Smoke*, came out in 1978. Actually, that particular film was the first of several comedy movies for the hilarious duo of Cheech Marin and Thomas ‘Tommy’ Chong. All of their films made light of the idea of using marijuana or ‘smoking dope,’ as it is more commonly called. Anyway, Marilotta and I purposely refrained from talking with you about ‘marijuana’ or any other illegal drugs. After you so eagerly decided to ‘try’ a few of my Tomarlbury cigarettes, we didn’t want you to ‘try’ other potentially harmful substances.”

“Were you both afraid that I would get hooked on smoking dope?”

“Not really. Wantsalittle, most experts agree that marijuana, occasionally used for the purpose of ‘getting high,’ is probably no more harmful to you than the alcohol that you would consume by drinking a couple of beers. Here’s the problem: Marijuana usage could lead to your wanting to partake in other, much more dangerous, illegal drugs—cocaine or crack cocaine or amphetamines, for example. Habitual use or an overdose of any illegal substance could severely damage your body and/or mental faculties; it could even kill you, right then and there.”

“If such illegal drugs, either stimulates or depressants, are so potentially harmful, why do so many people, especially younger people, use them?”

“People may use illegal drugs at various times and for various personal or social reasons. None of those reasons, including the idea that some illegal substance may provide an individual with a momentary pleasurable ‘high’ or a temporary ‘euphoric state of mind,’ justify the short-term or long-term consequences of his or her usage of any such illegal drug or illegal substance. On the bottom line, *do NOT experiment with or use any illegal drugs or illegal substances*. And be extremely diligent and cautious with your consumption of alcohol, whether it is beer, wine, champagne, hard liquor, or whatever. And, Wantsalittle, whatever you do, *do NOT drive a vehicle or operate any machinery while you are under the influence of ANY drug, illegal or otherwise, or while you are under the influence of ANY alcoholic beverage!*”

“Thanks, Willie, for the great advice. I think that it would be best for me NOT to associate with or at least NOT to be negatively influenced by anyone who indulges or by anyone who partakes in any illegal drugs or any illegal substances.”

“Good for you!”

“Willie, while we’re on the subject of illegal drugs, I’ve heard that many people, including a growing number of teenagers, use anabolic steroids? What are anabolic steroids, and where did they come from?”

“Wantsalittle, I’m glad that you asked. In the 1930’s, scientists found that anabolic steroids could facilitate skeletal muscle growth in laboratory animals. For the past couple of decades or so, many bodybuilders, weightlifters, and athletes in other sports have used various forms of anabolic steroids to gain weight and/or to build more massive muscles, generally giving them greater personal size and strength, and possibly giving them a competitive edge against athletes who have developed or will develop their individual physical attributes without injecting themselves with illegal steroids.”

“Okay, but why are anabolic steroids illegal?”

“Studies have shown that anabolic steroid use or abuse has resulted in a wide range of adverse side effects—some life threatening effects—particularly after prolonged usage. In addition to likely harmful physical effects, anabolic steroids have also resulted in users experiencing negative emotional effects, including irritability and aggression. Finally, steroid use among adolescents may prematurely stop the lengthening of bones, resulting in stunted growth. For these reasons and others, anabolic steroids are now considered to be illegal drugs. In other words, someone can’t just walk in to his or her local drugstore, pick up a bottle of steroids ‘off the shelf,’ and purchase these drugs as if they were bottles of vitamin or mineral supplements. As is the case with marijuana and other illegal drugs or substances, only in special health circumstances will legitimate medical doctors issue prescriptions for anabolic steroids.”

“Willie, it appears to me that people, athletes or others, and especially young people, would be wise if they abstained from using anabolic steroids, regardless of how they might acquire these drugs, for the sake of their long-term general health and well being.”

“Wantsalittle, that’s a very perceptive observation and a most logical conclusion. For instance, *in cases of amateur or professional athletes of any age who might be so enticed to use steroids to gain a competitive edge in their respective sports, all of the possible personal accolades or the potential of their signing professional sports contracts for many millions of dollars wouldn’t be worth their risking their personal health, perhaps risking an early death, as a result of their taking anabolic steroids!*”

Willie, after completing his remarks about the dangers of using illegal drugs and illegal steroids, wanted to get back to preparing me for my upcoming journey. He took a deep breath of air and said, “One of the neat things about a time machine is that you can travel as far as you want to go and be gone for as long as you want. And you can return at the same time you left, so that you don’t miss anything at home while you’ve been gone, if you know what I mean?”

“You just covered a lot of ground. I really don’t know what you mean!”

“Wantsalittle, it doesn’t really matter. The other day, I gave you a new duffle bag. Are you packed and ready to go?”

“Yeah, I’m a little nervous, but I’m anxious to get started.”

“All right, let’s go out to the car. With the driving lessons you’ve had over the past week, you shouldn’t have any trouble with the vehicle.”

We entered the garage, and Willie opened the garage door. After I put my duffel bag, war club, and ax behind the front seat, I strapped my lance to the top of the Corvette. Then I climbed into the car and sat down in the driver’s seat. Willie got in on the passenger’s side.

“Let me explain what I said, earlier, about being able to ‘return at the same time you left’: Today is May 27, 2010, 4:30 P.M. You can take as much time as you want while you’re on your journey. I’ll program the computer module in the Corvette for today’s date and time. And I’ll enter my home address as your final destination.”

Willie programmed the main computer module, which was mounted to the dash in the Vette. Then he hit a few buttons on the remote-control unit, programming that device, as well. Afterward, he said, “All right, that’s taken care of. When you want to return the car to me, simply hit the big white *Return* button here on the main

computer module. You'll arrive back here on today's date and time. It'll be as though you never left. And then you can stay here with Marilotta and me for as long as you want, or I'll take you back to Camelot—whatever you choose to do."

"Willie, what about the other three large buttons?"

"Okay, when you press the blue *Enter* button, the module will ask you to type in the 'date' and 'time' and 'destination.' After you have entered the necessary information, just push the green *Go* button. Instantly, you will be transported through time to the designated destination or location. If you have any trouble with the car or with the time-travel units, simply push the red *Emergency* button. By way of radio and satellite communications, I will immediately be alerted as to your precise location and time. I have a couple of extra time-travel remotes safely stored away in the house. If you have an emergency, I will transport myself to your current location. And if I need to find you, I can press the *Emergency* button on one of my remote units and be transported to wherever you happen to be."

"Okay, I think that I've got all that information stored in my head. I'm ready to go!"

"Wantsalittle, you haven't eaten anything all day. Would you like to have some dinner before you leave?"

"No, thanks! I'm just too nervous to eat right now. I'll stop and get something while I'm on the road."

Then Willie reached into his back pocket. He pulled out his wallet. He had already been very generous since I arrived. I hated to take any money from him, even though we both knew that I needed it.

"Here's five hundred dollars," Willie said. "You can call it your reward for finding and returning my remote. If you run low on cash while you're away, come back to my place. I'll give you some more money so that you can finish your trip."

"Willie, thanks for everything! I really appreciate all of your hospitality and help. If I need more money, I'll find some part-time work while I'm gone. And *please* thank and say 'goodbye' for me, again, to Marilotta when she gets home."

"You kind of like her, don't you?"

"Yes! I *really* do!"

“I can see that she likes you, too! Who knows? Maybe the two of you will get closer together one of these days! Wantsalittle, do you have any last-minute questions about anything?”

“No, I understand how everything works. I think that I’m thoroughly prepared to embark on my quest.”

“Okay, just remember to hit the big *white* button whenever you want to *return* to my place, here in Beverly Hills.” Willie got out of the Vette and leaned through the open passenger-side window. Finally, he said, “Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife, have a safe and personally enlightening journey.” We shook hands. I started the engine. Then I waved goodbye as Willie went back into the house. I was ready to travel into the future or wherever I wanted to go.

My Wacky Adventures

Episode One:

How My First “Knight” Out Ended Up in the Crapper

Lesson in Living:
Releasing Harmful Emotions

Denver, Colorado; July 27, 2010; 4:45 P.M.

I DIDN'T WANT TO GET CARRIED AWAY on the first day of my journey. Furthermore, I was already tired from a week of preparation for my trip. I just wanted to try out the time machine and get some rest. I planned to spend my first night out in Denver, Colorado. So I set the date/time/destination controls on the time-travel module, which was located on the dash in the Corvette, for a couple of months into the future and for Denver. Little did I know then that it would turn out to be a “knight” to remember!

After I pressed the green *Go* button, I disappeared. Then about as fast as I could blink, the car, with me in it, reappeared. The shiny metallic-red Vette “energized” on a busy street near downtown Denver.

Everywhere I looked, I saw people and cars—stop-and-go, bumper-to-bumper driving. Willie had mentioned that I might get caught up, at times, in rush-hour traffic when I visited bigger cities. He wasn't kidding. After driving in Hollywood, though, the

crowded streets in Denver seemed mild by comparison. Besides, my nerves had calmed down when I realized that the time machine was functioning correctly.

I had decided to stop at the first motel I saw. But first I wanted to get something to eat—just a hamburger or two and a drink that I could take with me to my room.

As I drove down the road, I saw a Burger Castle directly ahead. “My kind of place,” I said to myself. I didn’t feel like getting out of the car and having a bunch of people ask me why I was wearing a full suit of armor. So when I pulled into the fast-food joint, I drove around to the drive-up window.

“I’ll have that #1 Knight Meal Deal and a large Pepsi,” I said, after I stopped at the menu-speaker stand.

“Do you want our special ‘Guinevere’s Tartar Sauce’ with those fries, Sir?”

“Yeah, I guess. I didn’t know that Guinevere made a tartar sauce.”

“What did you say, Sir?”

“Never mind! Yes, I’ll try the tartar sauce.”

“Please pull up to the first window.”

I did, but I forgot to take off my helmet. When the cute little brunette handed me my order, she laughed and asked, “Why are you dressed up as if you were Sir Lancelot or somebody? Are you on your way to a Halloween party in the final week of July?”

“Sweetheart, it’s a long story. You might get the chance to hear or to read about it someday,” I replied, getting in the last laugh.

After I picked up my food order, I drove about two blocks down the street and pulled into the Lost Knight Motel. I checked into my room, laid my helmet down on one of the bedside night tables, and sat down to eat my dinner.

Then, after I ate, I unloaded my duffel bag. I knew that something was missing. Suddenly, it dawned on me. I raised my hands high above my head and yelled, “Damn! I forgot to pack my *toothbrush!*” The bad taste in my mouth from that damn Guinevere’s Tartar Sauce should’ve been my first clue that my journey was destined to get off to a *sour* start.

Sure enough, things got worse. My stomach started aching. I wanted to get some badly needed rest and overcome my stomach

ache, so I leaped, spread eagle and face up, right in the middle of my king-size bed.

Several hours elapsed. I had experienced more and more stomach pain as the time slowly ticked off the clock. Then I developed a slight headache. I got up and I went into the bathroom. I needed something to take for my aches and pains. When I reached above the sink and opened the medicine cabinet, I said to myself, “Ah, here’s a bottle of cod liver oil.” I took a couple of swigs. “I need a fast-acting laxative. I hope that this will do the trick.”

I dampened a towel and wrapped it around my forehead. Then I went back to bed. I tossed and turned for over an hour. I just couldn’t go to sleep.

All at once I opened my eyes, and I looked out of the window. Superman (the late Christopher Reeve, out of respect for his leading roles in the *Superman* movies) was outside on the sidewalk. He had been “examining” my tummy through the window with his dual X-ray vision.

Seeing Superman, in person, for the first time was strange. With his broad shoulders, well-defined pectoral and abdominal muscles, together with his bulging biceps and calf muscles—all stretching that predominately blue spandex suit—and that long, streamlined, red, satin cape, the Man of Steel appeared to be all that he was advertised to be—“more powerful than a locomotive, faster than a speeding bullet, and able to leap tall buildings in a single bound.”

Curiously, a big mirror was fastened to the ceiling, directly over my bed. As both of Superman’s red eye-beams focused on my stomach, I looked into the mirror and saw a reflection of what was ailing me.

Superman’s X-ray vision showed that my tummy and intestines were filled with: fear, doubt, worry, unhappiness, depression, frustration, resentment, anger, hatred, etc. Superman could see that I was hurting, but that damn “S” man didn’t come to my rescue! Instead, he flew away as if he were a coward and as if he were fleeing from a fight.

“I really feel bloated,” I moaned, holding my stomach firmly with both hands. “God, I wish that someone would help me!”

Instantly, I saw the image of a very sexy lady. She stood just a few feet off to the right side of my bed. The dazzling longhair blonde reminded me of Jessica Simpson, one of my favorite movie stars. In fact, after I studied her shapely figure for a few seconds, I was pretty certain that she *was* Jessica Simpson!

With a look of bewilderment etched on my face, I asked, “Are my eyes deceiving me, or are you *Jessica Simpson?*”

“Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife, your eyes *are* and they are *not* deceiving you.” Now, I really *was* confused. Jessica or whoever continued, “You see, Wantsalittle, it appears to you that I am Jessica Simpson. But I would rather that you call Me by My real name—*God!*”

I got more and more confused by the second. “You mean ‘God’ with respect to the idea that You are acting out the part of God?”

“No, I mean ‘God’ as a matter of FACT! The truth is, Wantsalittle, I’ve been watching just about every move that you’ve made since that day in Camelot—the day you proclaimed that you were going on a quest. I recall that you said something about your wanting to ‘become more worldly’ and to ‘feel *and act* like a king.’”

“Yes, Lord. Then I found a—”

“Yeah, yeah. You discovered a time-travel-remote device, traveled to Beverly Hills, met Willie C. Light, etc., etc.”

“God, as You obviously know, I stayed with Willie and his daughter for just over a week. Through that time, Willie and Marilotta taught me a lot about American history, world history, and prepared me for my journey into time.”

“Wantsalittle, in a very short period of time, you learned quite a bit about history and about contemporary news events. The truth is, however, that you need to know much more, particularly about American celebrities who you are apt to meet and speak with during your continuing quest to feel *and act* like a king.”

“Are You saying that my eight days of cramming for knowledge while I was staying with Willie didn’t thoroughly prepare me for my travels?”

“That’s right, but don’t despair. *Right now*, I am going to further “educate” you by bestowing within you just enough more personal knowledge—basic information about both people and places—to help you as you proceed on your journey toward self-improvement.”

“Thanks, God, but something is wrong here!” I exclaimed. “For heaven’s sake, the Lord isn’t a *woman*, is He—e-r-r—is *She*?”

God giggled and replied, “Wantsalittle, your words reflect your chauvinistic attitude. What makes you think that ‘God’ couldn’t be a *woman*?”

My mouth and eyes were wide open, and I was simply speechless for a few moments. Then I gathered what little senses I had left and tried to answer God’s question. “I never considered the idea that our ‘Supreme Being’ or ‘the Creator’ or ‘the Lord’ or ‘God Almighty’ could be a *female*! God, You’re certainly an eyeful of heaven! I just adore that half-unbuttoned and rather-revealing pink blouse. You certainly are well-endow—”

God interrupted me before I could complete my well-intended compliment. “Now I’m beginning to understand why your birth name was ‘Wantsalittle Morenooky.’ Please keep in mind just *who* it is that you are speaking with, okay?”

I was a little embarrassed about trying to flirt with the Lord. I thought about adding some nice comments with respect to the rest of Her ravishing physique and sexy attire—things such as: Her distinguished, entrancing, light-blond hair; Her short, cut-just-above-the-knee, powder-blue skirt with a lengthy left-side slit; and Her long, slender, stunning legs. But I decided not to push my luck. Instead, I asked, “Why do You look so much like Jessica Simpson?”

“Wantsalittle, did you know that I, being God, can *read your mind*? In your thoughts, and while your eyes were ‘covering all of the bases,’ how come you failed to recognize My pink, three-inch-heel, genuine-leather pumps?”

“Oh, Lord, I’m so sorry! But You must admit that You *are* a real ‘knockout’!”

“Thanks, *I think*, for that nice compliment. I wanted to appear before you in a human form. I knew that Jessica Simpson was one of your favorite entertainers. So I thought that I would sort of clone Jessica and give you somebody to talk with who could be most appealing to you. Tell Me, Wantsalittle, does *this* body and My meticulous choice of costume fill the bill?”

“It sure does! I don’t know whether to address You as ‘God’ or as ‘*Goddess*!’”

Earnestly amused, the Lord roared in laughter at my last remarks. Then She said, “By the way, you really don’t know, for

certain, whether or not that God is a male or a female. And I'm *not* going to tell you. You'll just have to keep wondering, like everyone else. Let Me just ask you this: Really, does it matter?"

I hesitated before I replied, "No, I guess not."

"Your response doesn't seem to reflect your true feelings. I think you believe that 'God' has to be a man, or at least of the male gender. Maybe I should have appeared before you as—"

Quicker than I could blink, and before God could finish her sentence, She then presented Herself in an all-white suit, including a white dress shirt and tie; the Lord assumed the persona of Morgan Freeman, the famous and most talented actor who portrayed God in *Bruce Almighty* and *Evan Almighty*—two very funny films, also starring Jim Carey, that I saw while I was staying at Willie's.

Before I could offer a comment, the Lord said, "Or, Wantsalittle, perhaps you would have preferred to see Me as one of your likely favorite sports' stars." Suddenly, God stood at the foot of the bed with a golf club—a putter—in Her right hand. Attired in black slacks, a crimson-red golf shirt, and a black ball cap with the Nike checkmark-like logo pictured on the front of it, the Lord appeared in the human form of Tiger Woods. The world's top-ranked golfer, probably the best ever in his sport, looked at me, anxiously, as if he were expecting me to guess his name and profession. Jessica—I mean—Morgan—I mean—Tiger—*whoever* the Lord was pretending to be—*She* or *He* tossed the putter aside. "If you don't play golf, or if you don't recognize Me as 'Tiger Woods,' do you like *basketball*?"

Of course, I had recognized Tiger Woods. Who in the world wouldn't? But I had just experienced another sharp pain in my stomach, and I wasn't able, at that time, to speak. I just nodded my head, affirmatively, and played along with God while He/She continued to show off His/Her divine powers. Even though I wasn't feeling well, I was both amazed and a bit amused by the Lord's quirky version of *What's My Line?*—a popular game show that first aired on CBS in 1950. I could hardly wait to see "who" God had next in mind. Just a few seconds elapsed before I lifted my head off the pillow and asked, "Aren't you Lebron James, #23, from the Cleveland Cavaliers?"

"Yes, but most of my fans refer to me as 'King' James," the Lord replied, jokingly.

Moments later, I stared, upward, into the big brown eyes of Carmelo Anthony, another young NBA superstar from the Denver Nuggets. “Hi, my ‘Melo’ man,” I said, fantasizing momentarily, as if he were one of my closest friends.

Still assuming Her stance as Carmelo Anthony, dressed in a white-with-blue-and-gold-trim Nuggets’ basketball jersey, #15, and blue jeans, God inquired, “Who’s your favorite, currently active, football player?”

“That’s easy. It’s Pey—”

The Lord was reading my mind. Before I could spit out his full name, Peyton Manning, future Hall of Fame quarterback of the Indianapolis Colts, #18, stood at the foot of the bed, a Wilson Official NFL “Superbowl” football in one hand, a black Sharpie permanent marker in the other hand. God asked, “Wantsalittle, do you want my autograph?”

“Sure—if You sign the football with *Peyton Manning’s* name, instead of Yours!”

The Lord, after showing me a brief *super*-wide grin, just said, “That figures,” as He/She reluctantly autographed the football.

After God handed me the signed, official, Superbowl XLI football, She reassumed Her guise as Jessica Simpson. “All right, Wantsalittle, would you rather that I make My appearance, and perhaps future appearances, on your behalf in a *male* human form or as a *female*?”

“That’s a tough question to answer. As You obviously know, I do sincerely admire the five male personalities—one fantastic actor and four superstar athletes—that You so graciously and so accurately imitated. It is more fun, though, if not also more exciting to me, that You are presenting Yourself in my presence in the persona, including diction and voice, of *Jessica Simpson*. Thank You, Lord, for Your great sense of humor and for Your utmost consideration!”

“You’re very welcome. Now, let’s discuss some more serious matters. You are traveling around in Willie C. Light’s time machine, in hot pursuit of your praiseworthy goals; at least, you are in search of those adventures that may provide you with the knowledge and the experience necessary for you to fulfill your commendable dreams. As you embark on your quest, you could become a legend

in your own ‘time,’ as well as other ‘times.’ On the bottom line, I have a vested interest in your ultimate success.”

I wasn’t sure what the Lord meant by “vested interest.” “God, why is *my* success so important to You?”

“To begin with, I’d like to see anyone achieve to the best of his or her abilities and live a happier and more prosperous life on earth. People look up to, admire, and are motivated by good example-setters. I’ve noticed that your intentions have always been in good order.”

“Well, I’m glad that I’ve done something right!”

“The idea that you’re upset about such things as ‘authoritarian leadership’ and a form of government that ‘deprives the common people’ shows Me that, by and large, you’re conscientious and that you care about the welfare of your fellow man. I’d like for you to become a great example-setter. And I’d like for you to be regarded by millions of teenagers and young adults, throughout the world, as a true hero. In other words, I would like for you to mature, mentally, and personally grow into your best true self. But, as of now, *character-wise*, you’ve got a few jagged edges to round off and some minor rough spots to smooth out. In particular, I’m concerned about the facts that you drink way too much, that you can’t control your bad temper, and that you frequently display aggressive patterns of behavior.”

“Yes, I’ll admit to those faults and a few others.”

“Wantsalittle, I haven’t mentioned, up to now, some of your other noteworthy personal problems—your generally sexist-minded approach toward women, for instance.”

A bit embarrassed and a little angered, I exclaimed, “Good God, Lord! Is there *anything* that You don’t already know about me?”

The Lord’s mood and disposition suddenly took a downward turn. Her big, bewitching, brown eyes now reflected traces of red. God squinted, slightly, and glared at me through demoniac, piercing eyes. Then She shouted, “I guess that you failed to hear Me when I said it was time to talk about ‘some more serious matters’! Wantsalittle, it may appear to you that I am just another pretty face—someone who you can easily joke around with, perhaps make fun of, or tease by way of your snide, sometimes sexually inferring quips and comments. By God, Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife, I am

your Lord! God Almighty! Your Creator! Young man, it wouldn't hurt for you to show Me a little more respect!"

As God yelled and screamed at me in an explosive, thunderous outburst, I noticed that She had a bit of a bad temper, Herself. I did my best to disguise the excruciating pain in my stomach. I would have been embarrassed for God to know *all* of what was ailing me. But I should have known that I couldn't keep *any* secrets from the Lord.

When the Lord calmed down, She said, "Wantsalittle, it looks as though you're really hurting inside, and I don't think that you've got a case of the stomach flu. As I see it, some of your negative thoughts and emotions are plugging you up, restricting your capacity to have faith in Me, and damaging your self-confidence and your self-esteem."

"What do You recommend?" I asked, while also thinking that God was my best hope of pulling my first night on the road out of the crapper!

Then the Lord replied, "I mentally picked up on that 'crapper' thought of yours!"

"I didn't mean to make light of—"

God broke in and said, "That's all right, Wantsalittle. Your God *does* have a keen sense of humor, at least most of the time. Believe it or not, I like to laugh and joke around as much as anybody. Your wry sense of humor and sometimes wit-spoken words reflect your charming and good-hearted nature. I don't want you to lose those fine personal qualities. Please don't take offense or to heart My earlier, momentary lapse of patience with you. I'm confident that, through time, you will better understand the importance of communicating with more tact, when it's called for, and you'll learn to listen more attentively. And as you further mature, morally and ethically, from your upcoming virtue-seeking adventures and experiences, you will become more respectful of others and more sensitive to others' individual needs."

The Lord paused for a few seconds, then She continued, "Wantsalittle, the real drama in your life—what should make your life more entertaining, more challenging, and more rewarding—will be played out according to how you act and react to various adverse circumstances and conditions. By the time the curtain falls on your forthcoming journey, ending the accelerated stage of what should be

your *steadfast* or *nonstop drive* for self-development and personal growth, you will possess an uncommon strength of morality and an exceptional standard of ethics—character traits more befitting of a king.”

My already aching stomach condition had gradually worsened as the Lord spewed Her lengthy, perhaps-scholarly discourse or oration or whatever She might have chosen to call it. All I could think of, throughout God’s sermon, was my “*steadfast* or *nonstop drive*” to rush into the bathroom. I said, “Lord, Your concern for my better interests, character-wise, has touched my heart. And Your forecast for my eventual wellbeing has been respectfully noted. But what do You think that I should do, RIGHT NOW, TONIGHT, to rid myself of some of my more negative thoughts and dreadful innermost emotions?”

“Wantsalittle, we’re not going to be able to solve all of your problems in one sitting. It’s going to take some time and patience. Really, the first thing I think that you should do is to go into the other room and try to ‘royally flush’ some of your ‘angels in black.’”

“What do You mean by ‘angels in black’?” I asked, reluctantly. I was afraid that God’s answer would likely be detailed and delay my inevitable trip to the toilet.

“The expression ‘angels in black’ is symbolic of your negative thoughts, bad habits, harmful emotions, etc.—any and all personal thoughts and personal behaviors that YOU perceive to be ‘skeletons hanging in your closet’—everything that reflects your darker side. You should clear your system of harmful emotional waste. Then try to fill your heart with more positive thoughts and emotions—things like: joy, self-love, love of others, love of your God, faith in your God’s goodness, belief in yourself, your worthwhile individual goals, and your precious personal dreams.”

“That’s going to take *some doing* on my part!”

“That might be an understatement!” God exclaimed. “For quite some time now, you’ve likely been trying, consciously or subconsciously, to suppress the feelings of your darker side. If your personal truths cause you to fear your angels in black, you must come to understand that such fear is not founded in universal reality. Your fear signifies personal false beliefs, not universal truths.”

“I really appreciate Your willingness to help me, Lord. What else can I do, NOW, to work on my false beliefs?”

“The Bible states, ‘As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.’ (Proverbs 23:7) Your heart is at the center of all your attitudes, goals, feelings, and actions. As you think with the attitude of self-confidence, for instance, you will be self-confident. Try to ‘see the light’ of your positive thoughts and emotions. As you do, you’ll be able to release your enemies within! That’s about all that I can suggest at this time.”

“Thanks, my Lord! When will I see You again?”

“Wantsalittle, I’m not sure that you will see Me again, at least not until that day comes when you may enter the Kingdom of Heaven. In the meantime, considering your obviously sexist-minded attitude toward women, I have someone special in mind to send your way. You can think of her as your guardian angel.”

“Lord, who in the world are You talking about?”

“Let that be a celestial surprise. I will give you one little hint: This woman is perfectly suited to address—perhaps I should say ‘to *undress*’—your male-chauvinistic mindset. And I will grant her all of the divine powers that she needs to help you in every respect for as long as you continue on your journey to personal enlightenment.”

“All right, God, whatever You say and whoever You have in mind to be my guardian angel is okay with me. But I sure had high hopes of Your future appearances before me in the lovely human form of Jessica Simpson.”

“Wantsalittle, I’ll bet that you did have ‘high’ hopes. You have to understand that I have more than 6 billion humanoids to take care of here on Earth. Most of these people pray to Me and ask for My help, especially in times of dire personal need. But you won’t be disappointed with My able-bodied and very attractive assistant.”

“When will I meet my guardian angel?”

“That’s up to you. You are welcome to request her presence at any time! Of course, you won’t know her name until you meet her. But that doesn’t matter. Wantsalittle, whenever you seek divine guidance on a particular subject, simply ask a relevant question. Your guardian angel will expeditiously answer the call. And, who knows? If My very busy schedule permits, perhaps I will appear before you, again, at times, to answer your questions and to help you in your pursuit of becoming a better man.”

“Okay, Lord. In case I don’t see You again in this life form, I want to sincerely *thank You* for dropping by to visit with me, personally. Willie C. Light, Marilotta Light, and my friends back in Camelot wouldn’t believe my ‘heavenly sent’ good fortune, right from the outset of my quest and journey into time.”

Jessica—e-r-r—God started to walk toward the door. Then She stopped and turned around. She said, “By the way, Superman *was* coming to your rescue. I used mental telepathy, of sorts, to give him the idea that you already had a ‘protecting angel.’ Then Superman flew off to take care of other important matters.”

“Thank You for telling me! That renews my confidence in the ‘S’ man.” The Lord just snickered, and then She suddenly disappeared.

Still sprawled out on the bed in my motel room, my stomach pains had become all but unbearable. I knew that, somehow, I had to eliminate the oppressive pain. Tightly gripping my gut, I crawled off the bed and labored to get into the bathroom.

When I finally entered the restroom, I braced myself against the wall with one hand and held onto the bathroom doorknob, then the towel rack, and then the shower rod with the other hand, waddling my way along to the toilet. Then I made good use of the white porcelain fixture, going “#2.”

When I got up and flushed the toilet, I saw the words: fear, doubt, worry, unhappiness, depression, guilt, resentment, anger, hatred, frustration, envy, tension, impatience, etc.—all of these self-limiting emotional terms swirled in the water just before they were sucked down the drain. Temporarily, at least, I had cleared my body of negative thoughts and harmful emotions.

On my way back to bed, I smiled and said, “Whew! It’s a real relief to flush away some of the crap that has been constipating my thinking!”

(The moral of this episode: Replace negative emotions with more positive ones!)

Episode Two:

Crossed Wires and Smoke Signals

Lesson in Living:
Overcoming Your Resistance to Positive Change

D.I.A. (Denver International Airport); July 28, 2010; 10:00 A.M.

THE NEXT MORNING I FELT REFRESHED and ready to go. What a difference it made to get a good night's sleep. I went outside and looked around. "Wow! It's a terrific day," I said to myself. "Today, I would like to do a couple of things: I want to take my first ride on an airplane, and I want to see Las Vegas."

I packed my things, and I left the motel. I drove a few miles east of Denver to D.I.A. I had planned to leave the Corvette at the airport and take the time-travel remote with me to Las Vegas. That way I could program the remote to transfer the car to Las Vegas, and I wouldn't have to take a plane back to Denver to retrieve the vehicle.

After I got to the airport, I bought a one-way ticket to Vegas. I only had to pay seventy-nine dollars. They gave me a good discount because some lady had just canceled her reservation; they wanted to fill her seat.

I thought that my day was going to get off to a flying start. But I encountered a problem at Concourse "K" when I attempted to get through the metal detector to board the plane. A sign posted above the security archway read "PLACE ALL BAGS AND METAL OBJECTS HERE."

I did my best to be inconspicuous. After I put my duffel bag, war club, and ax on the passenger-check-through belt, I tried to slip,

undetected, through the security area. Suddenly, glowing, red, flashing lights came on. A deafening alarm sounded. The loud noise startled me, and the alarm drew the attention of dozens of airline passengers, who were in the immediate vicinity.

I should've realized that my *full suit of armor* would trigger the alarm. I was thoroughly embarrassed by the incident. Fortunately, I had the visor down on my helmet; nobody saw the blood rushing to my sweat-dampened, ruby-red face.

To make matters worse, two security guards rushed over and hurriedly carried me away. I trembled from head to toe. My quivering left hand held an airline ticket that had "VIVA LAS VEGAS" and "FUN JET" boldly typed across the front of it. "Some fun this idea turned out to be," I said.

Then the guards hustled me to the front door. "We suggest that you choose another mode of transportation," one of the guards said, showing a sneer on his face.

After the security men released me and returned my bag and my weapons to me, outside the main terminal, I raised my war club and said, "You guys wouldn't be so brave if it wasn't for the fact that there are two of you and that you both are toting those big black revolvers!"

"I'm only going to tell you this once, pal," the other guard said, after pulling out his pistol and pointing it at me. "Put down that big club of yours! How would you like to spend the night in jail, Sir—whoever you are?" I lowered my weapon and took off on a mad dash for the Vette.

I reached into the car and took out a piece of cardboard and a magic marker. Then I wrote "EXCALIBUR HOTEL & CASINO OR BUST!" in large black letters, and I hung the sign on the passenger-side door of the car. I was determined to get to Vegas one way or another.

Frustrated and a bit peeved after the incident with the metal detector, I said to myself, "I refuse to change clothes just to travel on an airplane! What's the world coming to that one must undress to fly first class?" Then I looked toward heaven and asked, "How can I overcome my resistance to change?"

When I started to get into the car, I heard somebody coming up from behind me. I grabbed my ax and swiftly spun around; I was

ready to strike out against any potential enemy. I probably shouldn't have been so hasty.

Suddenly, I was in the presence of a beautiful young lady. I asked, "Did God send you? Are you my guardian angel?"

The shapely woman with long, wavy, dark-blond hair replied, "Yes, my name is Aphrodite (pronounced Aphrodi-*tee*). You must be Wantsalittle—Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife."

"Are you Aphrodite, the historic Greek goddess of love?"

"Indeed, that is who I am—I mean—at least that is who I was before I went to heaven."

"Say, haven't I seen you somewhere, perhaps on television? Let me guess: God summoned you in the guise and diction of *Carmen Electra*."

"Wantsalittle, you're quite an observant young man. The Lord has told me a lot about you. I am here as your guardian angel. I want to help you in your quest to feel *and act* like a king."

"Well, God was right on target when She said that you would be a 'heavenly surprise.' I am most happy to make your acquaintance. And to think that I once thought that Greek Mythology was a myth! You also went by the name of 'Venus,' didn't you?"

"Yes! The ancient Romans referred to me as 'Venus,' goddess of love, desire, and beauty."

"From my limited knowledge of Greek Mythology, didn't Zeus, who was the supreme ruler of the gods, grant you the power to compel any man you so choose to desire you?"

"Your memory serves you right. The Olympians consisted of twelve gods, including me, who ruled the world after the overthrow of the Titans—the elder gods who previously ruled over Earth. Zeus provided me with a magic girdle that gave me the power to win the attention and the affection of any man who I so desired."

"Aphrodite, do you still have that 'power,' and do you happen to be wearing your bewitching girdle, right now?"

With a perturbed look in her captivating, deep-blue eyes, Aphrodite exclaimed, "Wantsalittle, I'll be damned. God was absolutely right when She told me that you were a chauvinist pig of sorts. Let's get something straight between us, right here and now!"

The goddess of love was miffed with my "bewitching girdle" reference and what was on my dirty little mind. I knew right then

and there that her wanting to “get something straight between us” had nothing to do with any parts of our anatomies.

Aphrodite continued, “Wantsalittle, God has bestowed in me many additional powers to those abilities that I once claimed as the goddess of love. For instance, the Lord has given me the power to reason and to divinely guide you toward the praiseworthy character traits of virtue and nobility. But you would be wise to tread lightly with respect to your sexist-minded thoughts and comments in my presence.”

An expression of embarrassment came across my face as I said, “I am very sorry, Venus. God didn’t tell me that my guardian angel would be able to read my mind. By the way, may I call you by your Roman name?”

“Yes, you can refer to me as either ‘Aphrodite’ or as ‘Venus,’ whichever you prefer at any given moment in time. Wantsalittle, let’s keep our future meetings on the informal side and just between us. Nobody else but you will be able to see or hear me when we get together. I’ll contact you ‘in person’ upon your requests and for as long as it takes to successfully complete your enlightening journey.”

Aphrodite collected her thoughts for a few seconds before she said, “Because I am appearing before you and speaking with you in human form, I am apt to adopt human emotions and become influenced, although temporarily, by human behaviors and characteristics. In other words, you, as an imperfect mortal being, may prompt me to say things and perhaps do some things, at times, that I, as your guardian angel, wouldn’t normally say or do. And, on account of my human stance and expression as Carmen Electra, I will accept many of your sarcastic and sexist-slanted remarks so long as your intentions are honorable and you are willing to learn and show personal growth from my intermittent advice and suggestions.”

“Thank you, Venus, for allowing me some ‘human’ latitude in my face-to-face correspondence with you. After all, it was either your idea or God’s idea for you to assume the human form of a most beautiful young lady. I will promise to try to keep my chauvinistic thoughts and comments to a minimum and ‘above board’ during our future conversations. Hopefully, though, we can maintain a jovial yet meaningful and educational verbal exchange throughout the course of my quest toward enlightenment. And perhaps, among

many other of my personal shortcomings, you might even be able to help me cure my generally sexist attitude by journey's end."

"Wantsalittle, I'll give you *everything* that I've got—e-r-r—let me rephrase that before you get the wrong idea: I'll do the very best that I can to help you in every aspect of your character. As far as your sexist-minded ways, we definitely have our work cut out for us, haven't we?"

"I'm afraid so, but I *am* willing to learn!"

"That's what I wanted to hear."

"Venus, thank you, again, for your understanding and for your sincere concern for my personal growth and well being."

"With respect to your near altercation with the airport security people, do you remember what the Lord earlier told you about your being *aggressive*?"

I was red-faced, again. "Yes, I apologize for threatening the security guards a few minutes ago. I get a little hot tempered and hostile at times, as you probably know."

"You had a question with regards to how you might 'overcome your resistance to change.' Let's see if I can help you with that, okay?"

"Yes! Obviously, I'm pretty set in my ways. I got hung up with the metal detector, here at D.I.A., as I tried to board a plane to Las Vegas. I'm not accustomed to all of modern technology and to various contemporary cultural standards and ways. In many respects, my life was much simpler and easier in Camelot. How can I learn to be more flexible and willing to accept *positive* change?"

Aphrodite said, "Let's sit down in the car and discuss this topic for a few minutes."

With my cumbersome suit of armor, it took me a minute to wedge my way into the Vette. Aphrodite sat down on the passenger-side seat. She was very alluring. The goddess of love fashioned a white, satin, short-sleeve blouse, a dark-red, pleated skirt, and low-heel, white sandals. Unfortunately, however, her tight-fitting but front-bulging shirt was buttoned clear to the top!

As soon as we both got comfortable, Aphrodite said, "Walter Bagelot once wrote, 'One of the greatest pains to human nature is the pain of a new idea.' Really, Wantsalittle, change is good when people have positive images and ideas that lead to progress. Some change, an improved airport security system, for example, is

necessary if it serves to benefit or to better protect the rights and privileges of the public at large.”

The late-morning sun shined brightly through the cloudless sky. Outside the car, the temperature was about ninety degrees. We put the windows down as soon as we got into the Vette, but it was still getting too warm in the car. My picturesque guardian angel exclaimed, “God, it’s getting hot in here!” She quickly unfastened the top three buttons on her sweat-dampened blouse and squirmed around, from side to side, on the car seat for a few seconds. These maneuvers allowed me a glimpse of her high-riding cleavage, which was enticingly presented to me from over the top of her light-red, low-cut, French-lace, push-up bra.

I had a feeling that Aphrodite was going to be long-winded with her suggestions. She probably would have to take several deep breaths of air throughout her upcoming food-for-thought message. Although I really hated to, under the favorable peeking conditions, I started the engine, put the windows up, and turned on the air-conditioner. Then I flipped the switch on the blower to full blast.

“I want you to read part of a good story,” Aphrodite said, “of two men who overcame a greater resistance to positive change.”

God’s also-cerebral assistant handed me a sheet of paper. A section of a movie script was typed on the page. “What I’m about to share with you is an excerpt from a scene in a popular American film, *The Outlaw Josey Wales*. Clint Eastwood played Josey Wales, and the late Clint Sampson had the part of Ten Bears, a wise but angry Comanche Indian Chief.”

“Great! But how did you know what question I wanted to ask? Do you make it a habit to carry portions of movie scripts around with you?”

“Give me a little credit, will you? God gave me a clairvoyant mind. I can see into the future. I knew, beforehand, what you were going to ask me.”

By now, the temperature in the car had dropped to a cozy seventy degrees. While re-buttoning her blouse, Aphrodite said, “Wantsalittle, I hope that you’ve enjoyed ‘the view’ for the past minute or so. You seem to have a constant fixation with my *chest!*”

“Yeah, but it seems to me that *you* have a tendency to expose a plentiful portion of your fine and full mammary glands. I don’t

know whether or not that you're being generous or simply teasing me or what?"

Aphrodite chuckled and said, "Well, I admit that I *am* teasing you a little. I just thought that my more-revealing attire might help to keep our meetings and conversations on the lighter side and make our meaningful conferences a little more fun for you. Tell me something, Wantsalittle. Could you ever become interested in a woman who wasn't so well endowed?"

"Sure! Marilotta Light isn't that 'big,' as you must already know. But I haven't been able to get *her* off my mind. In fact, I'd seriously consider falling in love and marrying Marilotta, or somebody very much like her. For many guys, bigger boobs just give a female a little *extra* physical appeal. But that part, or any other specific part of a woman's anatomy, is not all that important to me. A lady is beautiful by what is in her *heart*, and that is what counts in any meaningful relationship!"

"I'd like to believe all of what you just said. Really, though, with respect to young and buxom women, I don't think there is *any* hope for you. Perhaps, time will tell!" We both chuckled. Then Aphrodite said, "Now, Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife, please take the time to read the brief excerpt from the movie script."

The script read:

Josey Wales: *You'll be Ten Bears?*

Ten Bears: *I am Ten Bears.*

Josey Wales: *I'm Josey Wales. I came here to die with ya or to live with ya. Dying ain't so hard for men like you and me. It's living that's hard. Governments don't live together; people live together. With governments, you don't always get a fair word or a fair fight. Well, I've come here to give ya either one or get either one from ya. The sign of the Comanche—that will be on our lodge; that's my word of life.*

Ten Bears: *And your word of death?*

Josey Wales: *It's here in my pistols, there in your rifles. I'm just giving you life, and you're giving me life. And I'm saying that men can live together without butchering one another.*

Ten Bears: *There's iron in your words of death for all Comanche to see, and so there's iron in your words of life. No signed paper can hold the iron. It must come from men. The words of Ten Bears carries the same iron of life and death. It is good that warriors such as we meet in the struggle of life or death—it shall be LIFE!*

When I handed the script back to Aphrodite, she said, “This is a classic example of two great men, each representing different cultures, who found a way to accept new circumstances and benefit from their changing environments.”

The goddess of love stopped to take a deep breath. I turned the air conditioner down a couple of notches, hoping that she might get a little overheated, again, during her rather exhausting dissertation. Then she continued, “Benjamin ‘Ben’ Franklin hit it right on the mark when he stated, ‘We must all hang together or assuredly we will all hang separately.’”

“Yeah, but how does the Josey Wales’ and Ten Bears’ story pertain to *me*?”

Aphrodite paused to take an even deeper breath. But to my dismay, she had left her blouse fully buttoned. Then she concluded, “It’s high time that civilized societies, governments, and all of humankind overcome their resistance to positive change. People must begin to respect, tolerate, and love one another, individually and collectively, and lay down their arms and prejudices! Wantsalittle, are you on the same page with me here?”

I tried to quickly respond to Aphrodite’s question. But my mouth was wide open at the time; I was right in the middle of the last one of four, back-to-back, big YAWNS! As soon as I was able to get my mouth closed, I replied, “Yes! And I’ll try to do my part!”

“I’m glad to hear that. Say, you look like you’re about to fall asleep. I hope that you’re not getting bored with my important message! Are you?”

“No! No!” I exclaimed, with my eyes now wide open and my jaws now clamped shut, following my yawns.

“Wantsalittle, you have confessed that you have had overly aggressive tendencies. Something tells me that you’re in for a tough battle with that particular personal demon.”

“Yes, but with your help, I think that I can overcome my bad temper and aggressive ways. Venus, would you like to add anything more on the topic of ‘accepting positive change’?”

“Here is one last thing: I want you to remember that as you think with the attitude of accepting positive change, you will become a part of progress, accordingly. Try to think about how you’ll overcome *your* resistance to positive change.”

Aphrodite left just as suddenly as she had appeared. In a way, I was kind of glad to see her leave, for now. I said to myself, “What a sermon! When my guardian angel gets going, you can’t shut her up! I think that she must’ve got up on the wrong side of the bed this morning. Why is she taking her problems with some of the rest of the world out on me? Besides, Aphrodite could’ve summed up much of what she had to say in one figurative sentence: *As most people on earth constantly try to screw one another, some mutants will be born!* Anyway, I sure hope that she is in a better mood the next time that I call on her!”

The time had come for me to go on with my plans for the day, which included traveling to Las Vegas, Nevada. I quickly programmed the time-travel module and pushed the green *Go* button. I didn’t expect what happened next.

On my way to “Glitter Gulch,” the outlaw Josey Wales held me up! Here’s how I ended up playing “Cowboys and Indians”:

The Vette and I energized out in the middle of nowhere, right next to an old trail marker that read “Blood Butte straight ahead.” I was surrounded by lots of cactus, a few rocks, and some shrubs. And I saw some wildlife. A prairie rattler slithered across the trail in front of the car. I noticed a couple of lizards. They were slithering around in the desert sand. Then I looked up and gazed at a vulture, which was hovering just above me. The rapacious bird fluttered his wings when he looked down on me; the vulture probably hoped that I would end up being his next prey. Also, I saw several scorpions. The ugly little critters were crawling all over the ground, snacking on ants.

I said, "What happened here? I know that Las Vegas is out in the desert, but something isn't right!"

I looked down at the computer module. The dial read "Blood Butte—one mile south of Santa Rio, Texas; July 28, 1866; 3:30 P.M." Then I began to understand. I must have gotten in too big a hurry and forgot to type in "Las Vegas, Nevada." And I might have mistakenly typed in the wrong "date and time of day." Or some wires in the time-travel unit might have crossed. I said, "Whatever, no problem! I'll just re-enter the date, place, and time."

Before I entered the correct data into the computer module, I got out of the car to stretch my legs for a minute and to have a cigarette. I had asked Willie if I could have the rest of his carton of Tomarlbury cigarettes to take with me on my journey. I sort of got into the bad habit of smoking Tomarlbury's when I was staying in Hollywood.

As I took a drag on my just-lit cigarette, I noticed that I wasn't the only one in the vicinity who was blowing smoke. I looked off into the distance and saw smoke signals coming up from behind a hill (Blood Butte), about a half a mile away. Those little clouds of white and gray smoke made me curious. But only a wagon trail headed in that direction. I knew that the Vette didn't have enough clearance to get over the rocks and ruts in the road. I didn't know how to set the computer to travel that short distance, so I came up with a better idea.

Willie had told me, that with the main computer module in the car, it was possible to transport somebody or something through time, either TO some destination, as would normally be the case, or FROM some place in time, in the event that I would want to fetch Spirit, my talking horse, for instance. I could only do this if I knew somebody's exact location at a particular time. Then I could energize those molecules to wherever I happened to be.

I knew that Spirit always rested in the same spot in his stall every night. And because of the time difference between Texas and England, I also knew that it would be late at night in Camelot. I said, "What have I got to lose?" I keyed in what I hoped were all the appropriate buttons on the module and pressed *Go*.

As fast as my stallion could have wagged his tail, or as if Merlin were performing his sorcery magic—presto—Spirit

suddenly appeared. The horse energized right between the car and me.

“Hi, Spirit!” I said. I walked over and stroked the palomino’s long, light-brown and golden-colored snout. “Welcome to *somewhere* in Texas, USA. Would you like to take me for a little ride?”

“Master, it’s good to see you again! I’ve been wondering about you. Hop aboard. I’ll take you wherever it is that you want to go.”

I mounted up and headed on down the trail. I got about a hundred yards from the car and just around the first bend in the road. All at once, some cowpoke galloped out from behind a clump of tall sagebrush. He hollered, “Halt, partner! Where da ya think yer goin’? And why are ya dressed from head ta foot with all that strange-lookin’ tin?”

My “strange-lookin’ tin” outfit shouldn’t have looked any stranger to him than his dusty old cowboy duds appeared to me! Anyhow, I readied my lance and replied, “My name is Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife. Please state your intentions before I move to impale you!”

“Hold on, Sir—whoever ya said! I mean ya no harm! Do ya realize that yer right-smack-dab in the middle of Comanche Indian country?”

I said, “Say, I know a little bit about you. Aren’t you some kind of a famous outlaw? Don’t they call you ‘the *outlaw* Josey Wales’?”

“Yeah, some people refer ta me as ‘the *outlaw* Josey Wales,’ but I AIN’T NO OUTLAW! I’ve never stole nothin’ in my life, and I’ve never kilt nobody that didn’t need killin’. Some Union soldiers, who are searchin’ for me, tagged me with the term ‘outlaw.’ In truth, it’s they who are the real outlaws!”

Then I turned and said, “Those smoke signals up ahead—I’ll bet that the smoke is coming from Ten Bears’ Indian village.”

“How did ya know that?” Josey asked?

“Just call it a lucky guess. Have you already spoken with Ten Bears?”

Josey tucked his pistol back in his holster and got down off his gray stallion. Then he replied, “Nope, I’m on my way ta do that, now. You see, Ten Bears is angry. The white man has lied to him, ambushed his warriors, taken away his prime huntin’ grounds, and

pushed him as far as he's willin' to go. Now he wants to fight back for what's already rightfully his!"

"Aren't you afraid to go up against him alone?" I asked.

"Yer damn right I am! What's more, I ain't got no personal grudge with him. But he's holdin' a couple of honest, decent men hostage. I gotta try ta point that out and reason with him."

"Yeah, I think that I know what you're going to say to him. Why don't you let me go in your place?"

"Well—okay, but yer probably headed to yer own funeral! If you fail, ya could make it harder fer me ta deal with him later."

"I won't fail! It was good talking with you, Josey."

"Same here, Wantsalittle. Best of luck to ya with Ten Bears!" Then Josey remounted his horse and began to ride off in the other direction.

About ten minutes later, I galloped right into Ten Bears' camp. He rode out to meet me, along with about a dozen of his braves. We faced each other on horseback. Ten Bears had streaks of red and black war paint smeared all over his forehead and cheeks. He fashioned a three-feather war bonnet; one long, predominately brown eagle feather stuck up between two other grayish ones. I could tell that Ten Bears was in a foul mood and that our conference was going to be cast in a serious light. Fortunately, I remembered the words from the movie script. I just "filled in" for Josey Wales.

Near the end of our conversation, a couple of Ten Bears' scouts rode up. They had seen the Vette and read the cardboard sign, which was still taped to the door.

"This paleface roams across our land in style," one Comanche scout said to all of the other braves. Then he looked at me and asked, "Where is this place you call *Excalibur Hotel & Casino*?" I just snickered and switched my attention back to Ten Bears.

". . . It shall be LIFE!" Ten Bears perceptively exclaimed, as we neared the conclusion of our horse-facing-horse, tension-mounted meeting. Then we tossed our weapons—his lance and rifle and bow together with my lance and war club and ax—on the ground, except for his hunting knife. Ten Bears patted his pure-white stallion on the rump and rode up beside me, closing the few feet of distance that there had been between us. He sat on his horse, just off to my right. As we sat in our saddles, we looked at each other, serious but willing expressions on our faces. Then I leaned a

bit to my left, away from Ten Bears, and spat on a scorpion, which had been sunning itself on a flat rock, off to the left side of Spirit.

We used the Indian Chief's knife to slice the palms of our hands. Ten Bears made a slight cut on his right hand; I removed my right steel glove and cut into the palm of my right hand. Scarlet-red blood trickled from Ten Bears' hand, and blood oozed from the palm of my right hand. Finally, we reached out to each other and tightly clasped the palms of our freshly sliced hands, becoming "blood brothers" in the process.

Ten Bears concluded, "From now on, we will live together as good neighbors in peace!"

Once more, I leaned over and spat on the scorpion. Then, in agreement with the wise Comanche Chief, I said, "I reckon so!"

(The moral of this episode: Overcome your resistance to positive change!)

Episode Three:

**“You’ve Got to be
the Wackiest Knight from Camelot!”**

Lesson in Living:
Replacing Aggressiveness with Assertiveness

Las Vegas, Nevada; July 28, 2010; 8:40 P.M.

AFTER MY POWWOW WITH TEN BEARS, I rode my horse back to the Vette. Then I “transported” Spirit back to Camelot and adjusted the time-travel module to take me to Las Vegas, Nevada. I pressed the green *Go* button. Instantly, I arrived at the Excalibur Hotel & Casino, located on the famous “Strip” in fabulous Las Vegas.

I checked into a room. Dirty from all of the trail dust that I had picked up in Texas, I really needed to take a long shower.

After I got cleaned up, I stopped at one of the Excalibur Hotel & Casino’s dinner buffets to choke down some food. Then I headed straight for the casino.

Willie had taught me some of the basics of blackjack. I looked for a “21” table with an available seat. The casino was crowded, but it only took a few seconds to find an open spot at a “five-dollar” (minimum bet) table. The table’s maximum betting limit was a thousand dollars per hand. I quickly sat down in the far-left seat, called “third base.”

After I took off my helmet and placed it on the floor, right behind my chair, I looked around the table. The blackjack dealer had an identification badge pinned on her light-blue shirt. The tag read “Hello! My name is Whoopi.” As I handed her a fifty-dollar

bill to purchase some chips, I asked, “Are you Whoopi Goldberg, the famous comedian, actress, and co-host on ABC’s *The View*?”

“Yes, twice a week, though, I moonlight as a blackjack dealer.” She handed me ten red (\$5.00) chips and said, “The minimum bet at this table is five dollars.”

Jay Leno, former host of the *Tonight Show*, happened to be sitting next to me. In fact, after closer observation, I noticed four other high-profile TV personalities at the table. David Letterman, host of *The Late Show with David Letterman*, sat just to the right of Jay. Bill O’Reilly, host of Fox News Channel’s *The O’Reilly Factor*, sat next to David Letterman. Joy Behar, also a co-host of ABC’s *The View*, sat next to Bill O’Reilly. And Dr. Phil McGraw, host of *The Dr. Phil Show*, sat directly across the table from me at “first base.” I was very excited to be in the midst of such prominent company.

Everybody at the table placed their bets. I glanced over and noticed that Jay had several stacks of black chips and a few piles of green casino tokens (chips) lying in front of him. He had two black (\$100) chips and two green (\$25) tokens (as “tokens” are more commonly called) placed in the betting circle; the green chips were stacked on top of the black tokens. Jay’s total bet was \$250. I scooted one red chip out as my five-dollar bet.

Whoopi dealt the cards out of a little clear-plastic contraption called a “card-shoe,” which was sitting off to her far left. I was dealt an *eight* of spades and an *eight* of diamonds; both cards were face up on the table. Jay’s hand revealed a two of *clubs* and a five of *clubs*. Whoopi’s “up-card” was a four of hearts.

Jay appeared relaxed, and he was minding his own business. He puffed on some kind of a big, brownish cigarette. In a friendly gesture, I slid an ashtray toward Jay.

I said, “Sir Jay, you’re certainly welcome to share this ashtray. Where did you get that giant-size cigarette? And why is the wrapper brown, instead of white?”

Jay cackled a little. Then he asked, “Who are you? And where are you from? Haven’t you ever seen a *cigar*?”

“No! I just smoke Tomarlbury’s. What brand of cigar is that?”

“This cigar or stogie is called an ‘El Non-producto.’ I switch back and forth between El Non-productos and ‘Black Owls,’ depending on my preference at the time. As you’re decked out in

that fancy suit of armor, it looks as if you're right at home here at the Excalibur Hotel. What's your name young man?"

"Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife, but you can call me *Wantsalittle*. Indeed, the decor and atmosphere in this casino does remind me of being at home in Camelot, but that's another story. This is my first time in Las Vegas. I'm here on a vacation of sorts and to do some soul-searching."

Joy Behar abruptly turned her head toward me and said, "Mister, did I just here you say that you are here on a vacation from *Camelot*?"

I replied, "Yes! Well, I don't know if 'vacation' is the right word to describe why I'm here. This is what happened: I recently found a time-travel remote device in Camelot. I simply returned it, personally, to its original owner, Willie C. Light, who lives in Holly—"

Joy broke in, "Say, Mr. Wantalittlemore or whoever you said you are, you remind me of someone that I've seen in movies. Aren't you Spider-Man—I mean Tobey Maguire—star of the *Spider-Man* films?"

"No, but I've been told that there is a striking resemblance."

Joy replied, "If you're not Tobey Maguire, you could be his identical twin. I wish you would take off the rest of that suit of armor and let me get a better look at you. At least you had the courtesy to remove your helmet when you sat down. Your facial features, your bright-blue eyes, and your short, wavy, brown hair *do* remind me of Tobey Maguire. If you're serious about being from Camelot, and that you're here by way of some time machine, what a story I've got to tell my friends and co-hosts on *The View*. Elisabeth (Hasselbeck) and Barbara (Walters) and the rest of our crew are not going to believe it!"

With a dumfounded expression, Whoopi said, "Joy, you're not kidding. I'm looking at this guy, right now, and I *don't* believe it!"

Joy asked, "Wantalittlemore, will you come to our TV studio at ABC in New York and be a *very* special guest on our morning show?"

"My name is '*Wantsalittle*.' Maybe sometime, later, I'll take you up on your offer to appear on your TV show. First, though, I'm going on a further journey into time, a quest of sorts, to become more enlightened and noble. I want to feel *and act* like a king."

Dr. Phil suddenly stood up, raised his hands high over his head, and shouted, “Hey buddy, I have as good a sense of humor as the next person. But I think that *you* need some serious therapy. You’re a pretty good actor, young man. You’ve almost got everyone here at the table believing that you *really are* from Camelot. I think that you had better make an appointment to come and be a guest on my *Dr. Phil Show*. I would like to diagnose you and treat you for what’s obviously ailing you!”

“Whatever you say, Doc. But —”

Bill O’Reilly interrupted me and said, “Say, pal, you’ve got to make an appearance on my show, *The O’Reilly Factor*, first. The folks have got to know about you, especially if you are not a far-left-wing liberal, which I’m very much afraid that you *are!* Anyway, when you sit down across from me on the show, you’ve got to understand that no bloviating (slang for “running off at the mouth”) will be tolerated. That’s my job. And you have to remember that ‘the spin stops here,’ okay?”

“Sir Bill, what’s a ‘far-left-wing liberal’? And what in the hell does ‘bloviating’ mean? Finally, what ‘spin’ are you talking about?”

“Wantsalittle, never mind! I’ll explain all that to you on the show. I think that we’ll put you on during our daily segment called ‘the most ridiculous item of the day.’”

“Okay, but I don’t readily find anything ‘ridiculous’ about me! In a few weeks, after I finish my travels through time, I’ll call your show and accept your gracious invitation. By the way, the next time that you see Megyn Kelly and Bill Hemmer, co-anchors of *America’s Newsroom* on the Fox News Channel, please give them my best regards, okay?”

“Sure, but I would have thought that you were likely more of a fan of CNN, rather than of the Fox News Channel.”

“Sir Bill, to be honest, I haven’t had the time, so far, to watch much of either cable-news network. Recently, while I was staying with a friend of mine in Hollywood, I did get a chance to switch back and forth from Fox News to CNN on a few occasions. I must say that I really enjoyed Shepard Smith, host of the *Fox Report* and *Studio B*. And I liked what I saw of Anderson Cooper, host of *Anderson Cooper 360* on CNN.”

“What about *my* show, *The O’Reilly Factor*?”

“I’m sorry, Mr. O’Reilly. I recognized you at the blackjack table, but I haven’t yet had the opportunity of seeing your show, except for some previews that I saw from *On the Record with Greta Van Susteren*. I have heard that you—”

Suddenly, before I could complete my conversation with Bill O’Reilly, David Letterman stood up, looked toward me, and quipped, “I’ve had some most interesting guests over the years on *The Late Show with David Letterman*. But something tells me that *you* are going to move to the head of the ‘interesting’ class! I can’t wait to come up with the list of the top ten reasons why Sir Wantsalittle wants *more from life!*”

Everybody at the blackjack table roared in laughter. Then Jay Leno said. “I’m really *not* a gambler. The others at this table aren’t gamblers, either. I come out to Vegas, occasionally, to relax and to get away from my hectic working environment. Right now, many of my celebrity friends and colleagues and I are here in Vegas for the annual Talk-show Hosts’ convention. Tell me, Wantsalittle, are you married or do you have any children?”

“No, I had a girl friend some time back, but our relationship really didn’t last that long. Her name was *Lady Expectsalot*. And she *more* than lived up to her name!”

Jay chuckled and said, “Well, with those big blue eyes and that innocent facial profile, you shouldn’t have any trouble attracting the ladies.”

Whoopi interrupted and asked Jay, “With your two cards, you have a total of ‘seven.’ Do you want another card to go with your two and five of *clubs?*”

“Hit me—HIT ME HARD!” Jay eagerly exclaimed.

Then *I* reached over and—*whack—whack—whack!* I knocked Jay out with my big fat war club. Jay saw stars, but *not* of the Hollywood variety! His head hit the table, his chips scattered, and his long, thick El Non-producto folded like an accordion.

The entire butt end of the smashed, twisted stogie was crammed so deep into Jay’s mouth and throat that it could have tickled his tonsils. The lit portion of the crumpled cigar stuck out from under Jay’s bruised chin; smoldering ashes sizzled in the drool, where he had slobbered on the forest-green, felt-top table.

Apologetically, I said, “I’m sorry, Jay. Old habits are hard to break!”

I couldn't believe that I did that, especially after Aphrodite had given me a lecture about my aggressive tendencies. My hostile action was a far cry from virtuous, kinglike behavior on my part. Jay should've just picked up his "*clubs*" and crowned me!

With an obvious look of displeasure on her face, Whoopi interjected, "Hey, Sir Lancelot, or whoever you think that you are. He just wanted another card! If you can't control yourself and behave in a respectable manner, I'll have to notify the security people. Do I make myself perfectly clear?"

"Yes—I'm really very sorry! It won't happen again!" Whoopi cleaned up the mess on the blackjack table and collected herself.

Jay scooted his chair to his right a few inches to get farther away from me. He was rubbing the big knot, which had protruded from his forehead, when a cocktail waitress stopped to offer him assistance. She gave him a courtesy drink on the house. Then she put a big Band-Aid on his lumpy head wound.

Meanwhile, all of the other players all had fresh drinks and neatly stacked piles of chips in front of them. A couple of ashtrays were filled to the brim with cigar ashes and butts. Whoopi was now ready to deal to me. I still had that *pair of eights* in front of me, lying face up on the felt.

Whoopi tried to coach me. "You should always *split* a pair of eights."

I appreciated the helpful dealer's good advice. I quipped, "Okay, I'll try to SPLIT 'EM"—*W-H-A-C-K!* I had stood up in front of my spot at the table and smashed my sharp ax directly through the pair of eights, splitting both cards in the process. The head of the ax stuck in the top of the table. Cards, chips, ashes, and butts went airborne. Every plastic cup and glass on the printed-felt gaming surface got knocked over, spilling coke, beer, and a couple of mixed drinks. All in all, it was a real ugly scene!

After she pulled a couple of chips and a cigar butt out of her dark, braided hair, Whoopi threw her hands up in disgust. Then she waved a little white bar towel over her head. Whoopi exclaimed, "I give up!" Everyone at the blackjack table had big frowns on their faces.

Totally perplexed by the incident, Whoopi softly added, in a monotone voice, "And I thought that I'd seen it all."

“Excuse me,” I said, “I’ve got to go to the restroom. Whoopi, will you please watch my chips and save my seat?”

“Do you mean to say that you’re *coming back*?”

“Yeah, I’ll be back in a few minutes.”

I strolled into the men’s room. I didn’t have to pee; I simply wanted to talk with Aphrodite. I leaned back against the bathroom sink, looked up, and asked, “How can I learn to control my sometimes combative behavior and still move confidently in the direction of my dreams?”

Aphrodite energized right in front me. She said, “I mentally picked up on your *smacking* Jay Leno and on splitting that pair of eights *with your AX!* For the second time, what do you intend to do about your overly aggressive ways? You probably just ‘axed’ any chance that Jay Leno or the other TV hosts would still invite you to appear as a guest on their talk shows! Wantsalittle, I don’t know what I’m going to do with you!”

My guardian angel was really upset with me. I thought that she would be. I wasn’t too thrilled with myself, either. “Venus, this is going to be harder than I thought. Can you give me some good advice?”

“In your case, *maybe!* It’s a good thing for you that I have a good sense of humor. Anyway, sometimes people get confused between ‘aggressiveness’ and ‘assertiveness’—two distinctly different emotional conditions and behaviors. To *aggress* signifies an unprovoked attack or a first act of hostility. Wantsalittle, of all people, you should understand that! Aggressiveness is a negative emotional response. To *assert* means to declare or to act in a self-confident manner. Assertiveness is a *positive* emotional response.”

“Do you mean that, even though I’m aggressive, I might not be *assertive* enough?”

“That’s right! Many aggressive or hostile people aren’t assertive enough. Those who possess a passive and apathetic nature should place an ax dead center on their being overly timid and shy. Wantsalittle, in some ways you fall into this category. Try to assert yourself IN A NON-HOSTILE FASHION! Do something constructive. Write down your personal goals. Initiate action to achieve them. Don’t put off until tomorrow what you can get up and

do today. Get creative. Make something happen. In other words, poop or pull up your pants!”

Aphrodite paused for a moment to laugh at her last remark. Then she added, “Wantsalittle, do something with your good ideas. Victor Hugo once proclaimed, ‘Nothing in the world is so powerful as an idea whose time has come.’ Set your thoughts into motion. Turn them into inspiring products or services. Try to accomplish something that will allow you to leave your artistic mark on the world.”

“Venus, I’m going to do the best that I can to start practicing what you preach.”

“I hope that you do! Before I go, I’d like you to keep one more thing in mind: As you think and act with the attitude of assertiveness, you will become more assertive. Don’t let life pass you by—by being caught up in the traffic of ‘Someday, I’ll.’ Instead, shove your aspirations into the ‘Today, I’ll’ gear. If you do, you’ll catch up with your dreams!”

Aphrodite disappeared, and I strolled back to the blackjack table. Along the way, I picked up a foot-long piece of rope that someone, evidently, had dropped on the carpet. I handed Jay the rope. I asked him, “Would you please tie my hands behind my back?”

“You’ve got to be the wackiest knight from Camelot!” Jay exclaimed. But he gladly complied with my instructions. “I’m going to have to have you on my new television show one of these days. People all across America would get a real ‘bang’ and ‘split a gut’ over you!”

The table had been cleaned, and everything was back to normal. Jay placed his next bet. Then he helped me make a wager. Jay pushed a stack of ten red chips in my betting circle.

Whoopi glared at me. She was still a little angry after everything that I had done. Then she turned to the pit boss and said, “Checks play!” (This is an expression that a dealer often uses to inform his or her supervisor that a player has placed a larger bet.)

Whoopi dealt the next round of cards. She gave herself a nine of spades as her up-card. I was dealt an ace of spades and a jack of hearts. (Right after the initial deal, any two-card combination of a face card and an ace is called a “natural,” a “snapper,” or a

“blackjack,” which pays three chips for every two chips wagered.) I had just won seventy-five dollars for my fifty-dollar bet!

Now I beamed with joy. As my hands were still tied behind me, I was unable to otherwise react. I said, “Thanks, Sir Jay and Lady Whoopi! I think that I’m beginning to ‘see the light.’ Whatever it takes, I’m going to stop being so aggressive and redirect my wasted energy into more constructive thoughts and actions!”

(The moral of this episode: Replace your aggressive behavior with more assertive, socially acceptable actions!)

*Episode Four:***“Stick ‘em Up!”**

Lesson in Living:
Improving Your Luck

Excalibur Hotel & Casino; Las Vegas, Nevada; July 29, 2010

I DECIDED TO EXTEND MY STAY at the Excalibur Hotel & Casino for one more day. The next morning, I got cleaned up and went to the casino’s coffee shop for breakfast. After that, I headed back to the gambling area. I wanted to play some of the other casino games.

“Look at all of these slot machines,” I said. “The casino has thousands of them—one long row after another. Practically any direction that I turn, I see more alluring ‘slots’ staring me in the face. I wonder just how often people hit the jackpot on one of these things?”

I still had about a hundred dollars in gambling money left over from my previous day’s blackjack session. That wouldn’t have gone very far if I started out playing “five-dollar” or even “dollar” slot machines.

Before I left Hollywood, Willie C. Light had advised me to take fifty or sixty dollars and try my luck on “quarter” slots. Furthermore, Willie said, “Count your money after you’ve played the quarter slots. If you have won enough quarters to be able to play the dollar slots on ‘house’ money, over and above your original gambling stake, it might be worth moving up to ‘half-dollar’ or ‘dollar’ machines.” Willie also pointed out that I could have just as much fun playing for smaller amounts and that “winning is winning.” Finally, Willie told me, “It feels good to hit any kind of a

jackpot, regardless of whether you're playing for 'nickels' or for 'dollars.'"

Across the way, I saw a bank (several slots of the same monetary denomination hooked to a common or "progressive" giant jackpot) of quarter machines against the wall. A sign that hung from the ceiling, just above the ten or twelve machines, read "QUARTER MANIA." Flashing red lights on a black, rectangular, ticker-tape device, under the sign, read "PROGRESSIVE JACKPOT NOW AT \$4,691.87!"

When I walked over to the bank of machines, other players occupied all of them. I said, "Say! These must be pretty 'loose' machines, considering that so many people are crowded all around them. I'll just wait for someone to leave."

Within a couple of minutes, some guy got up and wandered off; he hadn't had any luck. Then an attractive "change" girl walked up to me. She was scantily outfitted in a leaf-green, deep-V-necked, pullover dress. And she had a saucer-size, shield-shaped, brass buckle on her wide black belt—a real medieval costume.

The change girl said, a sharp and demanding tone in her voice, "Hey, Lancelot—or whoever you're made up to be—where's your helmet?"

"My helmet is up in my room. Would you like for me to go up and get it?"

"No, that won't be necessary. What's your name, Mr.?"

"Sir Wantsalittle—and yours?"

The pretty, young, casino worker started to laugh. Then she had a change of heart. With a serious voice, she asked, "Are you trying to be cute, Sir *whoever-you-really-are*?" Before I could explain, she continued, "I don't know if you should be in the casino with that full suit of armor and all. Oh well, this *is* the Excalibur Hotel. I guess you sort of fit in."

After hesitating for a moment, the offensive young woman said, "Nowadays, most casinos have converted their slot machines to an automated credit-slip payment system so that players don't have to deposit coins. But because we are trying to stay in line with our medieval motif here at the Excalibur Hotel & Casino, customers still deposit coins into our slot machines, and gamblers receive coins in slot trays on winning plays. Would you like some change?"

I wasn't sure what in the hell she was talking about, but I replied, nonetheless, "Yes! I'd like a roll of quarters, please."

For the change girl, it was a good thing that Aphrodite had just spoken with me on the subject of "aggressiveness." After she made those rude introductory remarks about "whoever you're made up to be" and about my "trying to be cute," I just wanted to reach out and yank down on her long, straight, blonde hair! Instead, I kept my cool and simply handed her a twenty-dollar bill. She gave me a full roll of quarters, a five-dollar bill, and five one-dollar bills.

"How come you didn't just give me a roll of quarters and a ten-dollar bill?" I asked.

The attractive little lady stared at me and replied, "I thought you might want to give me a 'little something' for my taking the time to give you change—you know, a dollar or two for my *tip!*"

"Oh! Well, if you hadn't insulted me, perhaps I—"

"Never mind," she said, now interrupting me in addition to her earlier tactless comments. "I had a hunch you might be a tightwad!"

"Listen here—" I stopped myself in the middle of my next comment. It was too late for me to reply. She had scampered off into the narrow, crowded aisle.

Unaffected by my brief exchange of words with the casino worker, I bent over to pull out the short-legged, dark-walnut-stained, wooden stool in front of the still-vacated quarter slot. A heavy-set woman, who looked to be in her late sixties, had been sitting on the next stool down, just to the right of where I was about to sit. She turned her head in my direction and looked up at me with a smug sneer. Then the elderly woman scooted her stool to her left, a little, just far enough to prevent me from sitting down. Right after that, she slipped three quarters into the "Wild Cherries" machine that *I* was just about to play.

"Excuse me! Is this seat taken?" I asked, as I pointed at the vacated stool, which was supposedly available to the next person who wanted to sit down.

"No! As you can easily see, Sir, the seat is not currently occupied. I moved over, between the two machines, because I want to play two adjacent slots at the same time."

I reminded her, “A little note, taped right here over the monitor, reads ‘Please play only one machine at a time when crowded conditions exist! Thank you for your courtesy!’”

The woman yelled, “All right! But I’m sure going to be mad if you sit down here and hit the jackpot right away!” She pulled the handle, which spun the reels for her last turn on *my* machine. She didn’t win anything. Reluctantly, the greedy woman scooted her stool over, back in front of *her* machine.

I sat down and smacked my paper-wrapped roll of coins against the front lip of the stainless-steel slot tray; the forty silver-plated quarters clashed and clanged, sending out a loud metallic sound, as the coins dropped, sequentially, and splattered all along the bottom of the metal tray.

A computerized message on the monitor read “Please Deposit from One to Three Coins.” I didn’t realize that I couldn’t win the progressive jackpot, now at \$4,905.75, unless I put in all three quarters before I pulled the handle. So I conservatively dropped a single quarter in the slot and pulled down on the upright handle. When the wheels stopped turning, the monitor showed “triple bar—triple bar—triple bar.”

I read the payout schedule below the monitor. With one coin played, three “triple bars” paid eighty coins—twenty dollars for a twenty-five-cent deposit. “This could become addictive,” I whispered under my breath.

Then the old lady to my right scowled at me, again, and said, “Why did you play ‘short’? You just cost yourself forty bucks! Always ‘load’ the machine! And when you get tired of pulling that awkward handle, you can simply press that little white button that says ‘Spin.’”

“Madam, I’m trying to have a good time here and mind my own business. I highly suggest that you just relax, sit back, and do the same!” She twisted her long neck back in a straight-ahead position and faced the screen on her own slot machine.

I knew that she was probably right, but I wanted to show her who was “boss.” Hastily, I deposited another *single* coin. Then I looked over at the gray-haired lady and ever so slowly *pulled the handle*. The reels whirred.—I continued to stare at the old woman. Suddenly, the wheels stopped. The white light on the top of my machine brightly flashed, and I heard a deafening ringing sound.

When I looked at the monitor, I saw three red “Wild Cherries” lined up on the center pay-line.

“Wow! I really did it! I finally hit the jackpot!” I screamed out, jumping for joy.

“Sir—whoever you might be—look again!” the annoying lady proclaimed. “You idiot! Because you only played *one* coin, you didn’t hit the progressive jackpot. That’s what you get for trying to spite me! Let’s see here. You won 2,000 coins or just \$500, instead of the almost \$5,000 you would’ve won had you played all three quarters! Damn, I had a hunch that machine would pay off big. I would’ve still been playing it, and I would’ve had it loaded up with all three coins played, if it weren’t for your butting in a few moments ago. Why don’t you go back to Camelot or wherever you’re from and give *Merlin* some grief? You’ve been a real curse to me, young man!”

What could I have said? “Damn the luck!” I exclaimed. She was absolutely right. Nonetheless, I was still pretty happy with the fact that I’d just won \$500. My slot tub was filled with quarters. The slot attendant came over and gave me \$250 cash to go along with 1,000 coins that dropped into the slot tub. I filled up four large coin cups, which were stacked up on the ledge between the machines. Then I headed to the “Cashier’s Window” to convert the quarters into dollar tokens.

The time had come for me to graduate to the dollar slots. I looked around for a few minutes. Then I found a “Blazing-7s” machine that caught my eye. It wasn’t a progressive machine, but lining up three blazing-red 7s on the center pay-line would’ve paid me \$1,000, not bad for what could be just a three-dollar investment.

I had learned my lesson about “playing short.” From that point on, I decided to load the machine before each pull of the handle, depending on whether or not a slot required three coins or five silver tokens to win the full jackpot.

About twenty minutes after I began playing the Blazing-7s machine and a few other dollar slots around the gambling hall, I learned another valuable lesson. Under my breath, I said, “I guess that it isn’t likely that I’m going to walk away a winner from every machine that I play. And it’s amazing how fast my money can go when I play three or more tokens at a time.”

I played several different dollar machines in less than half an hour. I didn't have any measurable luck. Sure, I got teased a little, winning "even money" a few times and a handful of dollars on two or three other plays. But my previous winnings rapidly evaporated.

Down to my last six bucks, I slipped three silver tokens into a "Magnificent-7s," three-coin, dollar machine. Catching three blue 7s across the center pay-line would've awarded me \$2,500. I pulled the handle on the "one-arm bandit." The slot reels spun; the computerized machine bellowed a promising melody. In a few seconds, the slot reels came to an abrupt stop. Three different symbols appeared on the pay-line: blue 7—bar—triple bar. A message on the machine's monitor read "Better Luck Next Time—Please Deposit from One to Three Coins." It just as well have read "*Stick 'em Up!*"

Frustrated and obviously upset with the unyielding, stingy, slot machine, I shouted, "Drats! This long losing streak is really depressing me. Venus, do you have an elixir that might improve my luck?"

My guardian angel appeared and sat down on a little slot stool, which was vacant and located just off to my left. She was dressed in the same kind of outfit as the bitchy little change girl. She looked very provocative in her dainty little Excalibur uniform.

With a wry smile on her pretty little face, Carmen—e-r-r—Aphrodite said, "Wantsalittle, it looks as though you could use some better luck. Now, I can't help you to win the jackpot on slot machines. These devices and other forms of gambling are simply games of chance. And you should realize that the 'house' has a considerable advantage. In this case, the casino owner is in business to make a handsome profit. I'm only here to give you some psychological tips that might improve your attitude; therefore, perhaps your luck will improve, in general."

"How is it, Venus, that one person can be luckier than another?"

"Largely, it's a matter of identifying with and allowing yourself to benefit from the universal laws of infinite love, infinite supply, and infinite abundance. In other words, you *are* what you *think!*"

“Some of your words are going over my head. Do you mean that if I *think* about ‘prosperity,’ for instance, that I’ll be more prosperous?”

“That’s the general idea. And here’s something that goes along with that notion: Jesus, Buddha, Mohammed, and other religious prophets taught that people should count their blessings. *You should stop to think about just how lucky you already are or just how much good fortune you already have.* How’s your physical and mental health, overall? Do you have a supportive and loving family? Are you fortunate enough to have caring and endearing friends? If you concentrate on what you HAVE, rather than on what you don’t have, you’re more likely to get more of what you want!”

“I don’t have any family, and I have very few close friends.”

“Wantsalittle, I think that you know what I mean. One day, you will likely settle down and start a family of your own. And as you change your ways, you will attract new friends, wherever you happen to be. Now let’s get back on the subject of ‘luck.’ Oliver Goldsmith wrote, ‘The fortunate circumstances of our lives are generally found, at last, to be of our own producing.’ If you like to gamble, you might improve the odds of ‘Lady Luck’ being on your side if you REALLY BELIEVE that you’re a lucky person and if you just know that prosperity and good fortune are coming your way.”

“Other than gambling, could my prosperity consciousness bring me good luck in other regards?”

“Good luck takes the shape of many faces. Sometimes, you may be focused on having good luck in one specific area—winning the lotto or hitting the jackpot on a slot machine, for example. Whether or not you actually win at these games, your mental energy, directed toward being lucky, may result in your having even better luck bestowed upon you from more significant and surprising sources.”

Right before Aphrodite left, she said, “Wantsalittle, as you think with the attitude of being lucky or fortunate, you may experience good luck or good fortune. Dare to prosper. Think about what your good luck images will be today!”

My guardian angel’s message uplifted my general attitude. She made me feel grateful for the things that I already had going for me

in my life. Then, thinking that I was already a ‘winner,’ I deposited my last three dollars in that same Magnificent-7s slot machine and pulled the handle. When the reels came to rest, *three blue 7s* were lined up across the center pay-line. Lights flashed, and a loud buzzer went off. I sprang off the stool, raised my hands high, and leaped for joy. This one-arm bandit didn’t get off with my cash. I had just won \$2,500!

Dozens of bystanders looked on as the slot tub overflowed with silver dollars. With a wide grin across my face, I blurted out, “It really helps to *expect* the unexpected!”

(The moral of this episode: You may already be luckier than you think! If you want to improve your luck, try to imagine yourself as already being successful in as many ways as you possibly can!)

Episode Five:

Reminiscent of “Eddie the Eagle”

Lesson in Living:
Decision Making

Nagano, Japan; February 6, 1998

AFTER I HAD HIT THE JACKPOT at the Excalibur Hotel & Casino, I headed for Nagano, Japan, site of the 1998 Winter Olympic Games. I had watched some reruns of those particular Olympic games while I was staying at Willie’s. Japan was one of the countries that I had planned to visit on my journey.

When I arrived in Nagano, I registered in a hotel and went directly to my room. I was mentally exhausted from my various gambling ordeals and from all of the action, in general, in the hectic, fast-paced environment of Las Vegas, Nevada. Nonetheless, I had a lot of fun in Glitter Gulch, and I learned a lot from my enlightening adventures on the famous Las Vegas Strip. My first night in Nagano wasn’t so eventful. Room Service delivered my evening meal. After dinner, I took a fifteen-minute hot shower and got a good night’s sleep.

The next day, I noticed a calendar on the wall. The calendar showed a big black circle scribbled around the date of February 7th, the first day of athletic competition for the 1998 Winter Olympic Games.

I sat at a cluttered desk in my spacious hotel room, trying to *decide* what to do next. I had thought about entering the Olympics in the ski-jumping competition.

Several books were scattered across the desk. The titles included: *Book of Knowledge*, *More Research*, *Webster’s New*

Dictionary, and *Roget's Pocket Thesaurus*. In addition, two piles of loose papers were piled up on a balance scale; each stack weighted down opposite ends of the scale. The top page of one pile read "Pros" and the top page of the other stack read "Cons."

"I've got a hard decision to make," I said to myself, "and I'm afraid of making the wrong decision." Then I raised my head and asked, "Venus, what elements should be considered in a decision-making process?"

Immediately, my guardian angel appeared. She grabbed a light-stained, oak, captain's chair, which had been sitting on the other side of the room. She put the chair right next to me and sat down. "How are you doing today, Wantsalittle?"

"Just fine—thank you! But I could use your help. Venus, how much time is required to make an important decision?"

"Napoleon wisely said, 'Take time to deliberate, but when the time for action has arrived, stop thinking and go in.' Sometimes, you can outweigh the facts and waste valuable time in making decisions. Occasionally, you'll end up making the wrong decision, regardless of how much time you take. If you've done your best, but still make a wrong decision, even a major one, forgive yourself. Try to learn from past mistakes, and get on with your life."

"What other factors go into making a bigger decision?"

"When a more significant decision is called for, it should be well thought out and based on as much information as possible. Take enough time to gather all of the pertinent facts, and consider the circumstances. Solicit input from others. You should delay making an important decision only up to that point in time when further delay would jeopardize the quality of that decision. If you adhere to this formula, you will not be described as a reactive decision-maker, but as an assertive individual who uses good personal judgment."

"All right. I'm going to use all of these factors in making my decisions from now on. Would you like to add anything else?"

"Yes! Don't be afraid of making important decisions. If you are self-confident and visualize yourself as a good decision-maker, you will make better decisions, overall."

When Aphrodite vanished, I tried to decide whether or not to participate in the 1998 Winter Olympic Games. After I carefully weighed the pros and cons, I elected to enter the ski-jumping competition, representing the “Land of Camelot.” I put on a green-with-gold-trim ski-jumper’s jersey, which had my favorite number, #13, printed in gold on the back of the predominately green outfit.

Slowly but confidently, I climbed more than seventy steep steps to the top of the ski jump. Thousands of spectators noticed that I had a little smile on my face; those optimistic sports’ fans heartily cheered for me. Some onlookers, however, doubted my wisdom; those more realistic-minded souls knew that my inexperience in ski jumping and my full suit of armor would weigh heavily against my chances for success. One observer said, “This guy is crazy. He reminds me of Eddie ‘the Eagle’ Edwards, Great Britain’s legendary but nutty Olympic ski jumper.”

Just before I started to ski down the long ramp that led to free flight, I confidently stated, “I’ve made a decision. I’m going to try to set both the Olympic and World records for the longest ski jump!”

Then I accelerated straight down the lengthy, abruptly sloped ramp. Up to the point of no return—the time that it had taken me to reach the end of the takeoff ramp—I think that I accumulated a lofty number of “style” points for my expert, world-class form. Immediately after I flew off the perch of the ski jump, though, I went topsy-turvy!

Just a few feet straight out from the end of the ramp, I started to fall like a rock. I was in an upside-down position throughout most of my downward flight. Most among the alarmed crowd looked up and caught a glimpse of the narrow white and blue stripes, painted diagonally, clearly visible, across the top of my skis.

Airborne for what seemed like an eternity, I suddenly rolled over and stared toward the ground; my wide-open blue eyes appeared as big as teacup saucers to many of the startled spectators, gathered in mass, below. I heard the wind whistling through the tiny ear holes in my metal helmet. The bitter taste of temporary defeat languished in the saliva on my tepid, trembling tongue. After several seconds, I rolled over again, looked skyward, and I saw one of my skis directly above me. The ski had come loose. It harmlessly spun like a pinwheel through the chilly Nagano air.

After I tumbled nearly a hundred feet and to within a few yards from the ground, I was able to somewhat upright myself and prepare for my inevitable crash landing. As I rapidly speculated about my uncertain future, I took a deep breath and conceded the valiant effort. I said, “Obviously, I made the *wrong* decision. I only hope that I live long enough to forgive myself!”

(The moral of this episode: Take the time to consider all of the pertinent facts with regard to your making an important decision. Then be prepared to live with the results of that decision. Above all, learn from your mistakes. And try to forgive yourself and go on with your life after you have made any more important bad decisions.)

Episode Six:

**Standing in Line for *One Million Years B.C.*
Was Well Worth the Wait!**

Lesson in Living:
Patience and Persistence

Hollywood, California; April 7, 1966

FORTUNATELY, I WASN'T SERIOUSLY injured in my less-than-stylish landing on the ski slope at Nagano. I sustained only a few bumps and bruises. I needed to heal, and I wanted to give my body some rest. So I journeyed to Hollywood to take in a movie. The year was 1966.

I energized in a parking lot, across the street from a theater in downtown Hollywood. I locked up the Corvette and zigged and zagged my way, afoot, across the busy Hollywood boulevard. Then I wedged myself into the middle of a block-long line, outside the front entrance of the movie theater. Hundreds of people had gathered to watch the premiere of *One Million Years B.C.*, starring vivacious Raquel Welch.

The weather was miserable. It was raining hard enough to rust my already tarnished suit of armor. But I was able to protect myself from the torrential downpour. I found shelter under my broad black umbrella, which I had grabbed, along with my war club, from behind the front seat in the car.

"B-r-r-r, it's too wet and cold to stand in line all day," I uttered to myself. "Besides, patience is not one of my virtues."

I wielded my big war club, loaded with sharp spikes, as leverage to get in line, one position ahead of some little old lady, who was leaning against her cane near the front door of the theater.

“I’m in a hurry,” I yelled, “and I’m crowding in! Is that all right with you?” The terrified, frightened, old granny was too petrified to speak.

I pondered for a moment about my apparent character flaw—my lack of patience. After I thought better of the situation, I stepped out of the line. Then I wandered across the sidewalk and stopped at the curb. I gazed skyward and asked, “How can I learn to be more patient?”

Aphrodite promptly answered the call. “Wantsalittle, I remember the scanty cave-woman garb worn by Raquel Welch in her memorable screen debut of *One Million Years B.C.* She boldly fashioned a skimpy, tan, short dress, torn half loose at both the top and the bottom—an outfit that was also alluringly advertised on various theaters’ marquees.”

“Indeed, some sexy outfit! If only the good-looking women back in Camelot had worn such apparel, maybe I wouldn’t be standing here as such a sad and lonely guy.”

“From my observation of Raquel’s sexy cave-woman attire, it appears as though *I* may have some serious competition for your immediate attention and affection,” Aphrodite said, light-heartedly, giggling, as she spat out the last several words of her interesting if not also inviting introductory remarks.

I laughed and said, “You may be right. And don’t forget about Marilotta Light! I think that I could be very happy in the company of any one or more of the three of you lovely ladies. Of course, in your case, I’m referring to the *real* Carmen Electra!” We both chuckled. Then I repeated my earlier question, “Venus, how can I learn to be more patient?”

“Do as author Sinda Jordan suggested in her great book, *Inspired By Angels: Give yourself the gift of patience. There is no need to rush the changes in your life. All is in perfect order. You have all the time you need to initiate the changes you desire. Pushing the stream creates stress, while allowing a gentle flow creates effortless movement.* And, as it says in the Bible, ‘In your patience, possess ye your souls’ (Luke 21:19).”

“My guardian angel, you’re standing in the rain. Wouldn’t you prefer to step under my umbrella?”

“Yes, I’ll have to admit it—that’s a good idea! Wantsalittle, truly noble kings, queens, and great presidents are among those who understand the importance of both patience and persistence. Calvin Coolidge, former President of the United States, once spoke about persistence: *Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan ‘press on’ has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race.*”

“Thanks, Venus! I know that I must practice being more patient, as well as being more persistent.”

“That’s right! Whenever you get in a rush, ask yourself, ‘What’s the hurry? Am I moving steadily toward my goals and dreams?’ I’ve got to leave you now, but remember this: As you think about these virtues, you will become more patient and more persistent. By the way, Wantsalittle, unless I would have made a *topless* appearance this evening, clad only in a *G-string*, I knew that I couldn’t outdo or—perhaps more appropriately stated—*outstrip* the meager costume worn by Raquel Welch. That’s why I am standing here, without make-up, in loose, black, soiled, full-length sweatpants and dirty, smelly, old sneakers, along with a heavy, long-sleeved, drab-gray sweatshirt!”

“I wondered why you looked as though you had just got out of bed and slipped on your working-out-in-the-gym garments.” We both laughed, and then Aphrodite just walked away, straight into the rainy Hollywood night.

Immediately, I wanted to practice “being patient.” I moved to the very end of the long line at the theater. A glamorous young lady walked up behind me. She wore a pure-white polar-bear fur. Under her fluffy, unbuttoned overcoat, she revealed a gorgeous, dark-purple, evening dress. The stunning gown had a plunging neckline. Accented by a white-gold necklace and a diamond-studded pendant, the elegant dress and jewelry made the already beautiful woman look sensational!

“What’s your name?” I asked.

“Raquel Welch—and yours?”

“Sir Wantsalittle—”

Before I could spurt out my surname, Raquel exclaimed, acting insulted, “Mr., whatever your name *really is*, I’ve got half a notion to reach out and slap you!” Then she calmed down a bit. “Okay, Mr., I’ll take the bait. Sir Wantsalittle *what?*”

Almost afraid to answer, I softly replied, “Sir Wantsalittle *Morefromlife!*”

“Well, okay! That’s an interesting name. I’m sorry that I got so upset with you. If I offended you, please accept my sincere apology.”

“No, I wasn’t personally offended by your justified response. Long ago, I learned to expect people’s natural reactions to my unusual name. I was a bit embarrassed, I suppose. But it happens almost every time that I introduce myself to a female, especially a woman who is as attractive as *you!* My Lady Raquel, I’m in no hurry. You can step in line, right here, in front of me.”

“Thanks, Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife, for allowing me to get in line! And thank you for your nice comment about my being ‘attractive.’ As it has turned out, I’m glad that I had the opportunity to meet you. You are a real gentleman! I’d like to know more about you—your presenting yourself to be a genuine knight and all. Perhaps, we will see each other again one day.”

As Raquel completed her comments, we had reached the ticket booth. After we entered the theater, Raquel turned toward me, winked once, and gestured as though she were tossing me a little kiss. My heart sank as Raquel strolled past the curtains, headed for her seat. I wanted to sit by her, so I tried to follow her down the aisle. However, my cumbersome, weighty suit of armor made it too difficult for me to keep up. Suddenly, the lights dimmed throughout the theater; the movie was about to begin. I had lost track of the sexy starlet for now, at least. Nonetheless, I thoroughly enjoyed, throughout the next couple of hours, Raquel’s never-really-vocal, but-always-captivating character, Loana, in the film.

(The moral of this episode: “Patience” and “persistence” are admirable personal virtues. Try to practice these psychological principles each and every day!)

Episode Seven:

“I Want My Mummy!”

Lesson in Living:
Accepting Personal Challenge

Giza, Egypt; September 3, 1997

IHATED TO LEAVE HOLLYWOOD. Talk about “learning patience”! I would have stood in line with the sensual and charming Lady Raquel by my side *for one million years!*

I next visited Giza, Egypt at the site of the historical Khufu (Cheops) pyramid. In an effort to get my mind off of Lady Raquel, I applied for temporary employment. I accepted a job that required me to wash the great Khufu pyramid, which was originally constructed during Egypt’s 4th Dynasty.

Standing 481-feet tall and covering some thirteen acres at its base, the stone monument was built for King Khufu as his tomb. The Khufu pyramid was the first of three giant pyramids built as tombs for the great Pharaohs on the plateau at Giza.

Dressed in bib overalls and a light-blue, short-sleeved work-shirt, over my silver suit of armor, I stood in a little compartment at the end of one long arm of a huge crane. The crane hoisted me to the top of the 48-stories-high structure. A hundred-gallon barrel of cleaning solution, containing ammonia mixed with water, sat just off to my right in the small compartment. Equipped with only a brick-size household sponge, I had an enormous frown on my face. I cried out, “*I want my mummy!*”

When I gathered my wits, I said to myself, “Indeed, a challenging assignment. It’s a good thing that I get paid by the *hour!*” Then I thought for a moment about the predicament that I

was in before I asked, “Venus, what more important personal challenges are in store for me?”

In less time than it took for me to ask the question, the atoms and molecules that would be my guardian angel, including her wardrobe, energized. Again, she dressed casually. Like me, Aphrodite had on a pair of bib overalls. But this time, instead of a heavy, uninspiring sweatshirt, she wore a tight-fitting, light-flesh-colored T-shirt.

To get herself in a better position to speak with me, Aphrodite had to first wedge herself between the big barrel of pyramid cleaner and me. As she twisted and turned to maneuver into a more suitable stance, she accidentally bumped into the barrel of cleaning solution. About a gallon of the clear, water-based liquid splashed all over the front of her transparent cotton T-shirt.

Speaking of a “challenge”! Aphrodite obviously wasn’t wearing a bra, and it was hard for me to remain focused on her, *above the shoulders*. And it was just as hard for me to keep a straight face, considering my direct and full view of the leaving-almost-nothing-to-the-imagination, “nice set” of circumstances. My mind had fallen into a near-spellbinding trance. The goddess of love could have hypnotized me in a “Camelot second” with one more side-to-side motion or up-and-down movement of her fascinating twin peaks!

Enthusiastically, Aphrodite said, “Hello, Wantsalittle. It’s great to see you again!”

“Venus, it’s *greater* to see *you*, too!” I said, showing an ear-to-ear grin as I spoke.

The grandeur images that I had mentally photographed and cherished, and that I was *still* seizing and savoring, at every opportunity and for each priceless second, caused my legs to buckle. I stumbled, for an instant, and nearly lost my balance, which likely would have sent me over the edge of the scaffold.

Aphrodite chuckled, momentarily, at my near mishap, then she said, “Your question for me should not have been one of ‘what challenges’ are in store for you. Your question should have been: ‘*What can I do to meet such personal challenges?*’ Life would be boring and without much purpose and meaning if it weren’t for personal challenges.”

As I attempted to sneak in another, innocent, inadvertent peek or two at the front of her wet T-shirt, I said, emphatically, “My love goddess, right now, my life is anything but boring!”

I was surprised that I had been able to escape Aphrodite’s wrath, so far, with respect to my rather obvious, gawking, roaming eyes and my evil little thoughts and sarcastic comments. But, as it had previously come to bear, my guardian angel had detected and made note of *everything* that I had been visually investigating and all that I was, even then, carefully studying. Once again, she had accurately read my thoughts, down to the last pleasurable detail.

Suddenly, Aphrodite reflected a stern facial expression. She stared straight into my “baby blues” and exclaimed, “I am NOT your ‘love goddess.’ I am, or at least I *was*, the ‘goddess of love.’ Wantsalittle, watch yourself! I know exactly what you were referring to with that ‘my life is anything but boring’ remark, and it’s in bad taste! Today, I’m not the slightest bit amused by your sexist thoughts or by your rambunctious and wandering eyes. If you don’t clean up your act, I may make my future appearances before you as *Medusa*, rather than as Carmen Electra. Do you know about ‘Medusa,’ Wantsalittle?”

“Yeah, I remember the story of the Gorgon Medusa. As I recall, Medusa was a hideous and snaky monster—Mistress of the Beasts.”

“Yes, you’re right. Medusa was a serpent goddess, an ancient symbol of female power. Her scaly serpentine body with a rattlesnake’s tail and her forbidden grotesque face, surrounded by a halo of snakes, instead of hair—Medusa was a horrid sight to behold. As big around as silver dollars, one glance at Medusa’s glowing green eyes would instantly turn any living creature into stone.”

“God must have been in some kind of a foul mood when He, or She, created Medusa!”

“In truth, Wantsalittle, Medusa, at first, was a beautiful priestess, assigned to me at Mount Olympus. In Greek Mythology, she was originally a symbol of wisdom.”

“Venus, if my memory serves me correctly, Medusa was seduced by Poseidon, the brother of Zeus, in Athena’s temple on Mount Olympus. Then, in a jealous rage, Athena, the first child of Zeus and the goddess of heroic endeavor, punished Medusa by

transforming her into the abhorrent and repulsive creature that you previously described. Then Athena banished Medusa to the edge of the underworld.”

“That’s precisely what happened. And, after Medusa was sentenced to serve under Hades in the underworld, Athena assumed the role of the goddess of wisdom. Now, Wantsalittle, how would you like to meet the Gorgon Medusa, personally, and stand face to face with her as we speak? Am I getting my point across?”

“Yeah, Your message is coming across loud and clear!” I fully deserved to catch hell from Aphrodite for my shameful thoughts and somewhat indecent behavior. Nevertheless, the eye-popping frontal shots of Aphrodite’s wet T-shirt were worth each and every word of her harsh criticism and not-so-subtle threats!

My guardian angel and I glanced down at the shiny red Vette; the car appeared to be about an inch long. Then Aphrodite turned toward me. She said, “You know, a lot of interesting world history took place some 5,000 years ago in this exact location. Did you know, for instance, that approximately 6 million limestone blocks, weighing over 15 million tons, went into the construction of these three huge Egyptian pyramids and some surrounding underground tombs?”

“That’s incredible!”

“Yes! And it took thousands of stonemasons and tens of thousands of quarry workers nearly seventy years to complete this architectural miracle. The ancient Egyptians not only accepted this challenging task, but they magnificently accomplished their lofty goals, as you can see for yourself.”

I just stood on the scaffold and kept quiet for a few moments. I was in awe of the majestic Egyptian pyramids and in awe of *Aphrodite’s* stately, also pointed, unnaturally developed mounds. Then I said, “It really is an amazing testimonial as to what can be achieved when people work toward a common cause.”

Aphrodite finally offered me a slight smile. Then she said, “Theodore ‘Teddy’ Roosevelt once stated, ‘Far better is it to dare mighty things, win glorious triumphs, though checkered by defeat, than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy nor suffer much because they live in the gray twilight that knows no victory or defeat.’”

Bothered a bit by the ammonia fumes, Aphrodite sneezed a couple of times. "Goddess bless you!" I said, after each sneeze. I knew better than to try to sneak another peek at the front of her still-dampened, still-revealing T-shirt. Besides, I envisioned the look of Medusa. I would have hated for that beastly woman, even from a *back view* of her, to become a reality during any of my conversations with my guardian angel throughout my journey!

Aphrodite thanked me for saying "Goddess bless you!" Then she continued to speak about personal challenge. "Among many other outstanding statements, former President John F. Kennedy will always be remembered for throwing down this public challenge: *Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.* The world will always be ready for those who accept greater challenges and who seek worthier individual achievements."

"Venus, what can I do to challenge myself in ways that will be more beneficial to others?"

"The late Princess Diana accepted a challenge, among many others, to rid the world of land mines. Diana reflected, 'How can countries which manufacture and trade in these weapons square their consciences with such human devastation?' Princess Diana also nobly stated, 'I want to walk into a room, be it a hospice for the dying or a hospital for sick children, and feel that I am needed. I want to do, not just to be.' Wantsalittle, why don't you try to follow in the path of Princess Diana and countless other people who thrive on life-building personal challenges?"

"Okay, I'll give this some serious thought and see what I can do."

Right before Aphrodite disappeared, she said, "As you think about and accept various personal challenges, you will achieve more worthwhile individual goals and dreams. Constantly challenge yourself to be the best that you can be!"

Angola, Africa; September 4, 1997

I wanted to continue the late Princess Diana's life-saving crusade to rid the world of land mines. The next day, I cautiously parked the Corvette beside a minefield in Angola, Africa.

After I took a few minutes to survey the area, I strapped on a white hardhat over my steel helmet. And I slipped a pair of goggles on over my already pulled-down visor to better protect my eyes. I started to venture across the dangerous mine field. The sun reflected off of a bright metal object, protruding from a clump of dirt, several yards in front of me.

I firmly gripped my eight-foot-long lance and stretched the tapered instrument out in front of me, defensively. I carefully probed and poked at every dirt clod with the sharp point of the long weapon, along the way, so I wouldn't accidentally step on a land mine. I slowly advanced toward the shiny steel gadget. Finally, I walked up close to the object. But just before I reached out with the lance to examine that ominous, threatening device, I stopped and exclaimed, "Mankind still has many bigger challenges ahead. Let's begin HERE!"

(The moral of this episode: Endeavor to dare mighty things by accepting your fair share of "personal challenges." The self-satisfaction that you will experience and feel, after you accomplish more worthwhile goals or tasks, will make such challenges well worth your efforts!)

Episode Eight:

**“Don’t Blink or You Might Get
My Sweat in Your Eye!”**

Lesson in Living:
Working Hard to Get What You Want

Amity Island, somewhere off the coast of Maine; July 10, 1975

I FELT A DEEP SENSE OF SELF-FULFILLMENT from my effort to help the people in Angola. From Africa, I decided to go back in time to Amity Island in 1975.

Shortly after my arrival, I picked up a local newspaper and browsed through the classifieds. I focused on one particular ad that read “Help Wanted: Commercial Fisherman.” Under that, the ad read “HARD WORK / RISKY BUSINESS / BIG BUCKS!”

I said, “This is going to be a piece of cake!”

The next morning, I rented a Party Barge pontoon boat. Like everyone else in the area, I wanted to go trolling for “*Jaws*.”

I propelled my way nearly a mile out into the rough waves of the Atlantic Ocean. Then, through a pair of binoculars, I looked back toward shore. I could see the Corvette; it was parked next to a sign, which was stuck in the sand on the beach. The public notice posted on Amity Island read “Shark Danger / Beaches Closed.” Just up the shoreline from the warning sign, I saw the broken down remains of what had been a long wooden boat dock.

A folded-up black metal chair was leaning against a shark cage on the deck of the pontoon boat. I set up the shark cage, unfolded the chair, and placed it in the center of the cage.

I was equipped with a heavy, steel-link chain, which I used for fishing line. After I baited my hook and tossed the chain out of the

back of the boat, I anchored the butt end of my suit of armor down on the small chair.

The door of the steel shark cage was swung wide open. Just inside and off to one side of the cage, a stainless-steel pony keg was marked “Zapmeister Brew / Gives you a real *BUZZ!*” Four more pony kegs were roped together; those barrels stood up near the bow of the boat. The extra kegs, in addition to preventing me from dying of thirst, could have served, after they were emptied, to keep Jaws, once hooked, near the surface of the ocean.

I had placed a portable TV on top of the pony keg that sat in the shark cage. The TV was wired to the boat’s on-board generator. I cozily leaned back on the chair, a pewter beer stein in one hand, a chain-link fishing line in the other. I smoked a Tomarlbury and watched a baseball game on TV. I was cool, calm, and ready to do battle with whatever grabbed the bait.

A couple of hours passed without my getting so much as a nibble. After I had chugged down too many beers, I almost fell asleep. Then I gathered my senses and belched out, “No (*belch*) sweat! Easy (*belch*) job and big bucks (*belch*) to boot! Still, I (*belch*) wonder why Chief Brody and those (*belch*) two guys on the dock (*belch*) told me to bring all this heavy duty (*belch*) equipment?” (Author’s note: The late Roy Scheider played the part of Police Chief Martin Brody in the 1975 blockbuster film *Jaws*.)

My chain-link fishing line dropped almost straight down for several yards behind the boat. It was hooked to a big black ball, serving as a sinker. A thinner chain-link line, which I used for a leader, trailed a few feet behind the ball and the heavier steel line. For bait, I attached a big, juicy, raw roast to a hook-shaped boat anchor.

Jaws swam by but he wasn’t fooled. The fussy, man-eating shark turned his nose away from the blood-dripping roast. However, a less finicky, sharp-toothed, moray eel clamped down on the steel leader, sending an electric current all the way through the chain-link line and through every metal object onboard the all-metal boat.

Sparks flew. Immediately, I was thrown up against the back wall of the steel shark cage. Both my arms and legs were splayed against the bars; my feet were lifted several inches off the ground. The power surge blew out the TV screen, knocked the chair over,

and caused me to spill most of my beer. My Tomarlbury cigarette ended up somewhere on the high sea.

As I sweated drops the size of water balloons, and with an expression of complete shock, I shouted, “Why do I have to work so hard to get what I want?”

Suddenly, Jessica—I mean—God appeared. “It’s great to see You again, my Lord.”

“Thanks, it’s good to see you again, too.”

God was thoroughly prepared for the occasion. She had slipped a heavy pair of knee-high *rubber* waders over Her white sneakers and blue jeans. The Lord said, “Sometimes it pays to insulate yourself from external stimuli!”

“Yeah! I just received the *shock* of my life!”

“Wantsalittle, this ‘fishing job’ isn’t exactly the ‘piece of cake’ that you had envisioned it to be. Perhaps I can offer you some valuable food for thought. A.H. Smith, former president of the New York Central Railroad, once said of his industry, ‘A railroad is 95% men and 5% iron.’ Regardless of what it is that you want most in life, chances are that you’ll have to work very hard to get it.”

“I’m beginning to see what You mean!”

“To be truly happy or successful in life, you must love or really enjoy, at least, what it is that you do for a living or for some form of artistic expression. Take pride in your work. Focus on performance and accomplishment. Accept responsibility and hold yourself accountable for your words and actions.”

God paused for a moment and glared at me. “And drinking and smoking while you’re on the job is a definite ‘NO—NO!’”

“You’re right! I’m sorry. What else can You tell me about working hard to get what I want?”

“Wantsalittle, when it comes to work-related tasks, if you don’t want to do something, chances are that you won’t do it right. With respect to choosing a suitable career, capitalize on your personal vocational interests and your better individual talents and abilities. *Do what you love*, and whatever that may be won’t seem like actual work in the process. Try to determine what it is that you would love to do and what it is that you would be willing to work extra hard to get. That’s all that I have time to say for now. I hope to catch up with you later!”

I finally caught Jaws about an hour after the Lord had left. I towed the huge shark back to Amity Island. When I arrived on the boat dock, Jaws was still alive and very active! With the help of about a dozen other fishermen, I let the trophy-size fish loose in a swimming pool at a local island resort.

Later that day, I climbed aboard the Great White shark. I threw a lasso around Jaws' broad neck and tightly pulled on the rope. As if I were a rodeo star trying to hold the reins on a bucking bronco, I tried to ride the fully alert and highly energetic shark. We circled the pool in a clockwise direction. Jaws' head and tail continuously arched out of the water. I worked extra hard to maintain my balance, scooting from side to side, then back and forth, while I straddled the back of the swift-swimming, rambunctious beast.

Enraged by his captivity, the furious fish leaped and darted throughout countless laps around the oval pond. The 26-foot-long, two-ton giant romped and endlessly tried to buck me off his back.

I was confident but a little apprehensive about the giant fish. Sporadically, Jaws' monstrous mouth swung wide open, exposing his razor-sharp, arrowhead-size teeth. Once, the big shark tried his best to bite me, but then he blinked. All he got was my sweat in his eye! Jaws' evil eyes rolled, upward, and coldly stared at me. The shark's flat-black eyes, like a pair of hockey pucks turned on end, gazed straight into my own widening eyes.

My left-hand steel glove was tightly tucked under the lasso on the back of Jaws' neck. The Great White shark continued to try to buck me off, but I think the gradually tiring fish knew that it was only a matter of time before I tamed him. As I slid my left hand farther ahead on the lasso and squeezed the taught rope, even tighter than before, I said, "Working hard to accomplish a task can also be adventuresome and stimulating to your heart and soul!"

(The moral of this episode: Regardless of what it is that you want most in life, chances are that you'll have to work very hard to get it!)

*Episode Nine:***How I Won a Game
of Beach Ball with “the Babe”**

Lesson in Living:
Relieving Tension

New York City; October 2, 1927

WHEN I LEFT AMITY ISLAND, I traveled to the site of old Yankee Stadium, located in the Bronx section of New York City. The New York Yankees faced the Camelot Knights in the seventh and final game of the 1927 World Series, and I was cordially invited to be the starting pitcher for the Knights.

We led the Yankees 1-0 in the bottom of the ninth inning, but New York had the bases loaded with two outs. I was still on the mound, pitching for the Knights, after I had held the “Bronx Bombers” scoreless through the first eight innings. George Herman “Babe” Ruth, already a living legend, was up to bat. The plate umpire’s count was at three balls and two strikes.

Dressed in my full suit of armor, under my green and gold Knights’ jersey, #13, I took off both of my steel gloves and rubbed the baseball between all ten fingers on my sweat-soaked bare hands. Then I put the gloves back on and placed my right steel boot directly over the center of the pitcher’s rubber. I thought that I was ready to throw my next pitch to “the Bambino.” But at the last second, my arm muscles tensed up, and I decided to step back off the rubber. I tried to relax in front of some 70,000 Yankees’ fans. Everyone in the stadium was on his and her feet; they loudly screamed and cheered for “the Babe” to hit yet another game-winning home run.

Ruth had “SULTAN OF SWAT” boldly sewn on the back of his Yankees’ home-field uniform, and his famous #3 was clearly visible between his broad, muscular shoulders. The Babe had to wait for me as I tried my best to collect myself. But I just stood on the second-base side of the pitcher’s mound; I was nervously shaking in my dusty steel boots. To get looser, Ruth smoothly stroked through several practice swings. He effortlessly waved his long 38-ounce bat, back and forth, repeatedly. Suddenly, the Babe paused and pointed to the center-field bleachers, as if that’s where he intended to park my next pitch.

Ruth anxiously awaited the pitch. He carefully positioned himself in the batter’s box, raking his baseball cleats into the clammy soil that surrounded home plate. When the Babe was comfortable with his stance, the left-handed slugger raised the heel of his left foot, just far enough to enable him to swivel the front part of his shoe, first to the left and then to the right, digging in as far as he could.

Meanwhile, I had returned to the pitching rubber. Once again, though, I lost my nerve and stepped back off the hill. I turned around and took a couple of steps toward second base. With my back to the plate, I reached into the rear pocket of my uniform and grabbed a bottle of tranquilizers. I choked down half a bottle of the little nerve pills.

The tranquilizers didn’t work. After a minute or so, my arm muscles remained tightly strung, like finely tuned guitar strings. Caught up in the tension of the moment, I was mentally stressed to the limit. I said to myself, “If I can throw one more strike, we’ll WIN the World Series.” I then clenched the baseball firmly with my right hand and asked, “How else can I get loose and get control over my anxiety?”

Suddenly, Aphrodite stood right beside me on the pitcher’s mound. She had read my mind and was also dressed in a Knights’ baseball uniform. But her jersey had a big blue #2 sewn on the back of it. “Venus, why are you wearing #2 on your uniform?”

“Well, the way I see it, for the purposes of either God’s or my heavenly sent conversations with you, only the Lord is deserving to be #1, so I am hereby claiming the right to wear #2. Do you have any problem with that?”

“No, absolutely not! But if ‘beauty’ had anything to do with it, on a scale from 1-10, I would issue a big #1 to *both* of you!”

“Thanks for that nice compliment, Wantsa—”

Before Aphrodite could finish her reply, the home-plate umpire hollered out, “Hey, Wantsalittle! Your team has *one* too many players on the field. Somebody has to head for the bench!”

I wheeled around and hollered back, “Okay, just give me a minute here!” Then I looked at Aphrodite and said, “The umpire and some 70,000 other people can see you standing here beside me. Did you forget to make yourself invisible to everyone except me?”

“Damn! You’re absolutely right. When I finish speaking with you, it wouldn’t be too believable for all of these people and ballplayers if I simply vanished, right before their eyes. Okay, I’ve got a plan. Nobody is warming up in the bullpen, as yet. As soon as I complete my task here, I’ll stroll out to the bullpen, which is mostly obstructed from view by the left-field bleachers, and disappear, without being noticed.”

“Yeah, that sounds like a pretty good idea. Venus, it’s a good thing that you’ve got all of that long light-brown hair of yours neatly tucked under your baseball cap! But how are you going to hide your beautiful brea—”

The goddess of love interrupted me. She said, “Don’t you dare say the ‘B’ word!” Then, with both hands, Aphrodite reached down and pulled her tucked-in Knight’s baseball shirt loose from her pants. The jersey-top draped straight down, hanging loosely, from the upper section of Aphrodite’s front torso, leaving her well-rounded figure considerably less noticeable. Aphrodite said, “Alright, Wantsalittle, that should take care of the ‘protruding posture’ problem!”

I said, “Venus, you seem to have an answer for *everything!*”

My guardian angel smiled and said, “Poet Edwin Markham wrote, ‘At the heart of the cyclone tearing the sky is a place of central calm.’ Wantsalittle, when tension has its grip on you, try to visualize yourself in a quiet and tranquil setting—some vacation spot where you generally go to relax.”

“You might be a little on the nervous side, yourself, if you were about to pitch to the great Bambino!”

“Perhaps! But some tension can be advantageous. If you’re an athlete, for instance, you may need that shot of adrenaline to better

prepare yourself for a moment of outstanding personal achievement. Your mind can only focus on one thought at a time. When your attention is vividly focused on performance, imaging the task at hand, there is no time for thoughts of fear and doubt. Sharp concentration will enable you to sustain levels of peak performance without experiencing undo stress during those special—but what might otherwise be considered—anxious moments.”

“Right now, I’m going to follow your suggestion of trying to imagine myself in a calm and peaceful setting.”

“Good idea! I’ll leave you alone now so that you can concentrate or meditate for a few moments before you pitch to Babe Ruth. Just remember this: As you put things in proper perspective, it will be easier for you to relax and achieve peak performance. And get into the habit of forming images that will help you to relieve your momentary or longer-term tension.” Aphrodite then trotted off toward the bullpen. As soon as she thought that nobody was paying any attention to her, she dispersed into thin air.

With the game and the World Series on the line, I took a few extra seconds before I pitched to Ruth. I visualized myself sitting comfortably in the saddle-shaped crevasse of a fallen log, gently holding a limp fishing line between the thumb and forefinger of my relaxed right hand. The still, aqua-blue surface of the motionless pond in front of me reflected a peaceful, serene setting somewhere off in the beautiful backwoods of nature. Then I gently tossed the bottle of tranquilizers to one side and replaced the potentially harmful pills with my now-relaxed body and my composed, focused train of thought.

As the Bambino had patiently waited, over five minutes, for me to deliver the baseball, he was more than ready for my next pitch. Ruth had smashed a Major League record of sixty homers for the Bronx Bombers in the 154-game regular season, four more round-trippers than any *team* hit collectively in 1927!

Finally, I wound up and threw the ball to the Sultan of Swat. Pitching the baseball while I wore a full suit of armor wasn’t easy! Seemingly, the ball took several seconds to arrive at home plate; the baseball arched highly through the air before it eventually dropped down near the outside corner of the plate.

Perhaps Babe Ruth was expecting my fastball. Or perhaps the ball came in “just a bit outside,” out of Ruth’s reach. Or maybe the Sultan of Swat simply got over anxious. After all, the slow-traveling blooper pitch might have looked like a big white *beach ball* to the Babe. In any case, the Bambino took a mighty swing, but badly missed. Emphatically, the umpire called, “Strike Three—you’re *OUT!*”

I jumped for joy. Our Camelot Knights had just defeated the highly favored Yankees in “The House that Ruth Built.” The catcher dropped the ball that I had used to strike Ruth out. It was left half covered with dirt, lying close to home plate, in the Babe’s vacated left-foot print.

As proud as a peacock, I started celebrating. I yelled, “I thank my guardian angel for helping me to relax. Imaging a calm and peaceful setting allowed me to perform to the best of my ability. This is truly a wonderful, kinglike feeling!”

(The moral of this episode: Whether you sharply focus on the task at hand or try to imagine yourself in a peaceful and serene setting, “imaging” can be a valuable psychological tool for reducing the degree of stress in anxiety-related circumstances!)

Episode Ten:

It Happened in Paris

Lesson in Living:
Positive Thinking

Paris, France; December 3, 1996

NEXT, I JOURNEYED TO PARIS, FRANCE. I sat on the patio outside my hotel room and admired a scenic view of the 1,056-foot-tall Eiffel Tower. I had just been lounging around all day, watching TV and enjoying my brief stay in the spectacular European capital city.

I poured the remainder of a bottle of Pinot Noir—an elegant, fruity flavored, red wine—into a clear glass. The glass was exactly *half full* of wine. I held the empty bottle in one hand and the television’s black remote control in the other hand. Then I looked at the glass of wine.

Pessimistically, I moaned and groaned and said, “This glass is half *EMPTY!* Should I call room service to order another bottle of Pinot Noir or switch the channel of my thinking?”

My guardian angel joined me on the patio. “*Bonjour, Wantsalittle! Parlais vous Francais?*”

“What did you just say?”

Aphrodite smiled and chuckled for a moment. “I said, ‘Hello, Wantsalittle! Do you speak French?’”

With an expression of bewilderment, I replied, “Are you kidding? I can barely speak *English!*”

The Greek goddess of love smiled again and asked, “Wantsalittle, what’s on your mind, today?”

Now that Aphrodite was speaking in a language that I could understand, I asked, “Could you help me with my thinking and my attitude about life, in general?”

Aphrodite began our conversation with a notable quote. She said, “Renowned author and speaker Norman Vincent Peale stated, ‘The hard facts and circumstances of life are not so important as how we perceive these conditions. . . . A glass of water is either half full or half empty, depending on how we choose to look at it.’ *Positive thinking reflects your optimistic frame of mind. It means making the most out of everyday circumstances and looking at the bright side of things. Developing a more positive mental posture will uplift your spirit and improve your outlook on life.*”

“Sometimes it’s difficult to have a positive attitude,” I said.

“You’re right. But you should constantly strive to replace your negative thoughts and emotions—fear, doubt, anger, etc.—with more positive ones—love, faith, confidence, etc. You should be prepared to capitalize on every opportunity. That is what positive thinking is all about. When you think with a positive attitude, you will act self-confidently. And, as one possible result, you can open the door to new opportunities.”

“Venus, I pledge to do my best to shape a more positive frame of mind.”

Aphrodite nodded her approval with my affirmative response. Just before she went on her merry way, she exclaimed, “*Bonne chance! Bon voyage!* Wantsalittle, that means ‘Good luck! Have a nice day!’”

“*Merci beaucoup! Au revoir!*” I hollered, in *French*, right before Aphrodite disappeared. I knew a little more French than I had previously let on. Earlier, I had just wanted my guardian angel to know, for sure, that she was a little smarter than me!

While I sat out on the patio, the unusually warm, early December, afternoon sun shined brightly down on me. I hoisted the umbrella on the patio table. The huge umbrella displayed alternating *white* and *blue* sections, perhaps symbolic of Aphrodite, who was sort of my “white knight,” and my personal dreams, which could be symbolized as “blue sky.”

Optimistically, I looked into my glass of Pinot Noir and said to myself, “I see that the glass is half *FULL!* That’s plenty to quench my momentary thirst.”

(The moral of this episode: To capitalize on every opportunity in life, you must think positively. Try to replace negative thoughts with more positive ones!)

Episode Eleven:

Gandhi Would Have Laughed at this Little Joke

Lesson in Living:
Loving Yourself

Just outside of the Taj Mahal in Agra, India; December 4, 1996

DESPITE MY RECENT SUCCESS with respect to an attitude adjustment, I realized that I had a long way to go before I achieved my dream of feeling *and acting* like a king. I desperately wanted to enhance my self-image and develop a noble character. And I was eager and showed a genuine willingness to learn.

Furthermore, I looked for self-improvement at every opportunity. Nonetheless, I still didn't like much of what I saw when I looked into my mental mirror. To become like all, but far too few, truly self-confident people, I needed to learn to *love myself*.

The next day I journeyed to Agra, India. I energized just outside of the entrance of the Taj Mahal, one of the world's most beautiful buildings. The Taj Mahal was considered to be the greatest masterpiece of Indian Mogul architecture.

I got out of the Corvette and went inside the Taj Mahal. Then I looked around the interior of the monumental edifice, which was designed to be a representation of the throne of God in paradise. I saw an elaborate double-dome structure and a white marble facade. And I was impressed by the mausoleum's interior lighting—illumination through carved-marble screens, set near the tops of the walls.

As I stopped to look at the Taj Mahal's unusual glowing illumination, I turned around, for a moment, and noticed a group of

five tourists, who were standing together, several yards behind me. They were eyeballing me from afar, and it seemed that they were more interested in *me* than with their tour of the Taj Mahal. I said to myself, “If those people are so preoccupied with me, maybe I can give them a better reason to study me.”

I put my armored arms back over my shoulders and tightly clasped my metal gloves together, behind my neck. Then I lowered my head, just a little. Now it appeared to the on-looking tourists that I was embracing *another* knight. “When you lack self-esteem,” I said to myself, echoing a cold distaste for my self-love, “it’s a lot more fun to hug someone else. How is it that one could learn to love himself or herself? What can I do to get my head turned in the right direction?”

When Aphrodite arrived, she asked, “Wantsalittle, why do have your arms and hands wrapped behind your neck? And why is your head bowed as if you were staring at something on the tile floor?”

“I’m just playing a little joke on some tourists—those people who are standing over there, in the distance, directly behind me.”

“Whatever!” Evidently, my guardian angel wasn’t amused. She just wanted to get down to business. “I’m here to discuss the matter of how you can come to love yourself. Nicholas de Chamfort wrote, ‘If you must love your neighbor as yourself, it is at least fair to love yourself as your neighbor.’ Love is at the center of the universe. It is the magic behind all of the good that you do. Love mirrors everything positive within you and reflects all divine images of your true self.”

“I realize that I must come to love *myself* before I’ll be able to love others.”

“Yes, Wantsalittle, you’re right on target. In his fabulous book, *Dancing with the Divine*, Robert Spinden said, ‘When love rules our hearts, it frees us to react to any situation with joy and peace and understanding, instead of bitterness, strife, self pity, or anger.’”

“I feel better about myself, already. What can you add to this loving message?”

“Through love, you can create anything that your heart desires. You can attract unlimited abundance. Try to love yourself, unconditionally. Keep in mind that the more love that you allow for yourself, the more love you’ll be able to give to others. As you think

with the attitude of self-love, you will build your self-concept and have the ability to share your love with others, accordingly.”

“Thanks, Venus! I will try to focus on ways that I am worthy of my own love.”

When I spoke with Aphrodite, the five tourists had walked over in my direction; they were now just a few feet away from me. The curious tourists could see that, in fact, my arms were simply draped over my shoulders and that my fingers were interlocked. They could readily see that I had just been kidding with them and that I had *loved myself*, all along!

With a little smirk on my face, I giggled and said to myself, “Thank you, my goddess of love, for your loving message. Loving myself isn’t nearly as hard as I thought it would be!”

(The moral of this episode: To build and to maintain self-confidence and self-esteem, you must first learn to love yourself. And you must love yourself before you can truly love others!)

Episode Twelve:

Two Bulls and the Louisville Lip Made Me Yell “No Mas! No Mas!”

Lesson in Living:
Taking Control of Your Life

Madrid, Spain; May 2, 1974

I TRAVELED TO MADRID, SPAIN to test my skill at bull fighting. Decked out in a matador’s outfit, which I wore over my full suit of armor, I stepped into the bull-fighting ring and prepared myself for battle.

Thousands of Spanish citizens cheered for me as I waved at the crowd with my little red bullfighter’s cape. I was confident that I would be victorious in the minutes ahead. But I was so preoccupied with my being in the limelight that I nearly forgot about the bull, which had just been turned loose in the ring. Luckily, I wheeled around just in the nick of time.

The enormous beast had steadily made his way across the ring, to within about fifty feet of me. When I turned in the angry bull’s direction, he stopped, momentarily. Then the wild animal snorted, loudly, a couple of times and advanced, rapidly, straight toward me. I could see the rage in his big, dark, concentrated eyes. If I had waited a few more seconds, before I turned to face the hard-charging bull, he could’ve rammed his smooth, tapered, ivory horns right up the crease, between the buttocks, in the back of my shiny steel pants!

I had planned to tease the bull by holding the cape directly in front of me, more like a professional bullfighter. But I had to throw

that strategy aside. In a flash, the swift-stepping bull was nearly upon me.

Unfortunately, I didn't have enough time to move in any direction or to take any kind of evasive action. All that I could do was to quickly say to myself, "Maybe I should've taken some bull-fighting lessons before hand!"

The mad bull fully intended to severely harm me. Just before contact, he lowered his head. Then I felt the brunt of the impact from the heavy brown animal as he tried to poke holes in my thick metal jacket with his sharp, pointed horns. The rampant bull tossed me high into the air; my arms and legs were splayed to their fullest extent as I flew, helplessly, through the air. To the horde of speechless, startled spectators, I must've looked like an upside-down skydiver. Then I suddenly rolled, face down. All of those in attendance saw the two deep dents in my armored chest, where the angry bull almost fatally punctured me.

At the peak of my flight, my vision became blurred. I tried to focus on my little red bullfighter's cape, which lay on the ground, far below. In pain and agony, I cried out, "*No mas! No mas!*" (Spanish for "No more! No more!") Then I said to myself, "I think that I'm losing control of my life!"

Madison Square Garden; New York City; May 3, 1974

Fed up with bull fighting, the next day I reset the time and place controls in the Corvette. I zoomed to Madison Square Garden in New York City, still in the month of May, 1974. Bravely, I challenged former Heavyweight Champion of the World Muhammad Ali, formerly known as "Cassius Clay" or the "Louisville Lip," to an exhibition-boxing match.

Ali, who was scheduled to fight the current Heavyweight Champion George Foreman on October 30, 1974, readily accepted my challenge. Ali said, "I could use a tune-up bout before my upcoming fight with Foreman."

The ex-champ rented Madison Square Garden for our exhibition fight. Angelo Dundee, Ali's manager and trainer, and a referee were among a small gathering of curious fight fans in attendance for the bout.

Ali wore his usual white satin trunks. I slipped on a pair of black satin trunks over my armored suit. We briefly stared at each other in the center of the ring. Ali told me, “Your name should be Sir Wantsalittle *Moremercy*. I’m going to use you as a human punching bag. Whatever possessed you to think that you could get into the ring with me—the best, baddest boxer in the history of the world!” I was speechless. I just stood there, nervously, and quivered in my sweat-soaked steel boots. We tapped gloves and went back to our respective stools at opposite ends of the canvass.

The bell sounded for “round one” of a scheduled ten-round match. In less than a minute, the fight was over. Ali finished me with a sweeping right hook. His power-packed punch nailed me square on my left jaw; the jarring jolt knocked me flat on my back, out near the center of the ring. Had I not been wearing my helmet with the chin guard in place, the devastating blow probably would’ve killed me!

The referee signaled for Muhammad Ali to go to a neutral corner. Then the ref leaned over, beside me, and lifted his right hand. The ref was prepared to yell out the traditional mandatory eight-count. I was still lying on the canvass, staring upward, seeing nothing but big bright stars. Ali, without so much as a sweat-bead on his pretty face, bolted out from his ringside corner and skipped halfway across the ring. He stood over me as if he were an eagle gawking down on a freshly victimized varmint. The proud fighter raised both of his hands high over his head as the referee went through the customary “count.” The ref shouted, “. . . seven—eight—you’re O-U-T!”

I was down, but not altogether “out”! I had my senses knocked loose, but I was coherent enough to yell at Ali. At the top of my lungs, I hollered, “*No mas! No mas!*”

After I had succumbed to an early knockout and handed the world’s best-ever heavyweight fighter an easy victory, Ali danced jubilantly around the ring. He flashed and waved his former championship belt, repeatedly, in full view of the sparse crowd.

“I’m the greatest! I’m the greatest!” Ali boastfully proclaimed. Then he poetically chanted, “I float like a butterfly and sting like a bee, but that bold knight showed some *real class* by challenging me!”

I was hurting from the top of my head to my waist from a barrage of punches—heavy left and right hooks and jabs—all thrown by “the Champ” in a matter of seconds. As I struggled to get up off the canvass, I said, “My self-confidence has just been dealt another severe blow!”

United Center; Chicago, Illinois; October 10, 1997

A couple of days passed by before I fully recovered from my embarrassing defeat at the hands of Muhammad Ali. Then I traveled to Chicago’s United Center in October of 1997. I challenged Michael Jordan, superstar basketball player for the Chicago Bulls, to a friendly little “one-on-one” basketball match.

Jordan, commonly regarded as the most exciting and prolific player in NBA history, proudly wore his white-with-red-trim Chicago Bulls’ home jersey, #23. I slipped on my green and gold Camelot Knights’ jersey, #13, over my shiny metal knight-wear.

When we started our head-to-head competition, Michael initiated the action. At first, he determinedly dribbled the ball toward me. Then Michael suddenly eased up. I noticed a teasing, playful grin on his face. Jordan wanted to have some fun, at my expense, before he would make a serious attempt to score.

The basketball wizard taunted me. He said, “Okay, Wantsalittle, I’m going to badger you a little and irritate you before I take the ball to the hoop.”

In response, hoping that I could fluster the normally nerve-steady superstar, I quipped, “Okay, Mr. Basketball, give me your best shot!”

Michael didn’t like my cocky remark. All of a sudden, he stopped. But he continued to dribble the ball. He glared at me and showed me a much more determined look on his handsome face. Like anybody else who Michael ever played against, he carefully sized me up before he made his first move. As Jordan mentally prepared his attack, he dribbled the ball, first slowly, then more rapidly, intensely, while his feet remained firmly anchored to that one spot on the floor, as if he were entrenched in starting blocks, waiting for the gun to sound to start a 100-meter dash.

Meanwhile, I interpreted Michael’s patience and prudence as signs that the Chicago Bulls’ aging star player might be getting a

little old and long at the tooth. My hopes of successfully defending the play against Jordan rose with each bounce of the basketball.

Michael, having thought about it far too long already, grew tired of our little cat and mouse game. He moved in for the kill. As he dribbled the ball off to his right side, he bumped up against me with his left shoulder. Michael was trying to bait me. He wanted me to believe that he would try to get by me, around my left side. I tried my best to keep myself between Jordan and the basket. I didn't fall for his trap. I held my ground, and he had to try to reverse his course. I didn't fall for that tactic, either. Temporarily, I succeeded at holding the clever basketball guru at bay.

Then the tall, muscular athlete picked up the pace. He more deliberately dribbled the basketball, using his right hand and dribbling with short, pronounced strokes. In a couple of linked, one-right-after-the-other maneuvers that only Jordan could have gracefully performed, he first faked to his right. Then, with a mind-boggling display of Michael's lightning quick reflexes and his unique God-given physical coordination, he swung around, in a ninety-degree arc, and moved to his left. I didn't have any time to react. As fast as I could blink my eyes, he leaped through the air, like a rocket lifting from the launching pad.

As Jordan began his free flight to the basket, I saw "YOUR AIRNESS" printed on the back of his Bulls' jersey. Michael hung high in the air, over four feet off the floor, with his tongue sticking out. Then he acrobatically lifted the ball over the front of the rim with his right hand, in a windmill-like motion, before he swiftly stuffed the basketball through the hoop for two points.

After being badly beaten and faked out of my jock strap, I looked directly into Michael Jordan's big brown eyes and shouted, "*No mas! No mas!*" Then, out of total respect and appreciation for the incredible athletic feat that I had just witnessed, I turned away from Jordan and asked, "God, how can I be more like Mike? And how can I get better control of my life?"

Jordan left the court, his usual bottle of Gatorade in hand, to take a short break. Then the Lord appeared near the free-throw line. She had suited up in a Chicago Bulls' uniform; Her rightful number, #1, was printed on both the front and back of the Bulls' basketball jersey. God grabbed the basketball out of my hand, dribbled it a

couple of times, and said, “Wantsalittle, you specifically called *My* name. I wasn’t doing anything all that important at the moment, so here I am.”

“Jessica—e-r-r—Lord, I’m sorry that I mistakenly referred my question to You, rather than to my guardian angel. Nonetheless, it is a pleasure to see You again. Actually, Venus has been most cordial and helpful thus far in my travels. And I’ve both enjoyed and learned a lot from my private conversations with her.”

“I’m happy to hear that you are pleased with Aphrodite or ‘Venus,’ as you seem to prefer. Wantsalittle, Michael Jordan’s a pretty tough act to follow. But I think that I can show you how to take control of your life.”

“Yeah, You must’ve been in an exceptionally *good* mood when You created Michael Jordan!”

God chuckled and said, “In his excellent pamphlet, *As A Man Thinketh*, James Allen wrote a passage that clearly summarizes this subject: *Every man is where he is by the law of his being; the thoughts which he has built into his character have brought him there, and in the arrangement of his life there is no element of chance, but all result of a law which cannot err. . . . When he realizes he is a creative power, and that he may command the hidden soil and seeds of his being out of which his circumstances grow, he then becomes the rightful master of himself.*”

“Lord, do You mean that I am the master of my own destiny?”

“That’s exactly what I mean. If you’re not in control of your life, it’s time to get in touch with your innermost self. Free yourself from all distractions. Try to acquire faith in yourself and build self-confidence.”

“On many occasions, I wondered whether or not that life was worth living. I expect so much of myself—well, it’s easy for me to get depressed from my personal failures or lack of personal achievements.”

“Wantsalittle, if you’re generally or severely depressed, due to whatever reasons or circumstances—if it’s difficult for you to determine any purpose or meaning in your life—or what’s worse, if you’ve had or end up having suicidal tendencies—you can travel one of two basic roads—roads that are headed in opposite directions. One road, not having any faith in yourself, will take you on down and eventually out! The other road, doing whatever it takes

to build or rebuild your self-worth and your self-esteem, will allow you to recapture control of your life and lead you to wherever you want to go! Wantsalittle, *where the head goes, the feet will follow*. The choice you make will dictate the life you lead. Which of these two roads do you want to travel?"

"Naturally, I'd like to build my self-confidence and get self-control. What can You say that might help me to overcome my inner fears and self-doubts?"

"Confront your biggest fears. Do you have a fear of failure or a fear of rejection? You are made in your God's image. Do you think that I want you to crawl, cowardly, on your hands and knees? Or do you think that I want you to stand tall and walk confidently through life, unafraid? Concentrate on your personal strengths and abilities. *Above all, develop faith in your God. Through that faith, you will come to have more faith in yourself!* Each time you break through the fear barrier, your newly found self-confidence will replace fearful emotions such as self-doubt, anxiety, and worry."

"Lord, I'm going to overcome my fear of failure. From now on, I'm going to concentrate on my strengths and abilities. And I'm going to show more faith in You—*my* God! By so doing, I know that You will help me to have more faith and confidence in myself."

"Good! Please maintain that type of a positive attitude and frame of mind. John Milton wrote, 'The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell or a hell of heaven.' Additionally, Ralph Waldo Emerson said, 'The soul contains the event that shall befall it.' Stop imaging yourself as a failure or as being out of control. Instead, focus on your personal strengths and abilities. Look at the possibilities in your life, and explore all of your avenues of opportunity. Concentrate and form images of success—things that you want to accomplish. When you achieve a few of your goals and experience some degree of success, it will merely be a reflection of what your mind already holds to be true. And keep in mind the wise words of Henry Ford who said, 'Whether or not you think that you will succeed, you are right.'"

The Lord paused for a moment, then She continued, "Getting control of your life will also require you to find a meaningful degree of true happiness. Abraham Lincoln once said, 'Most people are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.' And Emerson wrote, 'To be happy, make yourself necessary to somebody.'"

Wantsalittle, *true happiness and success are largely measures of how you make other people happy and successful.* As you think with the attitude of happiness and success, you will more likely achieve true happiness and success. Try to think of what you can say or do to inspire others, encouraging their happiness and success in the process.”

“All right, Lord. I’ll do everything that I can to inspire others and to help them become more successful in their own lives. But how long do You think that it’ll take me to see some difference and make some major strides in *my* life?”

“You’re seeing more and more light with each passing day. And you’re well on your way to becoming a noble and virtuous individual. However, you are not likely to achieve your goals or reach your precious dreams, overnight. Have patience. Keep a positive outlook on life. Stay focused on your better talents and abilities. Try to image or visualize that you have already achieved your goals and dreams. As you have more faith in yourself and truly believe in yourself, your self-confidence will grow, accordingly, and you will experience unlimited personal success. Think of some worthwhile tasks—activities that will inspire you to ‘take the bull by the horns’ and get better control of your life!”

“Thank You, Lord, very much for all of Your valuable suggestions on this most important topic!”

“You are most welcome, Wantsalittle. Maybe I’ll talk to you later.”

Michael Jordan returned to the court, following his brief break, and I took my turn with the basketball. As a “bull” who believed that I could do absolutely nothing to get around him, Jordan felt generous. He said, “Wantsalittle, obviously you’re a considerably slower, less-agile competitor. I’ll grant you *one* wish—anything that you want that will help you to score against me.”

“Okay, Michael, I’ll take you up on your thoughtful proposition.” I trotted off the court and went into the equipment room. I picked up a small, flexible device and returned to the basketball court. Then I strolled out near the free-throw line and placed the apparatus on the floor. I backed up several yards and stopped in my tracks. Jordan was waiting for me. He assumed a defensive position, directly between the little doohickey that I had

just sat on the floor and the basket. He leaned forward, hands on his knees, as he tried to anticipate my next move. I hollered out, "Michael, try to stop me now!" Then I trotted halfway across the basketball court and planted both of my steel boots dead center on a *springboard!* I soared nearly ten-feet high in the air, directly over Jordan.

As I sailed toward the scuffed red rim of the basket, I purposely twisted around, my back to the basket. I winked at Jordan, who was suddenly stone-faced, right before I abruptly and spectacularly swished the ball through the center of the cast-iron cylinder, utilizing one, rapid, two-handed, over-my-head motion; the basketball touched nothing but net before it bounced several times on the court, diminishing height with each subsequent recoil, then rolling to rest right between the toes of Michael's stylish but embarrassingly flat-footed Nike shoe-ware.

My landing, though, was somewhat less than spectacular. Then, because I had worn my full suit of armor under my jersey, the damage that I inflicted to the indoor arena's hardwood floor had to be considered. I crashed down as if I were a rookie high-diver doing a belly flop off the highest platform at an Olympic-class swimming pool!

Nonetheless, I had a big grin on my face. I confidently exclaimed, "I'M BACK! And I've regained control of my life!" Michael Jordan simply shook his head and wandered off, dejectedly, toward the locker room.

(The moral of this episode: Forming images of success can reinforce your self-worth and build your self-confidence, which will allow you to take better control of your life!)

Episode Thirteen:

“I’m Having Sweet Dreams About YOU!”

Lesson in Living:
Overcoming Obstacles

Mexico City, Mexico; July 15, 1968

MY SELF-CONFIDENCE was at an all-time high, and I felt pretty darn good about myself, overall. I next visited Mexico City for the 1968 Summer Olympic Games. I entered the high-jump competition. Again I represented the Land of Camelot. And again I wore #13 on my uniform—a green and white track jersey, which I had on over my suit of armor.

I prepared for my first qualifying jump in the Olympic competition. The high-jump bar was set at 2’ 3” in height. I said to myself, arrogantly, “This is going to be easy.”

Then I loped up to the bar, hooked it with my left steel boot, and nosedived right into the sawdust. Dick Fosbury, who would later win the gold medal for the United States in the high jump during that 1968 Mexico City Summer Olympics, offered me a hand. He helped me to get up and out of the pit.

Fosbury was the first Olympic-class high jumper to roll over backward every time he left his feet and sailed over the high-jump bar. Fosbury said, jokingly, “You’ve just given a whole new meaning to what my fans refer to as the ‘Fosbury Flop’! Maybe high jumping isn’t your strongest suit!”

“There’s very little hope for me,” I said to myself, disconsolately, as I walked away from the high-jump pit. “My negative emotions are still holding me down from reaching my dreams. How can I rise above these obstacles?”

The goddess of love, also dressed in a green and white track jersey, #2, hopped across the eight-foot-long high-jump pit as if she were Carl Lewis, practicing the broad jump. I wondered how far that she could have leaped had she wanted to enter the Olympic competition in the broad-jump event. Then she partially answered that question when she suddenly fell, awkwardly, face down, after stumbling over the high-jump bar, which was still lying on the ground after my unsuccessful qualifying jump.

Aphrodite got up and wiped some sawdust and dirt off the front of her track jersey. Then she said, “Wantsalittle, we’ve covered a lot of this ground before. Have you been paying attention?”

“I’ve been trying to do just what God and you have suggested. But it’s easier said than done!”

“All right, Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife, let’s continue to work on your attitude, in general. Most of the time, obstacles represent forms of your limited thinking. You can overcome virtually any obstacle and accomplish whatever it is that you want to do. *First, though, you must unlock the doors of limitation in your mind. Wave goodbye to your restricted thinking. Train yourself to focus on the possibilities and on your opportunities in life.*”

Aphrodite handed me a 3”x5” note card with the following three lines boldly printed on it:

I believe in myself.

I believe that I will always take the right turn in the road.

I believe that I will make a way when there is no way.

Then Aphrodite said, “Apply these three personal affirmations whenever you’re faced with any major obstacle. You’ll be amazed at the results! As you think by setting goals to overcome major obstacles, you will surmount those obstacles and achieve your dreams.”

New York City; July 15, 1976

After I talked with my guardian angel, I thought that I could surmount any obstacle. But I wanted to test myself, just to be sure. I returned to New York City. On this occasion, the year was 1976.

When I arrived, I parked the Vette in front of the Empire State Building. Then I attempted to climb, without ropes or any other safety equipment, the street-side wall of the 102-story structure.

The climb was long and steep. Nearly an hour elapsed before I got close to the top of the imposing, concrete-and-steel building. With one step to go, I glanced down at what appeared to be a tiny red spot, next to the curb, more than 1,000 feet below. I just wanted to be sure that nobody was trying to steal the *Corvette*, right out from under my nose.

Then I stretched out with my right steel glove and grabbed the guardrail at the top of the building. Gradually, I pulled myself up and over the edge and crawled onto the flat roof of what, at the time of its construction, was the tallest building in the world.

As I got back on my feet, I smiled, from ear to ear. I thought that I had been the first person to accomplish this incredible feat. And perhaps I was the first *human* to successfully climb up the side of the monumental building. But I got quite a surprise when I raised my head. I saw KING KONG sitting, comfortably, on the roof. The giant ape just sat, relaxed, in a gigantic lounge chair. Kong looked quite content. After all, for him, it was just another day at his “office.”

Kong held Jessica Lange in the palm of his huge left hand. He was tickling her on the ribs with the furry index finger on his right hand. Jessica, decked out in a white tank top and a navy-blue mini-skirt, was quite content, herself. The gorgeous, shapely, blonde starlet looked as though she really admired and adored the big gorilla. (Author’s note: Jessica Lange was the starring actress in the first remake of *King Kong* in 1976, and she played the part of the late Patsy Cline in *Sweet Dreams*, released in 1985.)

Amused by my laborious effort to scale the monumental structure, Kong scoffed at the achievement and calmly inquired, “Is your name ‘Wantsalittle’?”

Almost out of breath, I simply replied, “Ah huh.”

“Great name! Some sexy, blue-eyed, buxom babe, who called herself ‘the goddess of love’ stopped by about an hour or so ago. She told me that you were on your way. I would’ve *loved* to get better acquainted with her, but I already had my ‘hands full’ at the time, as she could readily see. Anyway, Wantsalittle, what took you so long to get here?”

As I was thoroughly self-satisfied by my lofty achievement, I was puzzled and a bit perturbed at Kong's mocking remarks. Silently but emphatically, I said to myself, "If King Kong was indeed known as 'the Eighth Wonder of the World,' then it should simply be a matter of good public judgment that *I*—a real-life, time-traveling knight from the Land of Camelot—would someday be proclaimed 'the *Ninth* Wonder of the World!'" Anyway, I was totally exhausted and I couldn't talk back to the big, ugly ape.

Kong found even more humor in my out-of-shape physical condition. He laughed at me and exclaimed, "Instead of climbing tall buildings, maybe you should spend more of your free time at the gym!"

I didn't offer the sarcastic ape any reply. I simply stared at the beautiful Jessica Lange and said to myself, "I'm having *Sweet Dreams* about YOU!"

(The moral of this episode: When you unlock the doors of "limitation" in your mind, you can overcome any obstacle!)

Episode Fourteen:

Why, Instead of Howling, I Cried on the Night of a “Bad Moon Rising”

Lesson in Living:
Solving Problems

Still in New York City; July 16, 1976

JUST BEFORE I WENT TO BED that night in a motel in New York City, I heard a most symbolic song playing on the radio. The name of the song was “Bad Moon Rising” by Creedence Clearwater Revival. At the time, I was sitting on the king-size bed and thinking about all of my personal problems. The somber tune seemed to fit the moment.

The next day, I traveled to six different *locations* and at various *times*. I analyzed my problems and thought about the problems of others—all of these thoughts were going through my mind, while I also concentrated on the words to that song. Here is what the lyrics to that memorable tune meant to me:

Jerusalem, Israel; during the crucifixion of Jesus Christ

I journeyed to a spot just outside of Jerusalem. In those days, the region was known as Judea. I sat in the Corvette on the crest of a hill. A full moon had just risen on the east horizon. I witnessed the crucifixion of Jesus. I had a well-defined frown on my face.

*I see the bad moon rising,
I see trouble on the way.*

San Francisco, California; October 17, 1989

At the site of the San Francisco earthquake in 1989, I drove the Vette up to a particular spot on a major overpass and stopped. The highway had collapsed in front of me. I had a distinct frown on my face.

*I see earthquakes and lightning,
I see bad times today.*

Honduras, Central America; October 29, 1998

I traveled to Honduras in Central America during Hurricane Mitch. Mitch was a category “5” storm, as severe a hurricane as there had ever been, up to that time. Steady winds in excess of 150 miles per hour rocked the Corvette, as if the car were a rubber raft, bobbing on a high, choppy sea.

When I got out of the vehicle, I thought that the weight of my heavy suit of armor would keep me firmly anchored to the ground. It didn’t! My feet, which were encased in my massive steel boots, blew out from under me. I quickly reached out and grabbed the driver-side door handle on the Vette. I was barely able to hold on to the handle with one hand. And I narrowly escaped injury or death from huge tree limbs, boards, and broken slabs of glass—debris that was flying, dangerously, through the air, directly in front of me.

Soon, though, I was able to get back on my feet. I surveyed some of the damage and destruction from the devastating storm system. Nearby, windows on houses and businesses had been broken, and rooftops had been blown away. In the distance, I saw the remaining rubble of what, just moments before, had been a luxury oceanfront beach house.

All of the trees in the area were bent low to the ground; some trees had snapped like brittle wooden match sticks. Numerous vehicles had been upended. Many more cars and trucks had been smashed by fallen trees or by other wind-blown objects.

The torrential rains from the slow-moving hurricane had caused several mudslides, which buried thousands of houses and trapped thousands of helpless citizens under tons of mud and debris.

More than 20,000 people had lost their lives; many thousands more were missing and feared dead. I had a grave frown on my face.

*I hear hurricanes a blowing,
I know the end is comin' soon.*

Southern California; January 4, 1995

I arrived in the Huntington Beach area of Southern California, during a severe coastal flood. On January 4, 1995, Huntington Beach received 4.5 inches of water, causing flooding in various areas of the city. Streets were flooded, cars were stalled, and the high water levels stranded people throughout the area. Eight neighborhoods were evacuated; many people could not safely leave their homes due to waist-high water.

I stood beside the car, on higher ground, just above the floodwater line. Helplessly, I watched as raging rivers and floodwaters created havoc with both property and lives—all as a result of the swift currents and high water levels. I had a serious frown on my face.

*I fear rivers overflowing,
I hear the voice of rage and ruin.*

Obviously, I was despondent by all of the death and destruction that I had recently witnessed. I emphatically stated, “Regardless of the ages, I see that we must all confront real-life problems!”

New York City, New York; September 11, 2001

I futilely tried to aid in the rescue attempts at the tragic, terrorists-caused, World Trade Centers catastrophe. Helpless, I stood at “ground zero” and witnessed the horrific carnage, which resulted in the death of nearly 2,800 innocent men and women and children, many more people hurt, some seriously injured. I had an unforgettable frown on my face.

*Hope you got your things together,
hope you are quite prepared to die.*

I was deeply depressed. I asked myself, “What’s the use? Must I live in fear and anxiety in the midst of so many potential life-threatening problems?”

The Land of Camelot; near the end of the sixth century

Saddened and disconsolate, I needed a break. I returned, briefly, to Camelot, where I hoped to find safer, more comfortable surroundings. But when I arrived, I heard disturbing noises coming from the other side of a huge rock, which obstructed my view.

I snuck up behind the big boulder and peered around the edge. I witnessed two supposedly noble knights; they were engaged in a bloody sword fight.

Then, a few yards off to my right, I noticed Merlin. The sorcerer fashioned a black magician’s hat and a black satin cape. Merlin was stirring something that was brewing in a big black kettle. The magician, so involved with his cooking, didn’t notice an approaching dragon. The hot-tempered beast spit flaming-red balls of fire as he rapidly closed in on the unsuspecting sorcerer. I had an alarming frown on my face.

*Looks like we’re in for nasty weather,
one eye is taken for an eye.*

*Well don’t go ‘round tonight,
well it’s bound to take your life,
there’s a bad moon on the rise.*

Unable to escape from seemingly insurmountable personal problems and worries, and from the problems of others in my midst, I asked, “Where will I find the solutions to all of my personal problems?”

When Aphrodite appeared, she fashioned a predominately black sorcerer’s costume. “Wantsalittle, there are two types of problems: First, there are problems that you can solve on your own.

Second, there are problems that you can solve, spiritually. Some problems may be difficult for you to understand and hard for you to cope with.”

“I’m fully understanding you, so far.”

Aphrodite continued, “You are not apt to find a ready solution to every problem in life. If a problem seems insurmountable, why not put it in the hands of whomever you choose to be your God? You should try to have faith in your God and believe that your God will help you to deal with or solve any personal problem. If someone is an Agnostic or an Atheist, that individual should believe that he or she can solve any problem on his or her own.”

“Venus, sometimes I’m afraid to deal with my problems.”

“Follow the advice of Ralph Waldo Emerson who wrote, ‘Do the thing you fear, and the death of fear is certain.’ Come face to face with any problem. You may not find the solution you want, but your fear of the problem will disappear. And that’s of more value to you than what you wanted in the first place.”

“Okay, from now on, I will directly confront my innermost fears and problems. Do you recommend anything else?”

“Wantsalittle, as you think by setting problem-solving goals and turn to your God for help with problems that you cannot solve on your own, you will be equipped to solve or to deal with all personal problems. What problem will you stand nose to nose with today?”

“Right now, I’m concerned about a big bad dragon!”

Before my guardian angel disappeared, she said, “I’m sure that you’ll be able to solve this problem without my help.”

The angry, threatening dragon created a monstrous problem for Merlin and me. The overgrown lizard stood as tall as a two-story building; just the size of the creature caused me a great deal of concern for my own safety. Other than looking out for my own wellbeing, I also wanted to help Merlin. The famous sorcerer was about to become an afternoon snack for the hungry dragon.

I lured the dragon to my favorite spot on earth—up on the hill, near the big red oak tree that overlooked the Lady of the Lake. I felt more comfortable and confident by gaining what I considered to be a home-field advantage. I believed that this particular location would give me an edge and significantly improve my odds for

success as I prepared to go into battle against the dragon, a most formidable opponent.

My steel-spiked war club in my left hand and my sharp-bladed ax in my right hand, I was poised and ready to confront the savage beast. A white owl, perched on a lofty branch in the big red oak tree, curiously looked on. The owl winked at me; the wise old bird offered me his support for my pending good cause.

I gazed out over the crystal-clear water of the small lake below. Once again, the Lady of the Lake surfaced, visible from the waist up, and tempted me to draw Excalibur from her inviting hand.

With her long, straight, sandy-blonde hair, the Lady of the Lake reminded me of actress Helen Hunt, who I saw in several movies while I was staying at Willie's. I really enjoyed her films, especially *As Good As It Gets* and *Pay It Forward*. Anyway, I knew that if I had the mighty sword, the dragon would pose no serious threat to me. But I remembered that I must have faith in myself and in my God. I waived off the Lady of the Lake's enticing proposition. Then the mysterious woman—guardian of the lake and keeper of the treasured sword—slowly submerged into the depths.

I became fearless in the face of my adversary. "I won't be intimidated!" I confidently proclaimed. "I refuse to walk in my shadow of fear. Sir Dragon, I've got a real problem with *you* and your *bad* breath! I don't need Excalibur to deal with you. I think that I'll just take my war club and bop you across the bridge of your nose. Then I'll take my ax and whack off your tainted tongue!"

The uncertain dragon thought better of the situation. He simply turned his tail and slithered away. I was pleasantly surprised at the dragon's sudden reluctance and change of heart.

I yelled out at the cowering, retreating beast, "This time I'll allow you a rain check. On the next occasion that our paths should cross, we will have to duel to the death!"

(The moral of this episode: When a problem seems insurmountable, put it in your God's hands. Have faith in your God, and believe that your God will help you to deal with or solve any personal problem!)

Episode Fifteen:

All the President's Men—and Women

Lesson in Living:
Your Right to be Wrong

Washington D.C.; January 15, 2001

I DECIDED TO JOURNEY TO WASHINGTON, D.C. in the year of 2001. I energized on the side of a country road about twenty miles south of America's capital city. It was just past midnight. Physically and mentally exhausted, I didn't even want to get out of the Corvette. I just leaned back in the driver's seat and fell asleep. When I woke up the next morning, the car wouldn't start.

"I made a mistake by leaving the headlights on last night," I said to myself. "Now, the battery is dead." I tried to use the vehicle's built-in time-travel module. But the car battery had drained the power from the time-machine components, as well. To make matters worse, I had forgotten to plug the time-travel-remote unit, which needed to be re-charged, into the car's cigarette lighter. The remote device wouldn't function, either. I could've pushed the *Emergency* button on the time-travel remote, which would have alerted Willie C. Light, back in Beverly Hills. Willie had told me to hit the big red button if I had any problems with the Vette or with the time-travel equipment. He said that he would, by using his spare remote, immediately come to my rescue. But I didn't want to bother Willie for something as trivial as a dead car battery. I decided to thumb a ride to the nearest garage.

Across the road, I saw a sign that read "All Services Just Ahead." While I waited to hitch a ride, I ambled along the right side of the road, headed south, away from Washington D.C. Then I

noticed another sign, which was posted a hundred feet or so farther down the road. This two-part sign read “Little Rock, ARK—1,500 Miles (straight ahead); Righteous City / Perfectionville—20 Miles (to the north).” Behind me, toward Washington D.C., yet another sign read “Dangerous Curves Ahead.”

A long black stretch-limo, headed south, pulled up along side of me. Suddenly, someone in the back seat rolled down the rear passenger-side window. Then an attractive middle-age woman stuck her head out of the window and said, “If you’re not part of the vast right-wing conspiracy, we’ll give you a lift.”

I quickly accepted the stately lady’s kind offer despite the fact that I didn’t know what she was talking about. When I climbed into the front passenger-side seat, I glanced toward the back seat. Then it dawned on me. The woman who offered me a ride was Hillary Rodham Clinton. She was sitting next to former President William Jefferson Clinton. I asked, “Aren’t you Hillary Clinton, recently elected Senator from New York?”

“Yes, and this man sitting next to me is Bill Clinton, my husband. You can refer to us as ‘Bill’ and/or ‘Hillary.’” At a loss for words, I just turned my head around and peered down the road.

I recalled from some of my history lessons, watching highlights of past news clips, etc., while I was staying with Willie C. Light in Hollywood, that President Clinton had experienced some personal problems near the end of his days in the White House. I remembered that he got a little sideways with a good portion of the American public and many of his colleagues, both Democrats and Republicans, in Washington. The former President had been accused of having a sexual relationship with a former White House intern. Anyway, he might have been impeached from office had those circumstances and accusations occurred earlier in his second term of Presidency. That would have been a real shame because of all of the good that President Clinton had otherwise done for Americans and humanity in general during his tenure as President. And I knew that, regardless of some personal setbacks, President Clinton had furthered the ideals of freedom and democracy and peace, and that he had left a most positive legacy, overall, for the better benefit of people and cultures throughout the world.

After we had traveled a couple of miles or so down the road, we approached a convenience store. I asked the chauffeur, “Would

you mind stopping, for a few minutes, so that I can get a soda pop?" I wasn't all that thirsty, but I wanted to talk with my guardian angel.

The chauffeur turned his head toward Senator Clinton as if he were seeking permission to stop at the convenience store. The former First Lady said, "Sure! That's a good idea. Sir—whoever you are—I'll go with you into the store. Bill and I are also thirsty. I'll grab some soft drinks and snacks for all of us."

The chauffeur pulled the limo into the parking lot and stopped. Hillary and I went into the store, and I headed straight to the restroom. In reference to the former President's personal problems, I asked, "Don't we all have the right to be wrong?"

Aphrodite promptly responded and replied, "Wantsalittle, I'm getting tired of meeting with you, although it may be only occasionally, in men's restrooms. In the human form and persona of Carmen Electra, I'm allergic to bathroom odors. Bad smells make me nauseous and sometimes make me sneeze. Can't you call on me from a more pleasant and more heavenly scented location?"

Before I could respond, Aphrodite said, "Never mind! I know that you are doing your very best, at least most of the time, to please me. I can see that you're in a bit of a predicament, right now. After all, you're dealing with a couple of pretty important people here. Let's talk about 'your right to be wrong.' Regardless of who you are, you're going to make some mistakes in life. Even great kings and presidents are apt to stumble, personally, at times. If you don't believe me, you could ask Mr. Clinton!"

Aphrodite followed me out of the restroom. As we strolled over to where I could get a soda, Hillary walked by. She must have been wearing some strong perfume. My guardian angel turned her head toward Hillary and sneezed. Of course, Aphrodite was invisible; Hillary couldn't see her or hear her. But the former First Lady got hit on the left arm with some of Aphrodite's nasal spray. Hillary glanced down at her left forearm. Puzzled by where the damp, tacky substance had come, she looked around in all directions. Then Hillary gazed upward and said, "Damn, the ceiling in here must be leaking!" Aphrodite and I simply laughed as Hillary quickly wiped the goddess of love's nasal drops off her arm. Then the Senator from New York proceeded with her shopping.

By then, Aphrodite had turned back toward me. Suddenly, she sneezed again. That time, she accidentally sprayed *me*, right on my forehead. With an embarrassed expression on her face, Aphrodite exclaimed, “Excuse me, Wantsalittle!”

I said, “Goddess bless you! Perhaps, you’re allergic to more than just less-fragrant bathroom odors!”

We both giggled for a few seconds. Then Aphrodite continued, “As John Diefenbaker once wrote, ‘Freedom is the right to be wrong, not the right to do wrong.’ Mr. Clinton and countless others in the world need to learn that important distinction!”

Aphrodite stopped to sneeze yet again. But this time she politely covered her nose and mouth. She went on, “The educational system in most countries is predicated on the idea that ‘to err is wrong.’ Therefore, you learn to keep your mistakes at a minimum, which makes perfect sense from a practical point of view. However, if you’re not comfortable with making errors, and you constantly avoid situations where you might fail, you won’t be taking too many chances in life, either.”

“I was always taught to play it safe and not take too many chances.”

“The vast majority of achievers in the world are the ones who deviated from the more conservative, ‘playing-it-safe’ philosophy. Most successful people are risk-takers. They take chances, and they are not afraid to be wrong. Renowned author Elbert Hubbard said, ‘The greatest mistake a person can make is to be afraid of making one.’ Writer William Gladstone agreed, ‘No man ever became great or good except through many and great mistakes.’”

“I guess that I should quit being so afraid of making mistakes and go out on the limb more often, shouldn’t I?”

“Yes! And in terms of practicing sound human relations, you should immediately and openly admit your mistakes or wrong doings. Be totally up-front and honest. Claim the right to be wrong, and grant this right to others! Remember that nobody is perfect. Everyone errs and makes mistakes. As you think with the objective of quickly and frankly admitting your mistakes, you will increase your chances of earning others’ trust and respect.”

Before Aphrodite left, she concluded, “Wantsalittle, quickly admit your next mistake and stand confidently behind your right to be wrong!”

Senator Clinton purchased a six-pack of Snickers candy bars and four cans of Pepsi. We left the store and got back into the limo.

The chauffeur dropped me off, about a block farther down the road, at Walt's Auto Service. Before I went into the garage, I tapped on the driver-side rear window of the limo. Mr. Clinton immediately rolled down the window. I briefly addressed the former President. I said, "Not long ago, I saw a good movie. The name of the film was *All the President's Men*. Had the popular movie, which debuted in 1976, been a flick about *you*, they probably would've called it '*All the President's Men—and Women!*' Sir Bill, you pulled a real 'boner.' You're not alone! Virtually every one of us, at one time or another, has made a big mistake. As I'm pretty sure that you would do for me, I grant you the right to be wrong. But do yourself a big favor: The next time that you screw up, openly and promptly admit your wrong doing."

I hesitated for a second, and then I concluded my comments to Mr. Clinton. I said, "I've learned that people, by and large, are more forgiving, and they generally have more trust and respect for someone who, after making a mistake or after using poor personal judgment, is honest and straightforward about his or her error or shortcoming. Immediately 'coming clean' usually neutralizes people's defenses, softens their reactions, and allows others the opportunity to both identify with and appreciate a person's admittedly human nature. Anyhow, Mr. Clinton, thank you for all of your *positive* contributions and accomplishments!"

The former President asked, "Just who in the world are you, young man? And why are you dressed up in that knight's costume?"

"My name is Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife," I replied. "But you can just call me 'Wantsalittle.' I'm from Camelot, here on an extended vacation, of sorts. It's a long story."

Senator Clinton overheard me. She instantly turned toward me. Her eyes appeared as big as golf balls. Hillary yelled, "*WHO* did you say you were? *WHERE* did you say you're from?"

Mr. Clinton wasn't that surprised. He interjected, "I had a feeling, all along, that you were more than just some penniless wanderer, hitching a ride. Well, *Sir* Wantsalittle, you are quite a perceptive fellow. I simply want to thank you, sincerely, for your

good advice! Maybe our paths will cross again, someday. I'd like to know a lot more about *you!*"

Meanwhile, the former First Lady had gotten out of the limo. She walked around the front of the car, toward the driver-side rear door, and stopped, right beside me. Out of pure curiosity, Hillary briefly looked me over, from head to toe, and said, "Indeed! I'd like to know more about *you*, too! If you're from Camelot, how come we haven't heard of you before now? Weren't you one of King Arthur's 'Knights of the Round Table'?"

"Yes, I was! You could say that I'm a 'late bloomer.'"

Senator Clinton exclaimed, sarcastically, "Yeah, about *1,400 years late*, I'd say!"

The former President said, "Let me guess—you journeyed here, to twenty-first century America, in some kind of a time machine, didn't you?"

"Right on, Mr. Clinton! I've been traveling around, throughout the United States and elsewhere, in various time periods, for the past few weeks. I'm on a quest to become more worldly, and I want to feel *and act* like a king. I don't have time, right now, to go into all of the details. But I'd be glad to tell you all about it, later, if you're still interested."

"I definitely *would* be interested!" the former President exclaimed. "I'm more than just a little curious to find out a *lot more* about *you!* Wantsalittle, you seem to know a lot about me. Don't be offended, but how would you, a genuine knight from the Land of Camelot—someone who claims to be *vacationing* here in modern-day America and elsewhere—how could you be so knowledgeable of recent American history and *my* social life, etc.?"

"Have you ever heard of a man by the name of 'Willie C. Light'?"

Senator Clinton asked, "Isn't Willie C. Light an author? He writes romance novels, doesn't he?"

"Yes! And Willie is also a Hollywood stunt-double. He lives in Beverly Hills. Anyway, he's the man who taught me a lot about contemporary history when I first arrived here from Camelot."

Mr. Clinton said, "One more thing, Wantsalittle: Where did you learn to converse so articulately? I mean, anybody short of God, Himself, couldn't have taught you how to communicate so fluently in such a brief period of time. Someone else—someone besides

Willie C. Light, your tutor, has been helping you. Come on now, Wantsalittle. Fess up! What *is* your little secret? What *is* it about you that my wife and I and the whole rest of the world, for that matter, would love to find out?"

"That all depends on what your definition of the word 'is' is," I responded, cleverly. "And where have I heard those questions, or questions very similar to them, *before*?" Hillary and I laughed at my light-hearted comments. The former President, on the other hand, reflected a momentary expression of shock. He failed to see the humor of my stinging remarks, although they were amusingly intended. Before Mr. Clinton could reply, I continued, "I can tell you this much: I have been *divinely* blessed. My contemporary mentors are beings who most would consider to be 'highly' qualified. Perhaps, after my time-traveling journey has ended, I'll divulge some of what is now more confidential information. And maybe I'll share my wacky adventures with others who may be inspired, to some meaningful degree, by my unusual story. I better get going now. I've got to get a mechanic to help me with my car. Meeting *both* of you has been a real pleasure!"

"Wantsalittle, same here!" Hillary exclaimed. As Senator Clinton turned and walked around the back of the limo, she bumped her left hand against the left-rear fender. Her wedding ring jarred loose from her index finger; the ring fell right into the middle of an old, dirty, sweat-stained, baseball cap, which was lying on the ground, upside down, near the back end of the car.

I asked Hillary, "Do you think that you would ever run for the office of President one day? You know, toss your *ring in the hat*, so to speak?" Senator Clinton laughed, hysterically.

"Well, who knows what my future has in store?" the former First Lady replied, after she retrieved her wedding band and proceeded to get back into the car.

Mr. Clinton then said, "Wantsalittle, try to keep us posted, will you?"

"Okay! And it might be educational, if not also entertaining, that *you* keep us posted on some of *your* more interesting activities and personal affairs!" Mr. Clinton simply shook his head, from side to side.

As I slowly walked away from the vehicle, and before they drove off, I heard both the former President and the former First

Lady speak with each other. Senator Clinton said, “You know, Bill, that nice young man’s *first* name would more appropriately suit *you!*”

Mr. Clinton chuckled. Then he spoke with his loyal, faithful, and good-hearted wife. Apologetically, he said, “Honey, I’m made out of flesh and blood, like any other man. Obviously, I’ve made some mistakes. Can you find it in your heart to forgive me?”

“Yes!” Hillary replied. “I will forgive you!”

(The moral of this episode: You have the right to *be* wrong, *not* to do wrong. Claim your right to be wrong, and grant this right to others. Readily and openly admit your mistakes. If you do, you are more likely to earn others’ trust and respect!)

Episode Sixteen:

From a Knight to a “King”

Lesson in Living:
Bouncing Back

*Daytona International Speedway;
Daytona Beach, Florida; February 3, 1998*

FULL OF PRIDE AND AMBITION after meeting and speaking with the former President and his loyal wife, I had the car’s battery charged and journeyed to Daytona, Florida, where I registered the Corvette into the 1998 Daytona 500. The annual Daytona 500 was considered to be NASCAR’s most spectacular stock-car racing event.

Kellogg’s Frosted Flakes proudly sponsored my car. The #13 Chevrolet Corvette out-performed and out-paced the stiff competition most of the afternoon. Tony the Tiger, my pit-crew chief, was proud of me, especially because I was a rookie driver.

Throughout the race, I had skillfully and patiently worked my way to the front of the pack. Then I darted past Dale Earnhardt’s #3 black Chevrolet to take the lead as Earnhardt and I entered the final turn on the last lap. But I blew a left-front tire coming out of turn number four. The Vette went into a wicked tailspin.

The out-of-control racecar spun like a top; tires screeched and charred pieces of rubber flew in all directions. When the dust settled and the thick cloud of smoke cleared, I was a little dizzy. And the Vette, which had a crunched right-rear fender, was backed up against the wall, just a few yards short of the finish line.

Earnhardt, who had never won the prestigious Daytona 500, and who was the crowd favorite all afternoon, took the checkered

flag. “The Intimidator” later congratulated me for my superb effort. Earnhardt told me, “Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife, this just wasn’t your day. You drove a hell-of-a race. Better days are ahead!”

I turned and walked a few yards away from Earnhardt. I felt totally dejected. I said to myself, “I had this race in the bag. Some black magic cost me the victory. How can I bounce back from such a bitter defeat?”

Aphrodite showed up at the racetrack in blue jeans, tennis shoes, and a Dale Earnhardt T-shirt. She said, “Clarence Darrow stated, ‘As long as the world shall last, there will be wrongs, and if no man objected and no man rebelled, those wrongs would last forever.’ Life isn’t always sugarcoated. Sometimes you have to take the sour with the sweet. However, you possess the ability to ‘bounce back’ from unfortunate personal circumstances or from major personal setbacks.”

My guardian angel paused for a moment, then she said, “The late Dale Earnhardt won a remarkable total of seventy-six NASCAR events, and he tied the record of seven Winston Cup championships in his legendary racing career before a horrific, head-on, into-the-wall crash took his life at Daytona International Speedway on February 18, 2001. Like so many people who have achieved some measure of greatness in their lives, Earnhardt repeatedly bounced back from untimely defeats throughout his story-book racing career. Wantsalittle, try to emulate the good example of Dale Earnhardt and numerous others who bounced back from times of temporary defeat and became highly successful individuals, as a result.”

Aphrodite paused again and continued, “If you’re not frequently making mistakes and suffering setbacks, it’s a good sign that you’re not doing anything. Carl Yastrzemski, a perennial All-star first-baseman for the Boston Red Sox, accumulated over 3,000 hits in his brilliant career. ‘Yaz’ once told a reporter, ‘If you want the hits, be prepared for the misses.’ That’s the way the game of baseball—and life—goes. After a brilliant career, Yastrzemski was later inducted into Major League Baseball’s Hall of Fame. *Regardless of how many times you ‘miss,’ it’s most important that you keep swinging.*”

“Yes, but will that necessarily bring me success?”

“Thomas J. Watson, the founder of IBM, said, ‘The way to succeed is to double your failure rate.’ Wantsalittle, use your mistakes and temporary defeats as stepping-stones for greater accomplishments. Don’t be a quitter. Follow through on whatever you set out to do. If you experience a setback, find out what went wrong. Learn from what didn’t work. Think of something different. Try a new approach. Form new ‘success’ images.”

“Venus, I’ll learn from my mistakes and go forward with my life!”

“Wantsalittle, Norman Vincent Peale truthfully said, ‘You are never defeated until you accept the image of defeat.’ As you think with a goal of *bouncing back* from your personal setbacks, you will realize greater individual accomplishments.”

“Thanks, my wise personal advisor! I’ll see you on down the road.”

Rockingham, North Carolina; February 10, 1998

After repairing the damage to the Vette, I traveled to Rockingham, North Carolina for the G.M.Goodwrench 400. The race at Rockingham, a week after the Daytona 500, was another, major, annual, NASCAR event.

As I had done in the race at Daytona, I started near the rear of the field. More determined than ever, I gradually worked my way into contention. I moved into second position with only two laps remaining. Jeff Gordon, “the Rainbow Warrior,” had led the field most of the day. When we took the white flag, with just one lap to go, Gordon successfully blocked me. And it looked as if he would be able to hold me at bay to take the checkered flag.

The pressure was on me to try to pass Gordon and steal the victory on the last lap. I was able to pull up on his rear bumper, but I couldn’t quite muster the speed to get around him. Gordon was driving an “inside groove” on the track as he came into the corners. It was tough to get around him. Still, I thought that I might be able to just squeeze by him on the inside, right before we entered the second turn. Then, when I tried to sneak by Gordon and dart past him from the inside, he shrewdly pulled his car way down near the apron and cut me off. As we approached the third turn, I moved high up on the steeply banked racetrack. I tried to pass Gordon from

the outside as we came out of turn number three. That last-minute maneuver didn't work, either.

I was about to concede the race to Gordon and settle for second best. Then I remembered that the Corvette had a unique "overdrive" gear. Once again, I pulled up on Gordon's bumper. When we powered our way out of the fourth and final turn, I reached down and shifted into *overdrive*. Like a missile thrusting from its launcher, the Vette shot up off the track and soared over the top of Gordon's #24 Chevrolet. My racecar landed directly in front of him as we sped down the stretch.

Gordon made a gallant effort to pass me from the inside near the wire. But I just nosed him out as we zoomed across the finish line. Rusty Wallace finished strong and ended up in third place.

One spectator, Richard Petty, known as "the King" of NASCAR, reportedly said after the race, "Today, Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife went from being a knight to being a *king!* Cheerfully, I congratulate the new 'King' of NASCAR!"

As I slowly motored the surprisingly powerful, but temporarily run-down, gas-thirsty Corvette around the track in the customary "victory lap," a pigeon landed on the driver-side windshield wiper. The disinterested pigeon gawked at the roaring crowd. This time, the vast majority of the racing fans had collectively rooted and pulled for me in my upstart, underdog role.

I steered the Vette down victory lane. Then I anxiously crawled out through the driver-side window. I waved a royal-blue ball cap in view of hundreds of celebrating spectators, who had quickly gathered and crowded around me. Tony the Tiger could see that I was totally exhausted. Immediately, my crew chief congratulated me and handed me a cold quart of milk and a bowl-full of Kellogg's Frosted Flakes.

Respectfully, I rejected Tony the Tiger's healthy reward. "Thanks, Sir Tony! But I'd really rather have a Tomarlbury and an ice-cold bottle of Zapmeister!"

(The moral of this episode: As Norman Vincent Peale said, "You are never defeated until you accept the image of defeat." Always strive to bounce back from temporary setbacks!)

Episode Seventeen:

Time Out for “R & R”

Lesson in Living:
Rest and Relaxation

The Land of Camelot; near the end of the sixth century

I NEEDED SOME WELL-DESERVED REST, so I temporarily returned to Camelot. I sat down on the grass in my favorite place, under the big red oak tree, which stood near the top of the hill, about a hundred yards above the legendary lake.

The Lady of the Lake surfaced. Once again she teased me. Helen Hunt’s look-alike held Excalibur high out of the water. She wasn’t going to fool me. I realized that, by and large, I still lacked the virtue and quality of character necessary for me to draw the mighty sword. Therefore, I just ignored the Lady of the Lake.

Instead of testing my strength, I simply played my banjo and sang a few of my favorite merry tunes. Then I daydreamed that sixteen dead knights were scattered across the countryside in blackish suits of armor. The sixteen dead knights in my daydream symbolized that portion of my angels in black—my dark side—that I believed I had conquered thus far in my journey.

“I’m totally tuckered out from my jousts and my duels with my angels in black.” Then I looked toward the heavens and asked, “How can I get more ‘R & R’?”

When Aphrodite became visible, she sat down on a fallen log, directly across from me. “Wantsalittle, it looks as though you could use some R & R—some rest and relaxation. Author Ernest Hello stated, ‘To work is simple enough; but to rest, there is the

difficulty.’ Whatever may be your endeavor in life, you should establish a realistic work pace. When you get too tired or gradually wear yourself down, take a needed and well-deserved break. You’ll be a better-rounded and a happier individual, and you’re likely to live longer, if you take the time to step out of the fast lane once in a while.”

“Venus, I’ve been trying very hard to develop a more kinglike character. But I’m just mentally exhausted right now.”

“Wantsalittle, what do you like to do for fun and recreation? What hobbies or outside interests do you enjoy? Where would you like to go on vacation?”

“I don’t know! That’s why I came back to Camelot.”

“Try not to take life too seriously. Improve your sense of humor. Exercise your smile and laughter muscles. Take a trip to Hawaii. Get in touch with nature. Watch a good movie. Read a good book. Enjoy your favorite TV program. Relax and do something that’s fun.”

“All right! I’ll try to mix in a little pleasure with my business of self-improvement.”

“I hope that you will. As you think with the goal of setting a relaxed and realistic work pace, you will be happier and more productive, as a result.”

After my uplifting conversation with Aphrodite, I opened a rectangular door on my suit of armor, in the area of my stomach. The compartment inside of me housed a Die-Hard battery. I hooked battery cables onto my rundown personal battery and connected the other end of the cables to a battery charger, which I had sat on a sawed-off oak-tree stump, some ten yards away.

A couple of dark clouds above collided and sent a bolt of white lightning into the battery charger. A blue jay, which had landed on one of the battery cables, felt a little tingle throughout his tiny body as a wave of electrical current transferred along the cables from the charger to my battery.

“When I receive another bolt or two of lightning,” I said, “I’ll be recharged and ready to continue my quest.”

(The moral of this episode: Step out of the fast lane once in a while, and give yourself a well-deserved break!)

Episode Eighteen:

My Knight Wings Left Me *Moonstruck*

Lesson in Living:
Setting Lofty Goals

Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona; July 15, 1969; 9:00 P.M.

THOROUGHLY RESTED AND READY TO GO AGAIN, I took off for the Grand Canyon, just north of Flagstaff, Arizona. The year was 1969.

“I’ve always wanted to fly like a bird,” I said to myself. Under the full moon in the clear evening sky, I got a little daring. I strapped on a pair of midnight-black angel-like wings, and I ventured over to the edge of a cliff, high above the Grand Canyon.

More than a mile below, I saw the reflection of the moonlight in the Colorado River as it twisted through the monumental canyon. It was an awe-inspiring, scenic sight to behold. As the roaring river bellowed a spooky, almost-frightening echo throughout the Grand Canyon—one of nature’s true miracles—I said, “I wonder if these manmade angel wings will keep me aloft?”

I backed up about thirty feet, tightened my wing-straps, and pulled the visor down over my helmet. I took a deep breath and loped toward the edge of the cliff.

Immediately after take-off, I experienced a minor problem. One of the mechanical wings collapsed. I fluttered through the air for a few moments. Then my other wing malfunctioned. I fell straight down, in a tight spiral, toward the dark canyon floor. About five seconds and 500 yards into my free-fall, I philosophically said, “Maybe I shouldn’t have set my goals so high!”

I was a risk-taking knight, but I wasn't stupid. I remembered my life-threatening, ski-jumping ordeal at the Nagano Winter Olympic Games. This time I had a back-up plan, just in case. I simply pulled the ripcord on my parachute. It opened properly, and I floated harmlessly to the ground. I landed in a small clearing, right next to the raging river.

Down on my hands and knees, I gathered up the life-saving parachute. Then, while I neatly folded the umbrella-shaped apparatus, I looked up and asked, "How can I set more practical personal goals?"

As if she had just gone for a leisurely swim at the beach, Aphrodite walked ashore, right out of the swift current of the Colorado River. My guardian angel wore very little—just an itty-bitsy, teeny-weeny, yellow, polka-dot bikini. Immediately, I rose to the occasion. Things were definitely looking up for me. "Wantsalittle, if at first you do succeed, try something *harder*. And try to keep your nasty little mind *off* of me and *on* what I'm about to say, okay?"

"Yes, Venus. I'm paying *close* attention!"

"Thanks! You asked me about 'setting goals.' I think that I can give you some good tips on this subject. Wantsalittle, try to get into the habit of setting lofty and challenging but also realistic personal goals. Your goals should be written down as personal affirmation statements. Here's an example: *As I am building more self-confidence with each passing day, I am making major strides in taking control of my life.*"

"It's hard for me to stay focused on some of my personal goals."

"Well, Wantsalittle, I'm happily surprised by your serious-minded nature this evening. Maybe there *is* some hope for you, after all!"

"Don't get me wrong, Venus. You are strikingly beautiful, as usual. But you kind of scared me the other day with your 'Medusa' threat. Were you really serious about that?"

"No, I wasn't. I just wanted to get your attention at the time. Thanks for that nice comment about my looking 'strikingly beautiful.' Even your guardian angel likes to receive a nice

compliment, once in a while. I almost thought that you hadn't noticed me in my skimpy bathing suit."

"You must be kidding! Thank God for the bright moonlight tonight. Believe me, I *did* notice and I am *still* noticing!"

"Thank you, again, Wantsalittle. I thought that you'd like the outfit, at least what *little* there is of it! Let's continue to talk about how you can achieve your personal goals. *Visualize* your goals. *Act* upon them on a daily basis. Try to anticipate the *emotion*—exhilaration, for instance—that you would experience by achieving a worthy, longer-range goal. Constantly *image* your goal until the subconscious mind receives the picture that your conscious mind is continually projecting. If you do, your subconscious thoughts will steer your conscious thoughts toward actions that will allow you to accomplish your goal or dream."

"Terrific! I'll try to vividly image what it is that I want most."

"Yeah, that's what I was afraid you would say."

"Come now, Venus. What kind of a guy do you think I am?"

"Wantsalittle, do you *really* want me to answer that question? Never mind. Here is one other thing that you should do with respect to setting challenging personal goals: Write down at least three 'objectives' for each of your goals. *Objectives* are *personal action steps*, which will help you to achieve your goals. Objectives have three elements: *condition*—'*at*,' stating *when* or *at what time* you will initiate some action toward your goal; *behavior*—'*I will*,' stating *what you will do* to achieve your goal; and *criterion*—'*so that*,' stating the *desired result* of your goal."

"I thoroughly understand what you have just said about goal writing. Is there anything else that you'd like to add on this topic?"

"Yes, here is one final thing that I'd like to mention: Author Ursula Le Guin stated, 'It is good to have an end to journey toward, but it is the journey that matters, in the end.' As you think with practical goals in mind, you will more likely achieve those objectives and realize your dreams. Wantsalittle, think about what lofty personal goal you can set for yourself."

"Okay, Venus! I've got a pretty *lofty* goal in mind right now!"

"Good! Go for it! I've got to go for now. See you later!" The goddess of love disappeared before I had a chance to tell her "goodbye."

Cape Kennedy, Florida; July 16, 1969

I headed for Cape Kennedy in Florida, where I was cordially invited to take part in the Apollo 11 Moon Mission.

Thousands of curious spectators looked on as the moon-bound rocket lifted off the launch pad on July 16, 1969 and thrust its way through the earth's dense atmosphere and into outer space. Roughly 240,000 miles later, the rocket landed safely on the rocky, barren surface of the moon, right near the middle of the Sea of Tranquility.

Four astronauts were on board, including me. Three of us—Neil Armstrong, Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin Jr., and me—boarded the “Eagle” lunar-landing module on July 20th.

Neil, the Mission Commander, and Buzz, the Lunar Module Pilot, couldn't help themselves from laughing at me. They thought that I looked pretty stupid with my space helmet pulled over the steel helmet on my otherwise unprotected full suit of armor. I laughed back at them. I wondered why the astronauts wore those ridiculous-looking space outfits over their normal NASA uniforms.

The fourth astronaut on the lunar mission, Michael Collins, the Command Module Pilot, watched and photographed us from the observation seat in the main spaceship. After a brief argument between Neil Armstrong and me over “who” would lead the way, Neil stepped out of the modular ahead of me. That gave him the distinction of being the first man, other than Superman, to walk on the moon.

As he began his historic, memorable trek, Neil said, “That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.” Neil also had the honor of planting the pole that carried the American flag.

To me, it seemed that Neil wanted to be the “first” guy to do everything! I wanted to be the *first* at something. So I zipped down my fly, and I proudly wrote my name in the moon sand!

Buzz was the *first* to gaze down and view the colorful white and blue swirls around our planet Earth in the distance. All three of us “earthlings” had broad smiles on our faces.

Just prior to our climbing back into the lunar modular, I said, prophetically, “Maybe no man can fly without artificial help, but let every man know that he can still shoot for the moon!”

(The moral of this episode: Set lofty, realistic, personal goals!)

Episode Nineteen:

**“Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star;
Oh, I Wonder Who You Are?”**

Lesson in Living:
Learning

Hollywood, California; July 9, 1995

FASCINATED WITH HOLLYWOOD, I returned there in 1995. I spent a relaxing, sunny, summer afternoon at a neighborhood park, located near Willie’s place.

As I had absolutely nothing better to do, I decided to look around the park through my high-powered binoculars. I wasn’t bird watching! I wanted to “zoom-in” on more interesting subject matter—namely, any attractive Southern California babe who might be lying around and sunbathing in the park.

A couple of hundred yards or so across the freshly mowed grass, I spotted, without the field glasses, an interesting “subject.” The woman sat, partially reclined, on a folded-down lounge chair. With my naked eye, she appeared promising enough to warrant a closer view. I lifted my visor and looked through the powerful binoculars. All I saw, though, was a speck of something against a greenish background. The distant object appeared to be several miles away. I didn’t realize it at the time, but I WAS LOOKING THROUGH THE WRONG END OF THE BINOCULARS!

“I seem to be focused on one little thing,” I said, not having realized, as yet, my backward thinking. “This is really frustrating me. How can I learn to eliminate my tunnel vision and see the bigger picture?”

I anxiously waited for my guardian angel to appear. After several seconds elapsed, I thought that she didn't hear my question. Then I turned around and saw her. Aphrodite had sat down on a park bench, just a few feet off to my left. Once again, her appearance simply took my breath away. The goddess of love's meager, pink, ribbon-tied-in-the-front halter-top and her very short, cut-off-high-on-the-thighs, denim pants left little to my imagination.

Aphrodite opened up a thick reference book that she had brought with her. She said, "*Webster's Dictionary* defines 'learning' as: *to acquire knowledge; to get to know; that which is learned.* Abraham Lincoln may have said it better, 'I am a slow walker, but I never walk backwards.' *The art of learning is applied knowledge.* Knowing most of the scientific facts or spiritual truths associated with life is so much trivial information and of little consequence, unless you can apply this knowledge to aspects of personal growth and development."

"I'm a little confused."

"Wantsalittle, true learning is the ability to become a *perceptive* thinker. Perceptive thinking can be likened to the whole of a thing being greater than the sum of its parts. Each part or fact symbolizes some meaning or purpose. For example: Birds and bees are parts, or facts, of life. However, what's the bigger picture? Do you see things that can fly? Do you see the reproduction of the species? Or do you see two wonderful gifts of nature? Regardless of how you elect to interpret the facts in your life, your focal point should be on the 'Big Picture.'"

"Trust me, Venus. My mind *and eyes* are currently focused on the *Big Picture*. You said something about seeing 'two wonderful gifts of nature.' And *that* is, or *those* are, precisely what my mind and eyes are now sharply focused on!"

"So much for your serious-minded nature, huh Wantsalittle?"

"I'm sorry about that! But your choice of words, at times, and your generally sexy attire leaves you wide open and exposed to my well-intended, although sexist, remarks. Please forgive me for my wandering thoughts, my straying eyes, and my sometimes ill-mannered comments! What else can you tell me about 'learning'?"

"Learning comes from all sources of personal exposure. Reading, writing, and arithmetic are valuable learning tools. Still, 'experience' might be life's best teacher. He or she who graduates

from the ‘school of hard knocks’ may be among the wisest and most prepared of all people. One thing’s for sure: *The more that you learn and know in life, the more you’ll know that there is to learn and know. Indeed, learning is a never-ending process.* Wantsalittle, as you think with the goal of learning to be a more perceptive thinker, you will better be able to apply your overall knowledge.”

As soon as Aphrodite left, I turned the binoculars around so that I would see a magnified image through the lenses. Then I clearly saw Roseanne Barr-Pentland-Arnold-Thomas-Conners—whatever her “last” name happened to be!

Roseanne was wearing a ruby-red bikini and soaking up some rays. She was reading a songbook that was turned to a tune called “Stand By Your Man,” written and recorded by the late and great Tammy Wynette.

Although she had already left, I said, “Thanks, Venus, for sharing your wisdom with me. But this time the *Big Picture* isn’t exactly what I had imagined it would be!”

(The moral of this episode: Learning is largely a matter of sifting through the various details and facts of life and focusing on the *Big Picture*!)

Episode Twenty:

All Cigarette Lighters Should Be Knight Proof

Lesson in Living:
Inspiration

Still in Hollywood; July 9, 1995

THAT EVENING, I STAYED in a downtown Hollywood hotel room. Using my black Bic cigarette lighter, I lit a candle, which sat on the window ledge. The candle burned brightly, and sparks were flying off of it. I didn't know it at the time, but within seconds the window curtain had caught on fire. I didn't see the fire start because I was performing a headstand on the floor next to my king-size bed.

I said to myself, "I've been bored to death lately. While the blood flows to my brain, maybe I can come up with a good idea." Then I asked, "How else can I overcome my passiveness and receive a spark of inspiration?"

In order that my guardian angel could talk with me face to face, she did a headstand right beside me. It was a good thing that she dressed in casual clothing—a plain light-blue T-shirt, which was tucked deeply into her blue jeans. Naturally, I had a little frown on my face.

Apparently, Aphrodite didn't see that the curtain had caught on fire, either. She simply looked at *me* and said, "Inspiration reflects bursts of perceptive thinking—ideas that come to you from your burning desire to tap into your own reservoir of knowledge. Meditation, getting your mind in a state of relaxed concentration, can give you the key to 'see the light.' Meditation can unlock the

doors to your innermost self. The trick is to bring these flashes of brilliance to the surface, from your subconscious mind to your conscious thoughts.”

I wasn't sure about how my heavenly mentor felt, but I noticed it getting a little too warm in the room. I asked, “Is it just me, or is it getting *hot* in here?”

Aphrodite just ignored me and continued, “*Inspiration, alone, is useless unless it manifests itself by way of applied knowledge—creative expression that takes the shape of inspiring others with your insightful words, artistic services, or artistic products.* Usually, it's easier to become inspired if you look for new ideas by associating your current interests and abilities with finding a need and trying to fill it.”

Aphrodite stopped, for a moment, to wipe the sweat beads off her forehead—not an easy maneuver when one is performing a headstand! Then she concluded, “As you think with the goal of becoming inspired, you may create something that will truly inspire others. Wantsalittle, look to see what's going on around you—something that could be improved or changed for the better.” Then God's evidently *hot*-blooded assistant vanished into the smoke-filled air.

Somebody should've told me that cigarette lighters could be hazardous to my health. My trying to receive a little spark of inspiration nearly trapped me in a towering inferno!

Fortunately, the hotel room had a fire extinguisher. I quickly put out the curtain fire. When I sprayed the flames, I noticed an empty white plastic *flowerpot*, which was sitting off to one side of the window ledge.

I reached in a dresser drawer, grabbed another candle, and lit it. I thought for a few moments about everything that I had just seen in the room. And then I said, “An inspirational thought just struck me: I'll search for my 'pot' of gold!”

(The moral of this episode: When you want to receive a spark of inspiration, it may help if you look around to see what could be improved or changed for the better. Then try to create something that will truly inspire *others!*)

Episode Twenty-one:

“Knightmare” on Fremont Street

Lesson in Living:
Wealth and Prosperity

Phoenix, Arizona; April 2, 1997

THE CORVETTE ENERGIZED CLOSE to a 7-Eleven convenience store in Phoenix, Arizona. The year was 1997.

I wanted to purchase a pack of cigarettes. Because of the lack of vacant parking spaces in front of the business, I drove around the block and parked, parallel to the curb, near an intersection, not far from the convenience store. Two street signs were posted on a pole, which was located at the corner of the intersection. One sign, signifying North and South, read “Las Easy Street”; the other sign, signifying East and West, read “El Pipedream Avenue.”

As I walked toward the door of the 7-Eleven, a male clerk came out of the store with a stepladder in hand. The young man positioned the ladder by the entranceway, directly under an outside neon sign. He climbed the ladder and reached up and changed a light bulb in the dimly lit, green-and-white-and-red sign. The four big bold words on the neon sign read “Scratch ‘N Sniff Here.”

“What an omen!” I exclaimed to myself. I went into the store and walked up to the counter. I asked the clerk to give me a pack of Tomarlburys and a one-dollar, “Knight in Shining Armor,” scratch-off, lotto ticket.

Right after I strolled out of the store, I stopped to look at the scratch ticket. The top portion of the little rectangular card read “Get three matching symbols on any one row to WIN prize shown.” I

uncovered all three rows of symbols. Pictured on the first row were: dragon / star / wizard hat—no matches for what could have been a \$5 prize. Pictured on the second row were: crescent moon / curled snake / black cat—no matches for what could have been a \$1 prize. Pictured on the third row were: *knight in shining armor* / *knight in shining armor* / *knight in shining armor*—three matching symbols—a WINNING ticket, worth a \$10,000 prize!

“Oh, thank heaven for 7-Eleven!” I yelled, jumping for joy. “I’m headed back to Las Vegas!” Before I left Arizona, I stopped at the Lottery Office in downtown Phoenix to cash my winning scratch ticket.

Las Vegas, Nevada; April 25, 1977

I set the time and place controls in the Vette to Las Vegas, Nevada in the year of 1977. I marched into Binion’s Horseshoe Hotel & Casino, which was located on Fremont Street in fabulous downtown Las Vegas. The popular casino was hosting the World Championship of Poker.

I meandered around the casino for a few minutes, and I went into the gift shop to purchase a cowboy hat. Then I strolled into the lounge, and I bellied up to the bar, which was positioned right next to the poker parlor. I ordered a bottle of Zapmeister. The bartender was kind enough to bring me an ice-chilled mug, along with the bottle of beer.

A moment of generosity must have come over me. I tipped the bartender a couple of dollars for his superb customer service. Then I sat down on a bar stool and proceeded to drink my beer.

After a minute or so, the bartender walked over again. He asked, “Do you smoke, Sir?”

“I never did until fairly recently,” I replied.

“Would you like to try one of my ‘Uncool Heavys’?”

“I didn’t know that cigarettes could be ‘heavy’! No thanks, mister! I think that I’ll just have one of my Tomarlburys.” The bartender grinned and walked away.

As usual, I was dressed in my silver-plated armor wardrobe. But I wore the cowboy hat that I had just bought, in place of my helmet, which I had left in the car. The tan, broad-rimmed, cowboy hat enabled me to fit in better with the rest of the crowd on hand;

Binion's Horseshoe Hotel & Casino presented an informal, country motif and a casual environment.

As I had cashed the \$10,000 lotto ticket before I left Phoenix, I had a bundle of bucks with me. And I was ready for "action."

One heck-of-a poker game was going on at a big round table, right behind me. I anxiously watched the action among a star-studded cast of players. Sitting around the table, clockwise, were: James Garner, (the late) Jack Kelly, (the late) Steve McQueen, (the late) Robert Shaw, Kenny Rogers, and (the late) Paul Newman. All of the players dressed casually, except for Robert Shaw. Mr. Shaw was decked out in a dark-blue business suit.

At Mr. Shaw's request, all of the players at the table wore ties. Newman's tie hung loose around his neck. He was slouched down in his seat, and he looked sloppy and drunk, similar to how he appeared in another poker game with Mr. Shaw—the memorable occasion when they played poker together on a train in *The Sting*, a blockbuster film that debuted in 1973.

A vacant wooden captain's chair sat between James Garner and Steve McQueen. An extra black tie was draped over the seat of the chair. Of course, the tabletop was loaded with poker chips, mostly black (\$100) chips; all the players had several piles of chips, either stacked up or scooped up in front of them. Players' drinks—various glasses, shot glasses, and bottles of booze, some empty and some partially empty and some full—were scattered across the top of the table. In addition, the table surface was cluttered with cigars and cigarettes, some not smoked and some partially smoked. Furthermore, the messy table was littered with several ashtrays, some of them overloaded with rubbed-out cigar and cigarette butts. And the table was filthy from cigar and cigarette ashes, which had been carelessly discarded or haphazardly smeared into the dirty, alcohol-stained, green felt.

I took a drink from my frosty mug of Zapmeister and said to myself, "Poker's really my game. I'll parlay this \$10,000 windfall into a small fortune. These guys don't look like card sharks to me!"

With a cane lying across his lap—the same cane he used in *The Gambler*, a popular, western, made-for-television movie—Kenny Rogers peered over at me, a look of curiosity on his manly, full-bearded face. I looked toward Rogers and his poker-playing pals. I inquired, "Hey, gents, do you mind if I join in?"

“Sure, stranger,” Mr. Shaw said, “but this is a gentlemen’s game. You have to wear a tie. And NO CHEATING is allowed. DO YA FOLLA?” I slid off the bar stool and ambled over to the empty chair. Then I lassoed my neck with the black tie, sat down, and confidently scooted up to the table.

“What’s your game, friend?” Garner asked.

“Five card stud,” I promptly replied. McQueen and Kelly slyly smiled. (Author’s note: the late Steve McQueen played Eric Stoner “the Cincinnati Kid” in the popular 1965 movie *The Cincinnati Kid*. James Garner played Bret Maverick on the comedy/western TV series *Maverick*, which aired from 1957 to 1962 and co-starred the late Jack Kelly as Bart Maverick.)

About an hour later, McQueen and I were the last two players left on a hand that had already been fully dealt. Both of us were “all in”—no money left in front of us. The poker pot must have had close to \$30,000 in it. We had just “called” each other, and it was time to show our hole cards.

I turned over an *ace of spades*, giving me a FULL HOUSE—aces full of eights. “Try to beat that!” I exclaimed, a cocky tone in my voice.

McQueen’s four exposed cards were: ten of diamonds, queen of diamonds, king of diamonds, and an ace of diamonds. He flipped over his hole card—the *jack of diamonds!* He filled out his STRAIGHT, “ROYAL” FLUSH! McQueen’s better poker hand took me by surprise and quickly wiped the smile off my poker face.

I had just experienced a “nightmare” on Fremont Street. However, if I were writing a book, I might title the forgettable episode “How I Got *Royally* Stung By a ‘Gambler,’ a Couple of ‘Mavericks,’ a ‘Queen,’ and Two Stars from *The Sting!*” At any rate, I was disappointed beyond belief. With a definite frown on my face, I said, “Nice hand, Sir Steve. You guys are too tough for me!”

I retreated to an empty seat back at the bar. After I ordered and received another beer, I glanced upward and asked, “Will I ever find true wealth and prosperity?”

Aphrodite energized in a cowgirl’s outfit—a brown-suede cowgirl hat, a red bandana, and a long-sleeve, predominately burgundy-and-blue-plaid, western shirt. She also fashioned a pair of chaps over her brand-spanking-new, pre-faded, blue jeans. When

she sat down on a vacant bar stool, right beside me, I couldn't help myself from admiring her tan, suede-leather, cowgirl boots.

"Howdy, partner!" Aphrodite exclaimed. "We both look right at home here at Binion's Hotel & Casino, wouldn't you agree?"

A little disappointed by the goddess of love's western shirt, which featured pearl buttons that were snapped shut, clear up to the collar, I just nodded, affirmatively, in response to her frivolous question.

"Wantsalittle, it doesn't seem like you're in a very good mood, today. What's the matter with you?"

"You wouldn't be in such a festive mood, either, if you had just lost nearly \$10,000 on one hand of poker!"

"Maybe I can offer you some advice that will help to cheer you up. At least, my divine message may enable you to find true wealth and prosperity. Mohammed wisely stated, 'A man's true wealth is the good he does in the world.' The universal law of prosperity is governed by harmony and order of abundance. Your mind is a lot like earth's atmosphere. You will gravitate toward that which you think about most. If you want more material wealth, put yourself in harmony with universal abundance. Sharply image wealth and prosperity."

"Venus, I've been imaging for success, as God and you have so often suggested that I do. And I've had some good things happen to me. But I haven't accumulated enough money to get me over the hump."

"Wantsalittle, how much money do you or does anybody really need? In your case, you might have more money and more material things if you didn't partake in gambling ventures! Your ill-advised patterns of risky behavior are not helping your cause. With respect to money and financial matters, you shouldn't look for any overnight get-rich-quick solutions. If lack of money and being in debt has been your way of life, try to change your lack-minded attitude. Develop new wealth and prosperity habits."

Aphrodite had to stop talking, momentarily, so that she could cough and clear her throat after she had inhaled too much of the secondary smoke, which filled the casino area. Then she said, "Constantly think of your being debt free and without financial problems. If you become preoccupied, daily, with images of prosperity and abundance, your prosperity-conscious thinking will

lead you toward actions that will result in your achieving these objectives.”

“Venus, I’m really lacking in material things. Just once, I’d like to be able to ‘put on the dog’—to show some real class and live with a little higher lifestyle.”

“All the money in the world wouldn’t buy you true happiness or necessarily make you a successful person. More important than any measure of material wealth, keep these wise words of Henry Ward Beecher in mind: *No man can tell whether he is rich or poor by turning to his ledger. It is the heart that makes a man rich. He is rich according to what he is, not according to what he has.*”

“Yes, I suppose that you’re right. I feel a little bit better about my financial problems, already. Thanks for helping me to ‘see the light’!”

“As you think with the objective of being in harmony with the universal law of abundance, you will become wealthy in both mind and soul. Wantsalittle, I have to leave now. Good luck to you! And please remember to form true wealth and true success images!”

A few moments later, movie producer Ron Howard sat down, next to me, at the bar. Ron reached over and gently tapped me on the shoulder. “Aren’t you *Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife?*”

“Yes, how did you know that?”

“You’re becoming a pretty famous young man. My name is Ron Howard. I’m a movie producer. I’ve been looking for you. My business associates in Hollywood and I would like to purchase movie rights to your unusual and inspirational story. People everywhere admire and look up to heroes or heroines. Your ongoing quest toward nobility and personal enlightenment is setting a positive example for numerous teenagers and young adults. At the end of your journey into time, we would like to give *everyone* in the world the opportunity to see and hear what we foresee to be a remarkable personal success story—a real-life exercise in self-development. Tentatively, we plan to title the film *A Hero Who Can Be You*. To get you under contract, *right now*, with our production company, would you agree to sign with us for a *million* dollars?”

Immediately, I experienced a mental flashback. I thought about the flowerpot, which had sat on the window ledge in one of my recent adventures—the episode that taught me how to manifest

more personal “inspiration.” In the midst of talking with Ron Howard, I daydreamed, for several seconds, about finding my pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

When I gathered my senses, I said, “Sir Ron, I appreciate your generous offer, but no thank you. For now, I’ve got a serious gambling problem. I’d probably just blow the whole bundle of bucks. Besides, you’ve just made me FEEL rich at heart. Right now, that means much more to me than any amount of money or material wealth! Perhaps we can discuss a movie contract at a later date.”

“I admire your honesty, Wantsalittle. And I respect your circumstances,” Ron replied. “But I wasn’t kidding. We really *do* think your story is *worth a million!* Here’s my business card. Let me know *if* or *when* you change your mind.”

“Say, it just dawned on me. This is 1977. How is it that you have heard of me?”

“Good question, and here’s the answer: Willie C. Light, your stunt-double friend from Hollywood, and I are buddies. Right after you embarked on your journey toward personal enlightenment, Willie called me and told me all about you.”

“Okay, but how did you get here? And how do you know about the circumstances or events of what has transpired in my journey through time up to now?”

“Willie has a tracking device connected with his time-machine components. He gave me and some of my colleagues permission to monitor your whereabouts. In other words, we’ve sort of been spying on you. And, because I borrowed one of Willie’s time-travel remote units, I was able to travel here to Binion’s Horseshoe Hotel & Casino today to meet you and to speak with you.”

“Sir Ron, it was great to make your acquaintance! I’ll get back in touch with you if I should have a change of heart about the movie arrangement. By the way, I really enjoyed watching some of your exceptional acting performances, first as Opie Taylor in the *Andy Griffith Show* and later as Richie Cunningham in *Happy Days*.”

“Thanks for making mention of my *acting* career. It’s been so long ago since I co-starred on the *Andy Griffith Show*. Sometimes I wonder if anybody remembers me for anything besides my more recent acting roles and as a director and producer. Anyway, I better run.”

When Ron Howard got up from his bar stool and started to walk away, he turned around and said, “Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife, I hope to hear from you again!”

“Thanks—I’d like to speak with you again, someday, too!” I exclaimed, just before the friendly movie mogul proceeded to leave the gaming area.

(The moral of this episode: As Mohammed wisely said, “A man’s true wealth is the good he does in the world!”)

Episode Twenty-two:

An Evening “In” at “Knight-in-the-Box”

Lesson in Living:
Creativity

Brookville, Ohio; July 7, 1995

FED UP WITH THE IDEA of trying to make a fast buck, I promised myself that I would never again try to win my fortune by gambling. I needed to get away from the “fast lane” for a while. So I pulled out a map of the United States, closed my eyes, and randomly put my right index finger smack-dab down on the map. My finger pointed to Brookville, Ohio. Brookville, with a population of 4,322 and located approximately twenty miles northwest of Dayton, seemed like a quiet place to spend a couple of days and collect my thoughts.

I journeyed to Brookville and registered in a motel. My spacious room featured a kitchenette. I decided to go to a nearby grocery store, pick up a few things to munch on, and simply spend a quiet, relaxing evening at the motel.

When I returned from my brief shopping spree, I emptied the contents in the grocery sacks all over the kitchen counter. A liter-size bottle of Pepsi, plastic paper cups, a box of crackers, a package of straws, a carton of Tomarlbury's, and a six-pack of Zapmeister beer were scattered across the top of the counter.

While I shopped for groceries, I had also picked up an interesting-looking book, *A Whack On The Side Of The Head*, authored by Roger von Oech. I laid the book, which dealt with the subject of “creativity,” on the kitchen counter, along with the other stuff that I had purchased.

In addition to my grocery shopping, I had stopped at a hobby shop and bought a strange novelty item. I dumped that bag out on the counter, as well. I didn't notice it then, but a little black key fell out of the sack. The key dropped on the counter behind the box of crackers; the key was hidden from my view.

Immediately, I began to examine the unusual novelty product. It was a square, thick-sided, clear-plastic box, about fourteen-inches across on all sides. A neck-size circle was cut out of the bottom side of the container.

The see-through plastic box was hinged in several places so that it could be opened, allowing someone, who was foolish and had absolutely nothing better to do, to stick his or her head in the contraption and close the front door.

Furthermore, the box had an automatic-locking mechanism. Once closed, I would need a key to open the front door and get my head out of the box. I really don't know why I bought the damn box in the first place. Out of curiosity and wanting something to play with, I just couldn't resist!

I sat the box down for a moment, popped the top on a cold 12-ounce can of Zapmeister, and took a couple of gulps. Then quicker than I could have said "knight-in-the-box," I downed the rest of my beer. After I bellowed out a loud, disgusting belch, I said, "That brewski really hit the spot. I think that I'll have another." I did. And then I chugged another, right after that.

About half way through my fourth can of Zapmeister, I got a little tipsy. And I got brave enough, or dumb enough, to put my head, after removing my helmet, in the box. Then I closed the clear-plastic door, which was now directly in front of my face. Fortunately the gap between my neck and the round hole in the bottom of the box was just wide enough to allow some air to seep through. That seemingly trivial circumstance enabled me to *breathe!*

I grabbed my big fat war club and raised it over the box. I paused for several seconds before I said, "My creative mind is locked in a box. I lost the key. I could give myself a good whack on the side of the head to break the box, but it might hurt! I'm thirsty for ideas, and I want to drink the rest of my beer." Obviously, I needed some help from "above." I thought about my dependable, forgiving, guardian angel and asked, "How can I become more creative in this dire moment of need?"

Instantly, God appeared, instead of Aphrodite. She laughed at me and said, “You’ve really done it this time. What a fix you’re in! Percy Bridgman wrote, ‘There is no defense, except stupidity, against the impact of a new idea.’ *Creativity is what innovative people with desire and initiative do to make their ideas happen.* The world constantly needs new solutions and new ideas. What worked yesterday probably will not work today—or tomorrow. Creative thinking means generating new ideas and new answers. Fresh innovative thoughts lead to all progress. As Disraeli put it, ‘Imagination rules the world.’ Wantsalittle, right now, you need to use your best imagination.”

“Lord, it’s been so long since I’ve last spoken with You. I was beginning to think that You gave up on me and that I wouldn’t see You again. Thank God You’re here! I could *really* use some *more* of Your advice on the subject of ‘creativity’!”

“Do you want to become more creative? Here are some tips: Don’t always be so practical. Loosen up. Get nutty and crazy. Break the rules. Learn from your mistakes. Use your imagination. Change your viewpoint. See the ‘Big Picture.’ Ask yourself ‘what if’ questions. Look for the obvious. Get an idea. Do something to it. Then do something else to it. Before long, you’ll have something.”

The Lord stopped, for a moment, to take another look at me. She saw that my head was still in the box. God just laughed again and said, “Visualize your being creative. A creative mind has the power to change something and make it something else. In his remarkable book, *A Whack On The Side Of The Head*, Roger von Oech suggested, ‘By changing perspective and playing with our knowledge and experience, we can make the ordinary extraordinary and the unusual commonplace.’ By the way, Wantsalittle, I see that you picked up this great little book. It is ‘must reading’ if you want to stir your creative juices.”

“Jessica—I mean—God, I promise that I’ll read the book.”

“You definitely should!”

“I’d like to start reading the damn book right now. But it would be difficult for me to see the words, considering that my head is locked up in this *damn* box!”

“Wantsalittle, please watch your language! It wouldn’t hurt for you to show Me a little more respect, at times! Anyway, as you

think with the goal of becoming more creative, you will transform your imagination. You'll be able to create practical solutions and useful ideas. It's high time that you 'whack' yourself into thinking more creatively! I've got to run for now. I hope to speak with you later."

As soon as God went on about Her normal daily duties, I tossed the heavy war club off to one side. My head was still locked in the box, but I thought of a way to solve my *thirst* problem, creatively.

I reached for the package of straws, which was lying on the counter. The straws had flexible joints in the stems. I simply stuck a straw through the keyhole on the front door of the box, bent the straw at its flexible joint, and slipped the main shaft of the straw into my can of Zapmeister.

After I slurped some suds through the straw, I tritely said, "Indeed, 'necessity is the mother of invention.'"

When I finished my beer, I searched for the key to the clear-plastic box. Luckily, I found it on the counter, behind the box of crackers.

(The moral of this episode: "Creativity" is what innovative people with desire and initiative do to make their ideas happen!)

Episode Twenty-three:

It Came Down to Sir Lancelot and Me

Lesson in Living:
Striving for Personal Excellence

Still in Brookville, Ohio; the following day on July 8, 1995

THE NEXT AFTERNOON, just past six o'clock, I wanted to explore the countryside, a few miles due west of Brookville. A brief, hard, rain shower in the area had cooled the baking midsummer air. When I arrived, the skies had mostly cleared, and it turned into a delightful, weather-perfect evening.

I turned the Corvette off of the main highway and onto a gravel-topped county road. The surroundings were peaceful—abundant with expressions of nature in all directions. Mile after mile of seemingly endless acres of corn and barley blanketed the landscape like spacious beds of deep-green velvet. Forested hills and river bluffs accented the rural region's visible agricultural carpet.

I eased off the gas pedal and almost idled along the rain-dampened, unimproved, gravel road. I tried to breathe in as much of the pleasant aroma from the lush flowers and foliage as possible. A slight breeze allowed me to hear the rustling of the dense dark-green cottonwood leaves, which vibrated in the branches from columns and columns of roadside trees.

I passed by a road sign that read "Path to Nobility." That section of the road was getting rough; rocks and chuckholes slowed me down to a crawl.

The Vette's right-front tire suddenly sank out of sight. The wheel had rolled into a deep chuckhole. The car came to an abrupt stop. I got out and inspected the damage. The tire was flat.

"The road of life can be rough in spots and full of pitfalls," I groaned. Then I lifted my head and asked, "How can I strive for personal excellence and become the best that I can be?"

My guardian angel came to my rescue. But she wasn't there to help me change the flat tire. Besides, as she fashioned new, clean, farm-hand duds—bib overalls and a white, short-sleeve, knit shirt—I didn't have the nerve to ask her to get her hands or her clothes dirty.

Aphrodite leaned against the front of the Vette and said, "Try to adhere to the words of Aristotle, who insightfully said: *Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have these because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.* Wantsalittle, what are the things in life that you do best? Where do your interests, talents, and abilities lie? When you aspire to actualize your personal talents and abilities, you must remember that practice makes perfect."

"I think that I'm doing the best that I can, at least most of the time."

"People rarely do the best that they can do. Confucius said, 'When you meet a man of worth, think how you may attain to his excellence. When you meet an unworthy one, then look within and examine yourself.' And Abraham Lincoln quipped, 'Whatever you are, be a good one.' Wantsalittle, here's the secret: Set challenging but realistic short and longer-term goals. Your visions are most important. As you move from one task to the next, throughout life, program your mind for success."

"How can I do that?"

"Use positive affirmations in everything that you say or do. Visualize that you've already performed or achieved what it is that you want accomplished. If you do, with patience and persistence, you shall receive it. As you think with the goal of striving for personal excellence, you will more likely become the best that you can be. Will you go the extra mile and strive for personal excellence?"

“Yeah! From this time forward, I’ll make a conscious effort to go that extra mile!”

“Great, I’ll speak with you later.”

My flat tire didn’t slow me down. I didn’t have a spare tire, but I simply engaged the car’s built in “flex-capacitor” and *flew* off into the wild blue yonder.

I stopped, for about an hour, in Brookville to get the flat tire repaired. At the service station, I thought about how I could become the best that I could be at something, I remembered my teenage years—back when King Arthur’s gallant Knights of the Round Table regularly tested their metal in jousting tournaments. I asked myself, “Why don’t I go back to the good old days in Camelot and joust against the noble Sir Lancelot?”

The Land of Camelot; about FIVE YEARS PRIOR to when I’d left on my journey

Upon my arrival in Camelot, I entered the World Jousting Championship. The tournament was about to begin.

Naturally, one of the first people that I recognized at the event was MYSELF! First, I said to my *current* self, “Drat the luck!” Next, I said to my *previous* self, “Sir Self, here is what you’re going to look like a few years from now!”

My previous self said, “Oh brother, I can hardly wait!”

“No—younger self! I don’t think that you quite understand. I’m not your ‘brother’! You see—just forget it! It’s a long story. I’ll explain it to you one of these days. For the time being, simply hide over yonder, behind that big oak tree, and cheer for your older bro—I mean—*self*. Well, I don’t know, exactly, what I mean! But *you* can witness first hand *our* trying to win the World Jousting Championship!”

My previous self concluded, “All right! I was going to enter the jousting tournament, *myself*. But it appears, anyhow, that I’ll—you’ll—*WHOEVER*—will be competing just the same! Whatever’s going on, I’ll cheer for you in the upcoming jousting matches. At least I know that you—e-r-r—I didn’t get killed. That is—unless you’re my ‘ghost’ who has come back to haunt me.”

After I solved that minor problem, I still had a few more similar obstacles to overcome. I hoped that none of my friends would notice that I had suddenly “aged” by a few years. I decided to keep my helmet on and pull my visor down to hide my face. That did the trick. Nobody knew that “I” was really “me.” Well, let me put it this way: They thought that I was Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife in the “body” of my previous self.

In any case, I entered the World Jousting Championship. A large crowd, aristocrats and commoners alike, was on hand to witness the spectacular event. The pavilions were filled with gorgeous ladies, curious young pages, and jewel-bedecked noblemen.

Almost all of King Arthur’s hundred Knights of the Round Table were present and registered for the tournament. Sir Lancelot, the prohibitive favorite, Sir Gawain, my former mentor and master, and King Arthur, himself, were among the list of notable combatants. As a precaution, flat wooden blocks were fastened to the ends of the knights’ lances to make for safer competition.

Most of the spectators had planned to cheer for either Lancelot, the current world champion, thought of by most people to be unbeatable, or for the popular King Arthur. Queen Guinevere wasn’t sure *who* to pull for. Her fickle emotions were divided between King Arthur, her loyal husband, and Sir Lancelot, her newly discovered champion and handsome secret lover.

Two other uninvited and unbiased characters were on hand. Louie and Frankie, the Budweiser lizards, curiously watched the proceedings from their side-by-side seats on a nearby log. The adventurous lizards had heard about me while I was in Hollywood. They had loyally followed me, and they had arrived in Camelot by way of “Louie’s Time-travel Limo,” which they had parked next to the Corvette, a few hundred feet away from the field of battle.

Several hours into the grueling, hard-fought spectacle, the field narrowed down to Lancelot and me. Sir Lancelot had easily defeated his good friend Sir Gawain in one semi-final duel. And I had just won a close battle with the aging but still-fierce King Arthur in the other semi-final match.

Although a couple of knights sustained minor injuries, nobody was seriously wounded or killed during the preliminary rounds of the tournament. The stage was set for the final jousting event.

Trumpets blew to prepare the contestants for the final event. Sir Lancelot and I dazzled the crowd with our lustrous, shining suits of armor. Our brilliant shields gleamed and reflected the bright rays shed by the late-afternoon sunlight.

Just prior to the competition, my “younger self” loaned me Spirit, my trustworthy palomino stallion. Like everyone else in the crowd, Spirit thought that I was crazy to go up against the great Sir Lancelot.

“Master, are you sure that you want to joust and duel with the notoriously treacherous Sir Lancelot?” Spirit asked.

“Just relax, Spirit, and do your part to help me unseat the world champ. I’ll reward you with a carrot if I come out the winner!”

“Wow! Okay, master, I wish you the best of luck! By the way, for some odd reason, you look much more *mature* today.”

In preparation for the “finals,” Lancelot and I mounted our respective horses. We faced off about a hundred yards apart; our shields were up and our lances were ready. Both of us glimpsed over toward Queen Guinevere. She was chewing on her fingernails as the last trumpet note sounded, initiating the action.

As two daring and bold knights, we charged each other at full speed. We met at mid-track. Our heavy metal lances clashed off our round steel shields. The heavy contact sent out a high-pitched, ringing, metallic sound that could have been heard from a mile away.

All of the hype and fanfare went for naught. The match was over in a matter of seconds. My first strike with my long lance glanced off Lancelot’s shield, then deflected squarely into the middle of his chest. He absorbed a punishing, almost fatal blow. The little flat wooden block, which had been attached to the tip of the lance, saved his life.

Lancelot had been knocked off his horse. As he lay crumpled on the ground, he waved a white flag, an admission of his unexpected defeat.

I rode up to where Lancelot had fallen. Quickly, I dismounted Spirit. Then I held my lance high as I looked down on the surprised, thought-to-be-unconquerable knight. Immediately, I was awarded the “World Jousting Champion” blue ribbon.

“Sir Lancelot is a hard-fighting, noble knight,” I said. “Today, though, I have soundly defeated him. And *I* am now the new world jousting champ!”

Louie, one of the Budweiser lizards, said to his pal, “Frankie, this guy’s more fun to watch than those boring frogs!”

“Come on, Louie,” Frankie replied. “The show’s over.”

(The moral of this episode: To achieve a measure of personal excellence and to become the very best that you can be, *image* yourself as already successful. And remember that practice makes perfect!)

Episode Twenty-four:

Shrimp Cocktails—Giant Dreams

Lesson in Living:
Achieving Your Dreams

New York City; February 14, 1988

AS PROUD AS A PEACOCK, I wanted to celebrate my upset victory over the gallant, almost invincible Sir Lancelot. I journeyed back to the future and landed outside a bar in New York City. The bar had an unusual name—*Cocktails & Dreams*. The year was 1988.

I strutted into the classy lounge and looked for a seat at the L-shaped bar. The room was crowded. One swivel stool was vacant at the far-left end of the bar. I hustled over to stake my claim to the plush, dark-burgundy, velour-covered highchair. Then I tugged at the top of the tufted-back stool, swung it around, and promptly plunked my tired butt down.

About a minute ticked off the pink neon Budweiser clock, which hung on the far wall. A handsome young bartender (Tom Cruise) was busy serving other customers. He didn't see me come into the bar and sit down.

"Hey, barkeep! What's a guy have to do to get a drink around here?" I sternly asked.

The bartender sat a partially filled glass of beer down and leaped toward me as if he'd been shot out of a cannon. "Welcome to my bar, Cocktails & Dreams! What'll it be for you today, Sir?"

"My dreams aren't that big. How about a bottle of Zapmeister and a shrimp cocktail?"

"Coming right up!"

Less than a minute later, the bartender returned. He said, “Here you are, Sir. As you can see by looking around, everybody here is having a good time and feels right at home. This is the bar where your dreams can come true. Dressed in that suit of armor, it appears that your dream may be that of becoming the legendary Sir Lancelot.”

“Young man, bite your tongue before I reach up and whack it off with my sharp-bladed ax! *Lancelot* should dream about being *me!*”

“I’m sorry, Sir! I was just trying to make light of your unusual attire. Enjoy yourself and simply nod when you want another drink, okay?”

“Thanks, I’ll do just that!” A moment later, I began daydreaming. I said to myself, “I thought that my dream was to feel *and act* like a king, but . . .?”

Scenes from *One Million Years B.C.*, my favorite movie, rapidly fast-forwarded through my mind. I tried to visualize myself playing a part in the film. I said to myself, “I dream of dueling with a gigantic dinosaur and other prehistoric reptiles with Excalibur at my side. Those big bad creatures wouldn’t stand a fighting chance!”

Furthermore, I couldn’t forget about Loana, the sexy cave woman, played by Raquel Welch. I shouted, “I dream of swinging from trees with the beautiful Lady Raquel—e-r-r—Loana.” I also dreamed of enjoying other recreational activities in the company of the wild, sensual, cave woman!

The late Ted Knight, who played Ted Baxter on the *Mary Tyler Moore Show*, was sitting next to me at the bar. Almost every “baby boomer” in America would remember that Ted was the anchor for “W.J.M. NEWS” in Mary’s popular sitcom. “I’ve always dreamed of being Walter Cronkite,” Ted said, daydreaming.

“I have a dream!” shouted Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who was sitting to Ted’s right at the bar, “in spirit.” One of Dr. King’s lifelong dreams was to personally witness two black children and two white children walking toward him—all with their arms around one another’s shoulders and true friends, regardless of their respective races.

Homer Simpson was on a stool next to Dr. King. Unable to think of anything specific to dream about, Homer simply sat with

his hands over his eyes. He “wondered” and saw nothing but “blue sky” in his dream.

Off to Homer’s right, Lois Lane (Teri Hatcher) sat back, relaxed, on her bar stool. She was also daydreaming. Lois envisioned herself as standing at the altar with Superman (Dean Cain). “I hope that Superman is going to be as ‘physical’ with me as he has been with everyone else that he’s ever put his hands on,” Lois thought to herself.

Seated beside Lois Lane was Peggy Bundy (actress Katey Sagal from *Married . . . With Children*). Peggy envisioned herself lying seductively on a bed in a negligee with her husband Al Bundy anxiously looking on. She imagined that he was standing at the foot of the bed and wearing his tight under-shorts. But Al’s head would be attached to Arnold Schwarzenegger’s muscular body. She daydreamed that her husband was beating his chest with his fists and hollering, “Me, Tarzan—you, Jane!”

Al Bundy (actor Ed O’Neill) sat next to Peggy. Al’s dream was similar to Peggy’s, with these exceptions: He envisioned himself lying on the bed in *his* body, not Arnold Schwarzenegger’s. In his dream, Heather Locklear was seductively standing at the foot of the bed and wearing a scanty negligee. Al imagined Heather saying, “Me, Jane—you, Tarzan!”

At the far end of the bar, Leonard Nimoy (Mr. Spock in *Star Trek*) simply said, “This isn’t logical!”

Unable to get Raquel Welch off of my mind, I asked, “Can I really make my dreams come true?”

When Aphrodite energized, she immediately said, “Wantsalittle, indeed you can make your dreams come true! And you’re well down the road to realizing your dreams, right now.”

“You’re right! Sometimes, I forget just how far I’ve come toward achieving my fondest dream, which is to feel *and act* like a king!”

“That’s okay. I realize that you’re mentally caught up, right now, in your long journey and with your dreams—particularly your dream that features the lovely Raquel Welch.”

“Venus, I should just forget about keeping *any* secrets from you, shouldn’t I?”

Aphrodite just winked and giggled and said, “Henry David Thoreau wrote, ‘If you have built your castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put foundations under them. . . . If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endures to live the life he has imagined, he will meet with success unexpected in common hours.’ Wantsalittle, whatever are your personal goals and dreams, try to be patient yet persistent. Never give up! Be as determined as a Redbone coonhound in hot pursuit of your specific goals and dreams. And try to visualize your goals and dreams as if you have already achieved them.”

“How can I achieve my dreams by ‘imaging’?”

“Here’s an old adage: *Whatever your mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve.* Imaging is a powerful method for actualizing your dreams. If you can visualize something hard enough and long enough, you will surely receive it. The more intense the picture—constantly visualizing every detail of what it is that you want most—the faster your subconscious mind will show your conscious mind how to act, enabling you to make the right decisions as you actively pursue your goals and dreams.”

“Venus, I’m visualizing every splendid curve—I mean every little detail of my dream, right now!”

“Yeah, Wantsalittle, I’ll bet that you *are!* But be sure to image dreams that relate to your talents and abilities. Otherwise, you may end up chasing dreams that just weren’t meant to come true. In the incredibly moving, inspirational movie *Field of Dreams*, Dr. Archibald Graham’s childhood dream was to be a major league baseball player. He became a doctor instead, after finally realizing that he was most suited to a medical career. The point: Plan your dreams not just according to your personal interests, but also in harmony with your natural and better abilities.” (Author’s note: The late Burt Lancaster played the part of Dr. Archibald Graham in *Field of Dreams*.)

“I was afraid that you would say something like that. You really know how to take the fun out of dreaming!”

“In her fine book, *Inspired By Angels*, Sinda Jordan reminded people, ‘The journey that leads to the dream is more important to the growth of the soul than the actual achieving of the goal.’ And James Allen wrote, ‘The greatest achievement was at first and for a time a dream . . . Dreams are the seedlings of realities.’ Henry Ford

was dreaming before he originated the assembly line that led to more affordable automobiles. The Wright brothers were dreaming before they piloted the first airplanes. If you never have a dream, how can your dreams come true?"

"Yeah, but so many others, throughout my life, have tried to discourage me from achieving my dreams. Are these people just negative-minded, or are they jealous to some extent?"

"Wantsalittle, they are probably a little bit of both. Always remember that the world has two basic types of people—*dream-seekers* and *dream-stealers*. The very best advice that I can give you on the subject of 'achieving your dreams,' for now and in the future, is to simply ignore dream-stealers, and allow dream-seekers to encourage you with respect to achieving your personal goals and precious personal dreams."

Aphrodite paused momentarily. Then she said, "As you think with the goal of vividly visualizing your dreams, you will assuredly make your dreams come true. Be sure to use *imaging*. Try to picture your dreams as if you've already achieved them."

"Thanks! I'll give it my best shot!" Then Aphrodite just evaporated.

I wanted to travel to prehistoric times—surroundings similar to that which I saw in the film *One Million Years B.C.* I intended to fulfill my dream of using Excalibur to fight dinosaurs and other monstrous reptiles. Naturally, I also looked forward to meeting up with the likes of Raquel Welch, who played the part of the alluring cave woman in that movie.

I programmed the time-travel module and pushed the magic green *Go* button. Suddenly, I landed in what I *thought* was a prehistoric setting. I glanced around and saw plenty of huge, towering reptiles. And Excalibur, the legendary sword, was leaned up against a nearby pine tree. I was elated. I danced and I pranced around the Vette in exuberant celebration of my dream come true!

"Thank you, Venus!" I shouted, in case that my guardian angel could still hear me. "With Excalibur at my side, I will go to battle and defeat these mighty beasts. But where's my Lady Raquel? Something's afoul! Perhaps, I should concentrate on my primary dream—to feel *and act* like a king!"

What I did NOT see was a sign posted on a blue-spruce tree, just off to my right. The sign read “Welcome to Jurassic Park / NO HUNTING!” The time and place controls in the Vette had failed me. I had transported myself to *Jurassic Park*, by mistake. The “sword” turned out to be a movie “prop,” left lying against the pine tree by some forgetful Hollywood stage-worker. So much for my dream about hunting prehistoric creatures and being in the company of the gorgeous Lady Raquel!

(The moral of this episode: Whatever your mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve. “Imaging” can be a powerful tool to help you reach your dreams!)

Episode Twenty-five:

This Story's a "Real Croc"!

Lesson in Living:
Cooperation and Open-minded Thinking

Somewhere in Australia's Northern Territory; March 4, 1986

DISAPPOINTED WITH MY FAILURE to live out my dream, really a fantasy, with Raquel Welch, I pulled out a travel brochure. The brochure read "Australia / Vacation Paradise Down Under."

I anxiously opened the brochure to a map of Australia. I said to myself, "Ah! This 'out-back' area, near a little town called Walkabout Creek in the Northern Territory, looks interesting."

Again, I programmed the time-travel module in the Corvette and pressed the *Go* button. Suddenly, the car energized on a tiny island, which was out in the middle of a big swampy lake, somewhere in Australia's Northern Territory.

When I got out of the car, I saw a sign that was tacked to the trunk of a nearby palm tree. The sign read "Out-Back Island Resort." Just under those words, the sign read "DANGER: MAN-EATING CROCS / NO SWIMMING."

The Australian summer sun scorched the rocky landscape. All in all, it was a blistering hot, sultry day. I put on some swimming trunks over my suit of armor and wiped the sweat off of my forehead with a beach towel. Then I popped the top on a 12-ounce can of Zapmeister and lit a Tomarlbury.

A few minutes later, I gazed out over the muddy lake, just beyond the shoreline, and saw a crocodile's head. The croc's

greenish-tinted eyes and long, pointed snout broke the surface of the water, just long enough for me to get a good look. I asked myself, "What kind of a vacation paradise is this?"

The Vette was off to one side, buried to the tops of all four tires in the mud. A wallaby (little kangaroo) was hopping about in a cool pool of cloudy brown water (a mud hole), alongside of the car. The cute wallaby curiously and carefully inspected the dirty sports car.

My helmet had a small door on the side of it. On the door, a warning sign read "Closed Mind / NO Trespassing." In addition, a metal compartment, with a thick steel door in the area of my heart, was marked "Cold Storage."

"This is some funny-looking car, mate," the wallaby joked. "I hope that you've got 4-wheel drive!"

Not in the best of moods at that moment, I replied, "I've seen and heard it all. I have no time or regard for the shallow opinions of others."

When I finished my beer, I grabbed for the door on my armored chest and flipped the latch on my built-in body cooler. Inside the little, cold-storage compartment, one last can of Zapmeister was leaned up against my slowly beating, almost frozen, blackish-tinted heart.

With a frown on my face, I said, "Sometimes, I feel in my heart as cold as ice." Then I remembered a few lyrics from "Cold, Cold Heart," a memorable song by the legendary Hank Williams Sr. I sang, "Why can't I free my doubtful mind and melt my cold, cold heart?" Right after that, I stared skyward and asked, "Venus, what can you tell me about cooperating with others and becoming a more open-minded individual?"

Properly dressed for the occasion, the goddess of love wore a bright-orange, two-piece, string bikini. I quickly took another huge gulp of beer and wiped some more drops of sweat off of my forehead. Then Aphrodite said, "Wantsalittle, no man is an island. People must learn to get along and cooperate with one another. *Listening, open-minded thinking, and compromise are the cornerstones for effective communication.* Be approachable, and put others at ease. Establish an 'open door' policy, which allows people to freely but tactfully express their ideas and opinions, without fear of intimidation or retaliation from you for their frank comments."

“Should I apply these more effective communication techniques with *kangaroos* as well as with people?”

My guardian angel just relaxed her entire body and lowered her head, momentarily, as if she were at a loss for words after hearing my silly question. Then she stood straight up and swept her flowing dark-blond hair back, away from her big blue eyes. But she didn't laugh. I guess that Aphrodite failed to appreciate my attempt to make a little joke out of the circumstances. She simply continued, “As author Sinda Jordan suggested, ‘Unlock your mind and release it from the limiting thoughts to which it clings. Nurture your mind with exposure to new ideas and allow it to thrive.’ The moral: No one individual knows all of the truth. Exchanging knowledge—what you and others perceive to be truths—will enable you to retain any new and valuable information that lends itself to your perception of the truth, while you discard the rest. By sharing worthwhile information and compromising, you will constantly grow as an individual.”

As I tried to look at Aphrodite with a straight face, I couldn't help but to show a slight smirk on my mug. I said, “All right, I'm listening to your advice and taking it seriously. Do you have anything else that you'd like to say?”

“Wantsalittle, please wipe that little grin off your chin. I'm trying to be serious here, and you should be, too! Sometimes, I don't know if you are simply being stubborn or if you are just plain pig-headed and uncompromising. But one thing is for sure: You are never going to be as noble as you want to be, and you will never really feel *and act* like a king, unless you lose your occasional bad disposition and say goodbye to all of your less-than-admirable, uncompromising, and stubborn ways! And it wouldn't hurt for you to tone down your sarcastic rhetoric, at times, as well!”

My most perceptive advising angel had caught me flatfooted. I didn't know how to reply. Of course, she was right with her constructive but stinging criticism. After thinking about her comments for a few moments, I could only think of five small words to say, “Venus, I am very sorry!”

“I accept your apology. Perhaps I was a bit too rough on you. But, at times, our minds don't mesh, and we're not on the same page, at least in terms of relating with each other in a serious manner. When the occasion or circumstances justify a more

straightforward posture, I don't really appreciate your snide remarks. Anyway, you're only human, so I guess that I can live with your sometimes quirky demeanors and frivolous comments."

I wanted to rib Carmen—I mean—Aphrodite on her sarcastic remark of my being "only human," but I thought better of the notion and let it go. I simply allowed her to complete her valuable food-for-thought message, without offering any light-hearted rebuttal.

Aphrodite concluded our touchy conversation when she said, "Wantsalittle, as you think with feelings of cooperation, your open-minded approach to people will result in more effective person-to-person communications. Who will you want to learn from and cooperate with, today?"

"The very next *human being* that I see!" The goddess of love couldn't help herself from cracking a little smile before she disappeared.

Suddenly, the door to my mind swung wide open. A message printed on the front of the little door now read "Welcome / Always Open." I said, "From now on, my door will always be open to new ideas, compromise, and suggestions."

Then, in my chest compartment, I noticed that my nearly frozen heart had thawed, and a new flaming-red heart had replaced the icy-cold, blackish-colored one. I said to myself, "I'm getting a little warm with this fire now burning in my heart. I'd sure love to go for a swim. But I'm afraid of those man-eating crocs!"

It turned out that there wasn't a crocodile in the water, at least not of the *reptilian* variety. Paul "Crocodile Dundee" Hogan surfaced. The comedy actor had been wearing a crocodile's head mask. "I was just teasin' ya, mate," Hogan said, a wide grin across his face. "This pond doesn't have any crocs. So take off that heavy, cumbersome suit of armor and come on in. The water here is safe for swimming!"

(The moral of this episode: Keep an open mind at all times. Respect the ideas and opinions of others. Be approachable, and try to cooperate with people. If you do, you will grow as an individual and improve your ability to communicate with others!)

Episode Twenty-six:

The Slap Shot that Broke the Ice Between “the Great One” and Me

Lesson in Living:
Good Sportsmanship

New York City; December 13, 1997

I NEEDED SOME EXERCISE, and I wanted to play some hockey. So I headed for New York City in 1997. I quickly put together a hockey team called the “Camelot Knights.” Then I matched our team up with the New York Rangers of the National Hockey League for an exhibition hockey game.

I put on my #13 hockey jersey and hockey gloves over my full suit of armor. I looked lean and mean; I was ready for contact. The referee dropped the black puck at center ice, and the contest began.

The first twenty-minute period ended without incident. Neither team managed to score. It was a hard fought defensive battle from the outset. Wayne Gretzky, New York’s famous perennial All-star team captain, finally broke the ice at the 11:38 (minutes and seconds) mark of the second period. The speedy, crafty, center iceman darted out from his “office” area behind the Knights’ net and slapped the puck home. Gretzky’s timely goal gave the Rangers a 1-0 lead as we headed into the third and final stanza.

With just under six minutes left in the game and the score still 1-0, the fabulous Gretzky stole another puck near center ice and raced toward our goalie, undefended, on a fast break. I was the only skater who had a chance to stop Gretzky from likely scoring on the play, which would have virtually “iced” the game for the stingy Rangers.

I angled in on Wayne from several yards across the ice. I couldn't quite get to the streaking Gretzky. Just as he was about to release one of his patented slap shots, I reached out with my long-handled hockey stick and collared #99 around the neck. Wayne's head snapped back, and he lost his balance. Gretzky started to topple backwards. When he fell, he tried to stretch his left leg out to brace himself for the fall. But the front portion of the blade on Wayne's left skate dug itself into the ice; his left foot didn't move along with the rest of his leg. Gretzky's awkwardly positioned left leg buckled at the knee. He went down, hard, hitting his back on the frozen floor. The fall briefly dazed hockey's living legend. But my rough, harsh tactics didn't seriously injure him.

By the time Wayne worked his way back onto his feet, he was fighting mad. "This is just an exhibition game!" Gretzky shouted. "What's your excuse for your madness and unnecessarily brutal, dirty style of play?"

I bitterly responded, "I'm a fighting knight, sworn to the duel. You are a formidable opponent. Nonetheless, if I had my lance, I might impale you!"

Without further words or delay, Gretzky and I threw our gloves and sticks down on the ice. We began "duking it out" near the pace-off circle in the Knights' zone. Both benches cleared; fights broke out all across the rink. Some 15,000 Rangers' fans whooped it up and hollered. They loved every moment of the frantic, fisticuffs action.

By the time the referees brought a halt to the brawl, several players' jerseys had been ripped and torn. Blotches of blood gradually soaked into the badly scraped, scarred-up ice.

I was awarded a five-minute major penalty for "roughing." While I sat in the penalty box, I tried to analyze my still aggressive-oriented character. Then I tilted my head back and questioned my guardian angel. "Do you think of me as being overly competitive or as being a bad sport?"

While I served my penalty time, Aphrodite, who had her favorite #2 printed on the back of her Knights' hockey uniform, met me in the penalty box. She sat down next to me and said, "Wantsalittle, winning in life is important, but not at any cost. A fine line exists between failure and success in almost anything that

you set out to do. Practice the ‘psychology of winning.’ Be a fierce but fair competitor. Get mentally tough from your determination to win. Exercise your will power to succeed. Strive to perform to the best of your abilities. Then let the chips fall where they may. More important, *remember that regardless of whether a person or a team wins or loses, true victory belongs to he or she or those who exhibit the best sportsmanship.*”

For some reason, Aphrodite suddenly got up off the chair. When she tried to turn around to face me, she slipped on the ice and fell down on her hands and knees, which interrupted her conversation with me.

When my celestial advisor got back to her feet, she wiped some ice crystals off of the front of her hockey uniform. Then she continued, “Regardless of the circumstances, true champions control their emotions. Even when provoked, they don’t throw childish temper tantrums. And real winners know in their own minds that they won’t be defeated in the long run by trying moments of frustration or by inevitable losses or temporary setbacks. Try to follow the advice of Shri Krishna, Master of all Yogis, who said, ‘Be even-tempered in success and failure, for it is this evenness of temper which is meant by yoga.’ As you think with feelings of determination and good sportsmanship, you will be a tough but fair competitor. Wantsalittle, do you have what it takes to be competitive and still be a good sport?”

“Yes, Venus, I think that I do!”

“Great!” Then Aphrodite simply skated off into oblivion.

After the game, I stood in line with my teammates as the triumphant Rangers’ players paraded by. Players from both teams shook one another’s hands, a gesture of good sportsmanship.

I held my hockey stick by my side as “the Great One” walked up to shake my hand. Together, Gretzky and I glanced down and saw a patch of open water; the ice had just melted between our skates—the skates of two fierce but fair competitors.

“Congratulations, Sir Wayne! You truly are the greatest hockey player *ever!* I have learned that winning is not so important as just doing my best and showing good faith on the field of battle.”

“For a rookie, you’re not so bad yourself,” Gretzky replied. “Good luck to you throughout the rest of your journey!”

(The moral of this episode: True victory belongs to he or to she or to those who display the best sportsmanship!)

Episode Twenty-seven:

My Knight Blues Left Me Singing the “Jailhouse Rock”

Lesson in Living:
Escaping from Loneliness

Crawford, Colorado; April 17, 2000

AFTER THE HOCKEY GAME, I spent a couple of days, sightseeing, in New York City. But I quickly got tired of the hustle and bustle atmosphere in the “Big Apple.” I wanted to visit a less-hectic, less-crowded town in rural America. I decided to travel to Crawford, Colorado—a scenic little ranching community. The town, with a population of about 200 people, was nestled in the colorful hills on Colorado’s Western Slope.

I stopped at the Needlerock Inn in Crawford to have a couple of beers and to play some darts. I entered the building, which was a restaurant and bar under the same roof. It was a cozy little place with a country atmosphere. I walked up to the bar and said, “Bartender, I’ll have a bottle of Zapmeister.”

“We don’t stock that brand. How about an ice-cold bottle of Coors?”

“Okay, that’ll be fine. And can I borrow a set of your house darts, partner?”

“Sure!”

I drank my beer, and then I decided to play a game of darts. As I began shooting darts, a cute little cowgirl walked by, right in front of me, just as I was about to throw another dart. She said, “Pardon me! I don’t mean to interfere with your dart game. But all of these

tables and people in here are blocking my path to the restroom. Some tight arrangement, isn't it?"

"Yes, it is crowded in here. My lady, you're not disturbing me in the slightest!" She continued on her way.

When the young woman came out of the bathroom, I unintentionally tripped her, as she had once again walked directly in front of me. "Excuse me!" I exclaimed, as she tumbled to the hard, oak-wood floor. "I didn't see you coming. Are you okay?"

The slender dark-haired cowgirl bounced back on her feet. She quickly responded, "That's quite all right. I realize it was an accident. What's your name?"

"Sir Wansalittle More—"

Before I had a chance to finish telling her my last name, the offended cowgirl interrupted me and said, "Mr. whoever-you-are, it's a good thing that my boyfriend, who is sitting over yonder, didn't hear what you just said to me!"

Unfortunately, her boy friend *had* overheard me. He jumped off his bar stool and rushed right over. He said, "Hey, little metal man, you should watch your step!"

I thought that I was being challenged. I "lost my cool" and swiftly threw a roundhouse right hook. The tall, lanky dude never saw it coming. My wide-sweeping punch had caught the redheaded cowboy totally by surprise. Up to that point, I hadn't been able to "hit the wall" with my darts. But I managed to "hit the bull's-eye" with my fist when I smacked that local cowpoke square on his nose! The punishing single blow knocked the starry-eyed cowboy for a loop. Then, of course, I spent the next twenty-four hours in the local *slammer*.

When I woke up the next morning, I found myself dressed in a faded-orange prison gown, which the town marshal must have pulled over my suit of armor sometime during the night. Then I noticed that my ankles were collared to a big, heavy, black ball and chain. The marshal, not wanting to take any chances with his mean-looking guest, had shackled me to a jailhouse cot.

I asked myself, "Where am I? What have I done to deserve such punishment? I'm so lonely that I feel as though I'm locked up in a dungeon. Venus, how can I break these chains of loneliness?"

Aphrodite didn't immediately answer my call. The few minutes that it took her to arrive seemed like an eternity. While I waited, my knight blues left me singing the "Jailhouse Rock," one of the late Elvis Presley's first "hit" songs.

When Aphrodite visited me in my cell, she wasn't wearing a prison gown. And she wasn't there to bail me out—or to bust me out of jail.

My guardian angel wore a sheriff's uniform, much like that of the local constable who had arrested me. Aphrodite just glared at me for a few seconds. She never so much as blinked. Finally, with her big blue eyes still fixed on me, she said, "I'm sorry that I'm late. I had another most important matter that required my personal attention. If you're lonely, Wantsalittle, it's probably because you turn people off. Are you selfish or hard to get along with? Are you overly critical of others or egotistical? Do you generally wear a frown, instead of a smile? If you want to break out from feeling imprisoned by loneliness, start by chipping away at your poor self-concept. Stop imaging yourself as being unpopular. Instead, *visualize yourself as a new, cheerful, and fun-to-be-with individual.*"

"Venus, at home in Camelot, I live alone. But I rarely feel lonely. During this journey, although I talk with others every day, I really feel lonely at times!"

"A clear distinction exists between living alone and being lonely. Many happy people enjoy solitude. They like themselves, and they stay active with their personal interests. Nevertheless, if you would prefer, like most people, to socialize more often, begin to look at yourself in a more positive, brighter light. To make new friends, first become your own best friend. Then become genuinely interested in people."

Aphrodite hesitated for a moment. She stared at my ugly, orange, prison garb and giggled. Then she concluded, "If all else fails, you still don't have to be lonely. Jesus said, 'I am with you always, even unto the end of the world' (Mathew 28:20). As you think with loving, cheerful feelings and keep in close contact with your God, you should never experience undo loneliness. Try to improve your self-image. And learn to view others with higher regard."

Right before Aphrodite left, she said, “By the way, Wantsalittle, I sure hope that your little ‘altercation’ at the Needlerock Inn and your having spent a night behind bars have taught you a good lesson with respect to overcoming your aggressive behavior!”

Still in jail, I introduced myself to my cellmate. “I’m getting out of here in a few hours,” I said. “What’s your name?”

“Nick Castle,” the masked inmate replied. (Author’s note: Nick Castle played the “bad guy” character of Michael Myers in the first *Halloween* flick.)

“I’m glad to know you, Sir Nick. My name is Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife. It’s nice to meet a new friend.”

“Likewise! I’m going to be in this jail cell for a while. Do you like rock concerts?”

“I’ve never been to one. What did you have in mind?” I asked.

“The cops picked me up at a place called the Mad Dog Restaurant & Fountain Cafe, just down the street from here,” Nick replied. “The place is owned by Joe Cocker and his wife Pam. The guy’s a pretty famous singer and musician from way back when—around the time of Woodstock, I think. And he still tours the world doing concert gigs.”

Nick paused, briefly, then he said, “Before some cowpoke recognized me and called the law, the restaurant manager—I think that her name was Trixie or Tracy or something like that—anyway, the cute little manager gave me a couple of tickets to Joe Cocker’s upcoming concert in Denver. I guess that I’m not going to be able to go. Do you want the tickets?”

“Sure! Thanks a lot, my new friend!”

I took the tickets. Later, I attended Joe Cocker’s concert in Denver. The experience was most enjoyable. I didn’t have to attend the concert alone. Tracy, the manager at the Mad Dog Restaurant & Fountain Cafe in Crawford, went with me. At least for that special evening, Tracy helped to free me from my chains of loneliness.

(The moral of this episode: If you feel lonely, work to build your self-concept and character, overall. Visualize yourself as a fun-to-be-with, cheerful individual. And become truly interested in others!)

Episode Twenty-eight:

A Truly Divine Idea

Lesson in Living:
Being “For” Instead of “Against” Things

Mayberry, North Carolina; June 6, 1963

IHAD WATCHED A RERUN of the *Andy Griffith Show* while I was sitting in jail in Crawford, Colorado. I got a kick out of Sheriff Andy Taylor (played by Andy Griffith) and his hilarious deputies, Barney Fife (played by the late Don Knotts) and Gomer Pyle (played by Jim Nabors). So I decided to pay Mayberry a visit in the year of 1963.

A slight miscalculation on my “place” control put me in Raleigh, North Carolina, about fifty miles north of Mayberry. I elected to drive the rest of the way.

On the two-lane highway, and a few miles south of Raleigh, a guy in a cherry-red 1957 Ford Thunderbird passed me. The young man was speeding, drinking a beer, and smoking a cigarette. Furthermore, the irresponsible driver had ignored the double-yellow, no-passing lines, which were painted on that stretch of pavement, and a blind curve was just ahead.

As soon as he passed me, I leaned over the steering wheel. With a scowl on my face, I hollered, “Halt, you idiot! I’m enraged! I’m going to chase you down and whack you up alongside of your head!”

Then I glanced over at my big war club, which was lying on the passenger's seat. I asked, "What else can I do to satisfy my anger and get that maniac off the road?"

On arrival, Aphrodite put my war club behind the seat and sat beside me in the car. She was very irritated with me. "Wantsalittle, you shouldn't react with road rage when another driver does something that upsets you! Such childlike behavior simply compounds an already dangerous situation! The roadways of the world are *not* a good place for you to develop an eye-for-an-eye, hostile, or aggressive attitude! For that matter, neither is any other place!"

"You're absolutely right. I'm very sorry."

A brief pause ensued in our conversation before Aphrodite said, "While we are on the subject of 'driving,' I have several most important comments. Wantsalittle, without constant focus and attention to what you are doing, a moving vehicle can be a deadly weapon. At any given moment, innocent people could be critically injured or killed as a result of an error in your judgment while driving, whether or not your mistake was intentional or accidental in nature."

"Venus, as you know, I have not been driving for very long, and I lack experience behind the wheel. And as you also know, before I left Willie C. Light's house in Hollywood, he gave me some driving lessons so that I could borrow his new—"

"Yeah, yeah. Willie loaned you his new Corvette, which features the time-travel module, so that you could embark on your journey into time. But I have one question for you: Do you have a driver's license?"

"What's a 'driver's license'?"

"Just as I thought. Do you know that you are breaking the law?"

"Oh, my God—e-r-r—oh, my *goddess!* Willie didn't tell me that I needed to have a license to drive."

"That's okay, Wantsalittle. In all of the excitement about your returning his time-travel-remote devise, etc., Willie simply forgot to have you take a California driver's test and get a driver's license. Fortunately, Willie was a good driving instructor. At least you haven't made any serious mistakes with your driving up to now. But

as soon as you get to Mayberry, you had better have Andy or Barney issue you a valid driver's license."

"Okay, I will do just as you suggest."

"People will probably laugh at you if they find out that you got your driver's license from Andy Taylor or Barney Fife in Mayberry. Besides, what will happen after you leave Mayberry and venture somewhere into the future? For instance, if a traffic cop from someplace in the year 2010 pulls you over, you will have a tough time explaining why your 'current' driver's license was issued in 1963! That's probably why Willie didn't bother to tell you that you needed a driver's license."

"Willie is a pretty smart guy, isn't he?"

"Yeah, yeah. In comparison with the rest of humanity, Willie is among God's better creations. However, he is not as smart as you may think. For example: If Willie is as smart as you say he is, why did he allow his bad habits of smoking cigarettes and drinking excessively cost him his otherwise most loving and very happy marriage?"

"Venus, you seem to know as much about Willie as you do about me. Do you know that much about *everyone* on the planet?"

"As I told you the first time we met, the Lord gave me many more powers than I had as the Greek and/or Roman goddess of love. All you need to know about my divine abilities is that I have the power to help you to become the best that you can be."

"Okay, I'm sorry to have interrupted you. Is there anything else that you would like to say about Willie?"

"Yes! As most fallible humans could use a little more of, Willie needs more *will power!* Nonetheless, Willie C. Light is a pretty smart guy, as you insinuated. He is also a great father to Marilotta. And he has his perspectives in life in pretty good order. What's more, I love the way Willie always motivates and encourages people to succeed in their lives, regardless of their personal ambitions. Above all, Willie has a heart as big as a lion's. Therefore, I'm pretty sure that God has overlooked his few personal faults and bad habits. When that time comes, I believe that the Lord has already reserved a spot for Willie C. Light in the Kingdom of Heaven!"

"Has God reserved a spot in heaven for me, as yet?"

Aphrodite giggled and responded, “What do *you* think? Let me better answer your premature question this way: Overall, you are a pretty nice guy and your intentions are in good order. But, when provoked, you have just got to lose your aggressive tendencies and learn to handle your problems in more tactful and socially acceptable ways. And it wouldn’t hurt for you to discard your sexist-minded attitude.”

My guardian angel paused to collect her thoughts on the subject of “driving.” Then she said, “Anyway, Wantsalittle, you can ignore what I said earlier about your having to get a driver’s license when you get to Mayberry. I will just have to watch out for you, every step of the way, while you are driving, during the remainder of your unusual journey into time. Generally, I think that driver’s licenses are too easy to get. Far too many people drive as though they bought their driver’s licenses at their local 7-Eleven convenience stores or at their neighborhood Wal-Mart discount stores.”

“You mean like the guy who just speeded past me in the cherry-red T-bird.”

“Yes, that guy is a good example. If drivers don’t value their own safety and lives, they should at least have respect for all others who they may so profoundly affect by their careless or downright reckless driving habits. Especially they should have deep concern for the infants and/or children who may be passengers in their own vehicles or who may be passengers in other vehicles.”

“I totally agree. Can you give me some more valuable driving tips?”

“After you have concluded your enlightening journey into time, unless you intend to meet up with God or me again, in person, perhaps way before your ‘time,’ you should always obey posted speed limits. Excessive speed can kill! And never follow other cars too closely. You should allow at least one car length in distance between you and the car in front of you for every ten miles per hour of speed that you are going. In addition, never pass someone when the yellow line is on your side of the median, and never change lanes, suddenly or otherwise, without first signaling your intentions. And swerving in and out of traffic, whether or not you are using your turn signals, can be very dangerous and could easily result in your causing an accident.”

“The nutcase in the Thunderbird was drinking a beer. Willie told me that drinking while driving wasn’t legal. Is it?”

“Absolutely not! Driving under the influence of alcohol, whether or not you are drinking at the time, is an accident waiting to happen! And ditto to driving under the influence of either prescription drugs or illegal drugs! More fatal accidents can be attributed to people who have been driving while under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs than for any other single cause. Wantsalittle, even if the guilty party survived after causing an alcohol or drug-related fatal accident, that individual would be tried and likely found guilty of vehicular homicide. Not only that, but also—what could that guilty person later say to the family members of the innocent victim or innocent victims of his or her totally illegal driving behavior and action?”

“Venus, I simply couldn’t live with myself if I had done something behind the wheel of a car, or otherwise, that resulted in the serious injury or death of another human being or others, particularly if one or more of the innocent victims were infants or children.”

“I’m very glad that you feel that way. Just make certain that you always obey all traffic laws, always focus on the road, and constantly be aware of the adjacent surroundings while you are driving. And drive defensively at all times.”

“What do you mean by driving ‘defensively’?”

“Driving defensively amounts to always being on guard as to the possible driving mistakes of others. I could give you many, many examples of ‘defensive driving.’ Here is one example: You approach an intersection with the green light to proceed in your favor. Another driver, who might be talking on his or her cell phone, or for whatever reason may not be paying attention to the red light as he or she approaches the same intersection, from either the left or from the right of you—that preoccupied, careless driver fails to stop for the red light. If you were driving defensively, and if you noticed that the other driver was not slowing down to stop for the red light as he or she approached the intersection, your alertness and peripheral vision possibly could avoid what might otherwise result in a horrific accident.”

“I completely understand, and I totally agree with your defensive-driving example. But I have one question: What’s a ‘cell phone’?”

“Wantsalittle, I was afraid that you were going to ask me that question. Let’s just say that a cell phone is a convenient, alternative way of talking to someone by regular phone. You *do* know about regular telephones, don’t you?”

“Yes! Willie taught me how to use a normal telephone while I was visiting with him in Hollywood.”

“Good for him. For now, while you’re on your journey into time, that’s really all you need to know. Cell phones may have been a marvelous contemporary invention, but they can be extremely hazardous devices while being used in moving vehicles. People who have been momentarily distracted while both driving and talking or driving and text messaging at the same time on their cell phones have caused numerous automobile accidents. *If people are determined to use hand-held cell phones while they are driving, they should, especially when sending text messages, have the common sense to pull off the road, when it is safe and legal to do so, before using them!*”

Aphrodite paused, just long enough to take a deep breath of air. Then she continued, “Wantsalittle, *you should always be aware of what other drivers are doing, and you need to use your best common sense and your best judgment at all times when you are driving your vehicle.* Finally, as you should know by now, *you must also keep your emotions in check when another driver has done something illegal, even if that individual has put your personal safety at high risk.* Your getting upset and wanting to retaliate in any way simply compounds the problem at hand. And your feelings and/or actions of ‘road rage’ will likely add to the already dangerous circumstance at hand.”

“Okay, I will always do the very best that I can, while driving, to drive safely, to obey all traffic laws, and to keep my emotions under control.”

“I sincerely hope that you do. Just remember that driving laws are for *everyone’s* safety and wellbeing. And remember to pay close attention, stay focused, and make sure that, while you are behind the wheel of a vehicle, *your driving is your first priority* until you get to your intended destination.”

“Can you think of anything else to discuss on this occasion?”

“Wantsalittle, here’s a fresh idea: Be *‘FOR’* SAFE DRIVING AND ACCIDENT-FREE HIGHWAYS, not ‘against’ careless or drunk drivers. Be *‘FOR’* CLEANER AIR TO BREATHE, not ‘against’ smokers, cars, and factories that pollute our atmosphere. Be *‘FOR’* A HEALTHIER, DRUG-FREE WORLD, not ‘against’ people who use or deal illegal drugs. Be *‘FOR’* EVERYBODY’S RIGHT TO PRIVACY, not ‘against’ paparazzi photographers and autograph hounds. Be *‘FOR’* PERSONAL AMBITION AND DREAM-SEEKERS, not ‘against’ procrastinators or dream-stealers. Be *‘FOR’* ALL HUMAN BEINGS BEING HUMAN BEINGS, not ‘against’ people who are racially prejudice and/or those who speak or write with racially discriminating comments or remarks.”

“I’m not sure that I’m following you, Venus.”

“By being *‘FOR’* instead of ‘against’ things, you can formulate more positive mental pictures with your affirmative words. Ultimately, clear visual images of what you WANT, rather than of what you don’t want, will more likely result in affirmative thoughts and actions. Consequently, you and all other people will benefit by enjoying safer, healthier, and more prosperous lifestyles and communities.”

“Do you mean that I should think and speak more affirmatively?”

“Yes, Wantsalittle, that’s precisely what I mean. As you think with positive thoughts, and you visualize what it is that you *want*, rather than visualizing what you don’t want, you will more likely achieve positive results. Concentrate on what *‘FOR’* slogans you can form positive images about with respect to: racism, alcohol abuse, spouse abuse, child neglect and/or abuse, cruelty to animals, staying in school, gangs, harmful cults, or any types of criminal, socially unacceptable forms of behavior.”

“Venus, that’s truly a divine idea!”

“Thank you, Wantsalittle! Well, I had better get going. I’ve got some personal matters to attend to.”

After talking with Aphrodite, I pulled the Corvette over to the side of the road. Then I got on the CB radio and called the sheriff’s office in Mayberry. Someone answered my call, and I asked, “Is this Deputy Fife?”

“No, this is Opie Taylor (played by Ron Howard). My pa—he’s the sheriff—is out of the office. Do you want to speak with Gomer Pyle? He’s one of my dad’s deputies.”

“Yes, Opie, let me speak with Gomer.”

Opie handed the phone to deputy Pyle. I said, “Sir Gomer, my name is Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife. I’m out here on the main highway, headed toward Mayberry from Raleigh. I’m about thirty miles away. A reckless and possible drunk driver is headed in your direction. Will you tell Sheriff Taylor or Deputy Fife to stop this idiot before he kills someone?”

“Shazzam! A killer on the loose and coming to Mayberry. I’ll get Andy and Barney. We’ll round up a posse! Thanks, Sir—whoever you said you were. I’ve got to go now!”

(The moral of this episode: By being “FOR” instead of “against” things, you can formulate more positive mental pictures with your affirmative words. Clear images of what you WANT, rather than of what you don’t want, will more likely result in affirmative actions!)

Episode Twenty-nine:

How I Turned My “Brown Eyes” Blue

Lesson in Living:

Humility

Jerusalem, Israel; in the days of David and Goliath

MY JOURNEY THROUGH MAYBERRY taught me a good lesson about “road rage.” But I was somewhat disappointed that I didn’t get the opportunity to personally meet Sheriff Taylor and Deputy Fife. Anyhow, I set the time and place controls on the time-travel module in the Corvette to Jerusalem, back in the days of David and Goliath.

I thought that I had made considerable personal progress in my journey thus far. I believed that I had come a long way toward fashioning a more virtuous, kinglike character. I was pretty happy with myself, and I really wanted others to hear about it. I got my wish!

When I arrived in Jerusalem, about a thousand people gathered around me. They were enchanted with my unusual metal costume. And the strange, metallic-red object on black rubber tires also blew their minds! All of the villagers were very curious about me. They imagined that I was from somewhere in outer space.

I thought that I needed a stage of sorts—some place where I could stand above the crowd and speak with more authority. A black stallion, grazing on some hay, was close by. I mounted the stallion and faced the hoard of spectators.

I said, “Gather around here, all of you inquisitive folks. I want to tell you my story. My name is Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife.

Although you haven't heard of me, I'm from the Land of Camelot. I've traveled throughout the—"

"You're from Cama-where?" a confused onlooker broke in and asked.

The onlooker's rude interruption instantly angered me. I grabbed my ax and war club and held the weapons high over my head. "I've never met my match in either joust or duel!" I screamed, a bragging tone in my voice. "Who dares to step forward to challenge the meanest and the most ferocious knight in the history of the world—and for all times?"

I didn't see a short, skinny, young lad in the midst of the crowd. He was holding a sling, and he was ready to fire. The perturbed boy said, "I'm going to knock this bozo off his high-horse just as I did to *Goliath!*" With my big "brown" eyes staring wildly into the crowd, I suddenly took a blow to the side of the head; a golf-ball-size stone put a quarter-of-an-inch-deep divot in my hard steel helmet.

Momentarily staggered by the rock, which had been hurled from little *David's* sling, I shook the cobwebs out of my head and said, "I guess that I've been a little 'full of it' lately. Where can I find a big piece of humble pie?"

Once again, my guardian angel made a timely appearance. She said, "There's a big difference between having a healthy ego and being egotistical. There's also a big difference between being the life of the party and always having to be the last one to speak. Author Glenn Clark wrote, 'Until one learns to lose one's self, he cannot find himself.'"

"I guess that I got a little carried away with myself, didn't I?"

"Yes—you did!"

"It's just that I've enjoyed so much personal success thus far on my journey into time that—"

Aphrodite interrupted. She said, "*Any worthwhile achievement simply equates with going one step up the hill from mediocrity. When you reach that point that you receive ovations, you should feel most modest because you have just begun to tap the limitless resources of your true abilities. Continue to think about that thing within you that is next worthy of being done.*"

"Thanks for the great advice!"

“Wantsalittle, as you think with the feeling of humility, your modest character will be appreciated by others. You will allow yourself to reach the peaks of still higher mountains. Determine what you can confidently and proudly accomplish, but still remain humble about.”

“Venus, thanks again! I’ll call on you later.”

Because the town folks didn’t care to listen to any more of my bragging, the crowd had dispersed. I sat down on a nearby log and propped my chin up with my right hand. I slowly digested my guardian angel’s insightful food-for-thought message on the subject of “humility.”

While I contemplated about my boastful nature, I smelled the pleasant aroma of a homemade pastry. I scooted back a bit, straddled the log, and pointed my nose in the direction of the pleasing scent.

A generous, white-haired, elderly woman walked up to me. She handed me a platter marked “Granny’s finest humble pie.” As I licked my lips and rubbed my tummy in anticipation of the timely treat, my previously *brownish* eyes suddenly turned big and *blue*.

I scooped up a healthy-size portion of the humble pie and took a bite. Then I said, “Yum-yum—delicious—this really hits the spot! From now on, I intend to be modest, as a good knight always should be.”

(The moral of this episode: As Glenn Clark wrote, “Until one learns to lose one’s self, he cannot find himself.”)

Episode Thirty:

Two-stepping My Way Across the Deck of this Boat Nearly Drowned Me in the “Sea of Love”!

Lesson in Living:
Finding True Romance

Off the coast of the Bahamas; October 11, 1998; 8:30 P.M.

NOW THAT I HAD BEEN HUMBLLED, I opted to search for true romance. I traveled into the future and landed on the deck of the *Sun Princess* (Love Boat) in 1998. Cruise Director Suzanne Zimmerman and Captain Jim Kennedy cordially greeted me upon my arrival. (Author’s note: Stacey Travis played the part of Cruise Director Suzanne Zimmerman, and the late Robert Urich played the character of Captain Jim Kennedy in the TV series *Love Boat: The Next Wave*, which aired in 1998 and 1999.)

That evening I spruced myself up, rented a black tuxedo jacket, and headed for the ballroom. After finding an unoccupied table, I sat down and ordered a bottle of Zapmeister. Then I carefully scanned the spacious room from left to right; I was looking for a dance partner.

In moments, I spotted a hot prospect. A short, shapely brunette sat all alone, a couple of tables off to my port side. I got up and smoothed out the lapels on my black tux jacket, which I had on over my lustrous, silver, metal suit. Then I ran my hand through my short, light-brown hair and ambled over to her table.

“My fair lady, would you like to dance?”

“Yes, I would! Thanks for asking. You’re certainly a noble-looking gentleman. Who knows, maybe I’ve finally found my knight in shining armor!”

The ship’s orchestra played the “Theme to the Love Boat.” We danced. She looked absolutely stunning. Some simple strands of pearls and sexy, look-at-me, deep-red lipstick highlighted her strapless turquoise party dress.

This presumptuous lady wasn’t bashful. She clamped both of her arms around my waist, tightly embraced me, and rested her head sideways on my right shoulder. She pressed against me so hard that I felt her firm bosoms clear through the thick steel plates of my armored chest. The diamond-studded band on her left-hand ring finger intermittently scraped the warming metal on my back; each little rub ignited flashes of light, which were seen by everyone across the wide, dimly lit ballroom.

I was thoroughly enjoying myself when, from out of nowhere, Danny DeVito (Louie from *Taxi*) tapped me on the left shoulder. I turned around. Danny shouted, “Hey, you, masquerading in the tin tent! Mind if I cut in so that I can dance with my *WIFE*?” I hadn’t realized it, but I’d been dancing with Rhea Perlman (Carla from *Cheers* and Zena from *Taxi*), whose real-life husband happened to be Danny DeVito.

With my head down and a huge frown on my face, I meandered off the dance floor. I said, “Shucks, I thought that there was some ‘spark’ between us.” Then I raised my head and asked, “How can I lose my lustful mind and find true romance?”

As soon as Aphrodite arrived at the dance, she said, “Wantsalittle, for a minute or so there, you had yourself into a real-tight position!”

“You ain’t kidding! She should’ve told me that she was married. I guess that I’m lucky that I got off the dance floor without getting into a fight.”

“You’re right! Danny let you off pretty easy. Fortunately, he’s got a reputation for being a lover, instead of a fighter. Wantsalittle, do you want to find ‘true romance’?”

“Well, I think that’s what I want!”

“At some point, I knew that it would get down to this. So I had already prepared a brief written document, just for such an occasion.

At least, I can give you something to read that may result in your having more insight on this touchy topic.”

The goddess of love handed me a sheet of paper and said, “I could speak with you all day on the subject of ‘true romance,’ but you might learn more if I share with you what other notable personalities have said in this regard. These inspirational quotes pretty much cover all of the bases and might serve to prevent you from striking out with the ladies. Who knows, you might even hit a ‘home run’ with that special someone!”

I read and got a real kick out of the following noteworthy quotes on the subject of true romance:

Nobody will ever win the Battle of the Sexes. There’s just too much fraternizing with the enemy. -Henry Kissinger

He felt now that he was not simply close to her, but that he did not know where he ended and she began. - Pablo Picas

A woman should soften, but not weaken a man.
- Sigmund Freud

A man can be happy with any woman as long as he does not love her. - Oscar Wilde

Seek not the favor of women. So shall you find it, indeed.
- Rudyard Kipling

I like not only to be loved, but to be told I am loved.
- George Eliot

The story of love is not important—what is important is that one is capable of love. It is perhaps the only glimpse we are permitted of eternity. - Helen Hayes

I was in love with a beautiful blonde once—she drove me to drink—‘tis the only thing I’m indebted to her for. - W.C. Fields

When I finished reading, Aphrodite said, “Wantsalittle, here are several additional comments: A relationship between a male and a female can be quite complex in nature. From a male’s perspective, the generalization would be that a man likes good sex and close companionship. And a man wants an ideal mother for his children. The female’s perspective is much the same. A woman also wants good sex and close companionship. And a woman wants a good father for her children. But most women tend to be more emotional in their mental makeup than do most men. Unless a man recognizes a woman’s true needs, emotionally, and unless he is willing to make a sincere commitment to his mate, he is not likely to get beyond ‘first base,’ at least with any woman who has high moral standards and who is an individual of exceptional character. And a woman must be willing to make a genuine and faithful commitment to her special man, as well.”

“Do I have to make a sincere commitment with each and every woman who comes into my life? And does every prospective mate have to be sincerely committed to me in return?”

“Wantsalittle, it depends on the individual. For many men and women, making sincere commitments to relationships can be difficult personal decisions. For instance, in many cases, women, because they don’t want to feel ‘used’ or ‘violated,’ physically or emotionally, in any way, are reluctant to commit to intimate relationships before they receive reciprocal true commitments from their prospective partners.”

“Venus, I’m a little confused. Are you saying that I must always make an emotional commitment to any woman with whom I intend to have sexual relations?”

“Again, Wantsalittle, it depends on the particular individual involved. All that I’m saying is that your intentions should be honorable, and your personal motives for any such intimate relationship or affair should at least be acceptable to your partner, if not also fully understood. In other words, just for the sake of your sexual urges, or just for the sake of your sexual self-gratification, you should never do anything to deceive a woman. Try to look ahead and realize the future implications or consequences of your words and actions. Your making a false or haphazard relationship commitment could end up breaking a woman’s heart. What could be worse is that your selfish, ingenuous, and lustful motives also leave

your unsuspecting partner with long-term or permanent emotional scars.”

“Damn! I’m now beginning to understand what you said earlier about the idea that women, on average, are more *emotional* creatures than are men.”

“Try not to refer to members of the human race as ‘creatures.’ And, yes, you are starting to see the light with respect to most women’s emotional framework.”

“Yeah, no wonder W.C. Fields once said, ‘I was in love with a beautiful blonde once—she drove me to drink . . .’”

Venus laughed, then I asked, “How old should my prospective mate be? I mean, does my age or my prospective mate’s age really matter?”

“As it is with other personal criteria—height, weight, general physical appearance, etc.—let your heart and your individual tastes be your primary guides. So long as you are not violating any of your nation’s or your state’s laws with regard to minors, it matters not how old your partner may be or how many years difference there may be between you and your prospective mate.”

Venus paused for a couple of seconds, then she continued, “Sometimes, generally for reasons that have to do with maturity and/or personal experience, either the man or the woman might prefer to seek a mate who is a few years older, or even someone who is considerably older. One word of caution: People who differ in age by a generation or more likely will not have enough common interests, which could be an obstacle with respect to mutual success or mutual happiness in that type of relationship.”

Once again, the goddess of love paused. Then she said, “Overall, however, the age difference between mates wouldn’t be as much concern for couples as other factors—things like: mutual physical attraction, mutual challenge, mutual trust, mutual respect, mutual goals, mutual values, mutual philosophies of life, etc. By and large, ‘age’ is a state of mind. A person may think and/or act much younger or older than his or her actual years. Again, Wantsalittle, follow your heart. Let what is in your heart and what is in your prospective mate’s heart be the principal guides to building and maintaining any mutually rewarding and mutually satisfying relationship, short-term or long-term.”

“All of what you said makes perfect sense. But I have a question: If a close relationship, regardless of how long the two people have been together, eventually turns sour, when should both partners agree to call it quits?”

“If two people are growing apart, rather than growing together, and if a separation seems imminent after considerable thought and every realistic effort to reconcile the relationship, the couple should probably split and go their separate ways. They should do this for their own sake and for the best long-term interest of any children that may be affected by the bad marriage or by the bad relationship. And if children are involved, both partners should swallow some personal pride and try their very best to maintain or to establish rational, positive, and effective channels of verbal communication, both during and after the breakup, again for the sake of any or all children concerned. Generally, a good rule of thumb to follow is this: A man and a woman should part ways when one partner or the other accurately realizes that he or she is no longer, nor will ever be again, the top priority of the other.”

Aphrodite hesitated for a few seconds before she added, “Wantsalittle, I have one more very important thing to say on the subject of dissolving a bad relationship: *No such thing as true love or true romance exists if ‘abuse’ plays a part in the relationship!* If either partner, although usually the woman, is physically abused, or if there is excessive mental abuse in the relationship, the victimized individual should immediately seek professional counseling and act quickly to dissolve his or her relationship! If an abused partner remains in the abusive relationship, he or she will increasingly lose self-respect, self-confidence, and self-esteem, making it even harder for that individual to end the bad relationship. Not only that, but any loss of self-respect, any loss of self-confidence, and any loss of self-esteem will also make it harder for that individual to ‘pick up the pieces’ of a broken relationship and start over in a new relationship.”

“That’s good advice. It appears to me that I should forego any serious relationship until that time that I lose *all* of my more aggressive, occasionally hostile temperament and socially unacceptable behavior.”

My guardian angel quickly and emphatically replied, “That is absolutely right! Wantsalittle, you have come a long ways in a short

period of time in softening your sometimes aggressive and hostile patterns of behavior. But you still have more to learn and a ways to go before you will make a truly outstanding and loving partner in a long-term relationship.”

I frowned and said, “While there may be some truth to the old adages of ‘there are plenty of fish in the sea’ and ‘a bus comes along every fifteen minutes,’ etc., I am getting tired of ‘playing the field’ whereby my intimate personal relationships are concerned. I will try very hard, starting right now, to eliminate what aggressive tendencies I may still have and make myself more suitable to a quality prospective mate.”

“Wantsalittle, just have some patience. You will find that special someone, probably sooner than you think. First, though, you have to get the rest of your life in order and develop more proper perspectives in your thinking, generally. And don’t forget about Marilotta Light. I happen to know that she really likes you, and she aspires to many of your positive character traits, especially your good sense of humor and your ability to effectively communicate with people, overall.”

“Yeah. I may be sad and lonely, but I have learned a considerable amount thus far into my enlightening journey. Now, I truly believe that I have acquired some better personal qualities than those that I had when my travels began. And thanks to you and God, I am getting more personality and character enrichment with each passing day. As far as that ‘special’ lady in my life—well, we’ll just have to wait and see, won’t we?”

“That’s almost correct. As the goddess of love, I already know what’s in store for you. But I am not going to tell you about your future.”

“Yeah, yeah. I didn’t expect that you would. It must be nice being *you!*”

Aphrodite just snickered, then she said, “Wantsalittle, here are a couple of last significant things that I would like to say on the topic of ‘finding true romance’: First, there’s a big difference between ‘lust’ and ‘love.’ Lust is self-gratifying, while love is how you seek to gratify others. Second, mutual honesty, mutual trust, and mutual respect must stand as the foundation to any worthwhile, long-term relationship. At the outset, mutual physical attraction or ‘chemistry,’ as it is commonly called, may be necessary between

prospective partners. But after the lust for each other wears thin, as will likely happen at some point in time in the vast majority of relationships, it will require *common interests* together with *mutual honesty*, *mutual trust*, *mutual respect*, and *mutual sense of humor* to maintain or to strengthen the loving bond between intimate mates.”

“Venus, you haven’t mentioned the factor of ‘mental challenge’ between prospective partners. From my personal experiences, I have found that if I cannot *mentally challenge* a woman, her personal interest in me fades fairly quickly. And if a woman does not challenge me, early on in the relationship, I seem to lose interest in her.”

“You’re making a great point, Wantsalittle. I must be getting a little rusty in my old age. Or maybe it’s been too long since I’ve been on a date or had a meaningful relationship.”

The goddess of love and I both chuckled, then I said, “Venus, I have a compliment for you: You don’t look very old to me.”

“Thanks! But if I weren’t standing here appearing to be the still youthful and most beautiful Carmen Electra, you would think that I was older than dirt. And, unfortunately for me, I *am* almost as old as dirt. No wonder I can’t get a date!”

Aphrodite and I both laughed. Then she got back to the topic at hand and said, “Indeed, especially in the beginning stages of a relationship, mutual mental challenge will generally bring prospective mates closer together. No two people are exactly alike, character-wise, or in their personal demeanor, or in their personal interests, etc. The differences between people make their personal relationships more interesting and more mentally challenging. As long as there exists enough common personality traits, enough common personal values, and enough common personal interests, both prospective partners will likely form a close bond with each other as they strive to overcome some of the minor or trivial obstacles in their relationships. Anyway, you’re right on target when you inferred that ‘mental challenge’ is a prerequisite and/or an intermittent instrumental factor to just about any developing and more meaningful relationship.”

“Venus, what about the notion that ‘a woman scorned is a woman possessed’? It appears to me that there’s truth to the old saying that ‘nice guys finish last.’ And it seems to me that the vast majority of women don’t really respond to their prospective mates

or that most women aren't really all that emotionally attracted to their possible partners until the man says or does something that really pisses the woman off."

"Wantsalittle, watch your language! Dammit! I am your guardian angel for God's sake! You are not really talking to Carmen Electra!"

"I'm very sorry! Please forgive me. But why is it okay for you to get peeved and curse and not me?"

"Okay, you're absolutely right! I'm sorry, too. Now, where were we? Oh, I remember. We were talking about 'a woman scorned is a woman possessed.' Any one or more of a multitude of factors may be involved, depending on the two specific individuals concerned. For instance, as two people are getting to know each other, over some period of time, one partner or the other may lose interest with the other. The man, for example, may simply ignore the woman or even want to dissolve the relationship. The man's sudden disregard, if the woman feels shunned by his actions, or should I say 'non-actions'—anyway, the woman's confused or frustrated state of mind, or perhaps her attitude of contempt or disdain or rejection, will likely break her self-preoccupation and get her undivided and full attention, particularly if she really likes the guy and is simply perplexed by his scorning her. At that point, the scorned woman will likely become sharply focused on the man and do everything in her power to recapture his interest and attention. In effect, she becomes 'mentally challenged' from the circumstance or from the set of circumstances that resulted in her being rejected or scorned. Again, no two people are exactly alike. And people are not perfect beings. The differences between prospective partners and their individual imperfections generally make for numerous mentally challenging moments in their possibly emerging and growing relationships."

Aphrodite briefly thought for a moment before she concluded, "Wantsalittle, *as you think with feelings of love in your heart, you will eventually find true romance!*" Then, as if the goddess of love had instantly jumped overboard, or as if she had quickly abandoned the ship, she suddenly disappeared before I could thank her for all of the valuable tips.

Both embarrassed and disappointed from my slow dance with a married woman, I left the ballroom. I walked out on the open deck of the Sun Princess. I just wanted to get a breath of fresh air. Then I noticed a petite young lady. She was sitting, just off to the left of where I was standing, at a little pedestal table, playing a game of solitaire by candlelight.

I must've startled the attractive young woman. When she saw me, she sprang up and out of her chair and accidentally knocked over the already unstable table. Her crystal champagne glass shattered when it hit the deck. Playing cards flew everywhere.

The shorthair blonde, dressed in a low-cut, scarlet-red, satin, evening gown, was most alluring. When she bent down to pick up the pieces of broken glass, I offered my assistance. Trying my best to be a perfect gentleman, I said, "Please, my lady, allow me to help you!" Then, as I took a couple of steps forward, I heard crunching sounds under my recently shined steel boots.

"Hey, you idiot, you're tramping across some bigger chunks of glass! Now, I won't be able to clean this mess up without a broom."

"I'm very sorry! I was simply trying to help. Can I get you another drink, my lady?"

"No, no! I'm sorry that I snapped at you. I've had a lousy day. I had no right to—"

I broke in before she could finish, "No apology is necessary. What's your name?"

"Ellen DeGeneres. And yours?"

"My name is Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife. You can call me *Wantsalittle*. It's a beautiful evening, isn't it?"

"Yes, I suppose that it is," she said. "You have a most unique name. Is that your *real* name, or did you just make it up?"

"That *is* my real name. Actually, my birth name was Wantsalittle *Morenooky*, but I changed my last name when I was a young boy for obvious reasons."

Ellen laughed and said, "I don't know, as yet, whether or not that you're being honest with me. I think that you might just be feeding me what you think to be a clever 'opening line'! To be honest, it really doesn't matter to me, anyway. Sir Wantsalittle *Morefromlife*—or *Morenooky*—or *whoever* you really are, look at that gorgeous harvest moon coming up over the horizon!"

“Indeed, it’s quite a sight!” I exclaimed. In truth, I had “gorgeous” on my mind and something in my “sights,” but it had nothing to do with my thoughts or observations about the *moon!*

While we paused to admire the rising full moon, we also witnessed a spectacular meteor shower—one little shooting star after another entered the earth’s atmosphere and gradually disintegrated right before our eyes, all in a matter of a few seconds. Right after the cosmic event, I turned toward Ellen and exclaimed, “Astonishing! Some of those meteorites were so close to us. It appeared as though we could simply reach out to catch falling stars.”

“Indeed!” Ellen replied. “I’ve never seen so many shooting stars in such a short period of time.”

Ellen looked as pretty as a playmate. With her splendid, well-proportioned body, curvy in all of the right places, and those bright-blue eyes, she simply took my breath away.

We both strolled, back and forth, across that small section of the top deck on the huge, approximately two-hundred-yards-long ship. We sidestepped our way between tiny pieces of glass and the well-spread-out assortment of playing cards, which had, by that time, blown across the floor in the stiff, warm, autumn breeze.

As we stood side by side near the bow of the boat, I put a hand gently under Lady Ellen’s elbow. The thin-figured blonde didn’t comment. She simply glanced at me and turned her head back toward the bright full moon. I noticed, but chose to ignore, the perplexed expression that had just replaced her enchanting smile.

We leaned over the ship’s outer rail and gazed out at the full moon’s big round orange face, which brilliantly and luminously reflected off the surface of the calm, dark-blue sea below. It was truly a romantic setting. We could hear the band inside. They were playing a slow song called “Sea of Love.”

As I admired the view, which included my seeing Ellen’s shapely silhouette against the bright moonshine, I said, “I’ve always dreamed of dancing in the light of the moon. May I have this dance?”

“Yes, Wantsalittle, but I’d better tell you something before we do that. I’m ga—”

I felt both amorous and optimistic, so I put my right hand up, quickly, and gently covered Ellen’s mouth, stopping her in mid-

sentence. Then I whispered in her ear, “*Later*, there’ll be plenty of time for more conversation.”

As we danced, I stared, for several seconds, directly into Ellen’s radiant, glowing eyes. Then I slowly lowered my chin onto her right shoulder. After a few moments, I turned my head toward hers. I saw that Ellen’s narrow, glossy, ruby-red lips were parted—what I believed to be an inviting look of romantic expectancy.

“I think that I’m hopelessly in love,” I said to myself. “I wonder if Lady Ellen is already betrothed?”

I had a reputation for being light on my feet on the dance floor. But I should’ve looked down. At that point in time, my heavy left boot landed solidly in the center of the “seven of hearts”!

Willie had told me that “seven” was a lucky number. But as my bad luck would have it, I found out that Lady Ellen was *gay*. She told me about it moments later, when I leaned over to offer her the first of—what I had hoped to be—a series of sweet, juicy, delicious kisses. Shortly after Ellen broke my love-starved heart, I said to myself, “*Two-stepping my way across the deck of this boat nearly drowned me in the ‘Sea of Love’!*”

(The moral of this episode: True love or romance is largely how you seek to gratify others!)

Episode Thirty-one:

Knight Vision Isn't Always 20-20

Lesson in Living:
Giving Yourself a Pat on the Back

Nashville, Tennessee; August 25, 1998

UNTIL NEAR THE END OF MY JOURNEY, when my love hormones would once again stimulate my behavior, I gave up on trying to find true romance. I decided to go back in time a couple of months, from October to August. I visited Nashville, Tennessee in the summer of 1998.

In need of some pocket money, I picked up a Nashville newspaper and searched through the "Classifieds" for a temporary job. One ad read "Help Wanted: Someone to watch Toby, my two-year-old son, and Tramp, my beloved black Labrador, while I am at work."

I got the baby/pet-sitting job. The first day, after the lady left for work, I escorted the little boy and his dog to the neighborhood park. It was around two o'clock in the afternoon on a hot, muggy day. The sun was bright, not a cloud in the sky.

I unfolded a reclining lawn chair and tied Tramp, the pet Lab, to one end of a ten-foot-long leash. I tied the other end of the frail rope to the back-right leg of my lounge chair. Then I told little Toby to go play on his choice of the slide, the swing, or the jungle-jim apparatus, all of which were just a few yards away.

With the dog and the kid now out of my way, I opened an ice chest, which I had brought along, and I grabbed a bottle of Zapmeister. Then I turned on my boom box, put on a black headset over the ear holes in my helmet, and comfortably stretched out.

My war club and ax were close at hand. I thought that everything was under control. I lit up a Tomarlbury, took a swig of beer, and closed my eyes. Next I sang along to the lyrics of an old country tune (written by Mac Davis), which was playing on the radio. "Oh Lord, it's hard to be humble when you're perfect in every way . . ."

Preoccupied with my listening to the radio and singing, I had failed to observe a few things that had just gone on all around me. For one thing, Toby, the toddler, had wandered down by a creek that bordered one end of the park. I hadn't heard Toby, but the little boy had said, "My sitter's back is turned. Maybe I'll go for a swim!"

Tramp, the dog, had broken the rope. "I think that I'll go for a stroll in the street!" Tramp had said.

Furthermore, the music had been blaring so loud through my headset, that the noise had rendered me incoherent. I hadn't heard a lady, about thirty feet behind me, who had been screaming at the top of her lungs. She had been strolling through the park. A man had tried to grab her purse. While the lady had struggled with the burly male purse-snatcher, she had cried out, "Help! Help! This man is trying to rob me!"

When the song finally ended, I leaned forward and took off my headphones. I looked around. Toby was playing in the creek; he was wading in water up to his neck. In two other directions, I noticed Tramp dodging cars on the busy street. And I saw a damsel in distress.

I said to myself, "I think that I'm hopeless. I feel as if I'm losing ground to every noble trait that I've gained so far during my journey. Should I just give up my quest and go back to Camelot? When will I 'see the light'? Venus, who will save me from myself?"

Thoroughly dejected and mentally depressed, I eagerly waited for my guardian angel to appear. Instead, as if She were Wonder Woman, God came to my rescue. "Wantsalittle, I'm glad to see that you finally came to your senses! Really, you're doing all right, for the most part. It's okay to be a little cocky at times. But remember that there will always be something new for you to learn."

"I need to pay more attention to what's going on, especially when the welfare and wellbeing of others are at stake!" I exclaimed.

The Lord said, “Yes, of course, you’re right. In this case, though, I think that you just had a temporary mental lapse. I know that you would never be intentionally neglectful whereby children and animals are concerned.”

“No, I would never purposely do anything that would put a child or an animal in harm’s way.”

“Wantsalittle, while we’re talking about ‘child/animal neglect,’ I want to make something perfectly clear: My biggest pet peeves with the human race are those non-actions, speaking of child neglect or animal neglect, or those hostile actions, speaking of spouse abuse or child abuse or animal abuse, that occur at any time and at any place, worldwide. After life on earth, no person is likely to enter My heavenly kingdom who has ever been purposefully neglectful of any child or animal! And no individual will likely enter My pearly gates who has ever been abusive, physically, to any spouse or child or animal! As far as mental abuse goes, it would depend on the perpetrator, the circumstance or the set of circumstances, the severity of the mental abuse, and the duration of the harmful communications.”

“God, you just spewed a pretty full mouthful. Do You mean that in the case of one of my own children, if I ever have any children, that I could not occasionally spank the child or ever lay a hand on the youngster?”

“You had better not leave any marks or bruises on the child in the process! Most parents know right from wrong with respect to proper and effective punishment for their child or for their children. It should be tolerable for either parent to harshly discipline a child, including his or her giving that child a spanking at deserving times, but not to the degree that the child would have any visible scars or any long-lasting marks or any long-term negative effects, physical or emotional, from the inflicted physical punishment. Many nations and states have enacted laws on this subject. Parents must adhere to the laws of that nation or state of which they are citizens.”

“Lord, a minute or so ago, You were speaking of ‘neglect.’ In view of the current circumstances, with Toby wading in the creek, Tramp running loose near or on the street, and the woman fighting off the purse-snatcher, shouldn’t You and/or I be tending to these problems, *right now?*”

“I respect your concern for the immediate safety of all those concerned, Wantsalittle. But your God is able to talk and know what is going on, throughout the universe, at the same time. Trust me, your God will not let anything bad happen to Toby or Tramp or the damsel in distress while I am in each of their presence. We still have time to continue with our most important conversation. That is, we will have the time *if* you quit interrupting Me!”

“Sorry, Lord. I should’ve known that You would have *everything* under control. What about animal abuse? Can you give me some examples of how some people are abusive to dogs and cats, for instance?”

“Those are very good questions. With domestic but also dependent animals, pet owners need to use good common sense. For example, you should not have tied Tramp up with a frayed rope. With dogs and cats, it is absolutely necessary that their masters always make sure that their pets have fresh, clean water available to drink at all times. And dogs and cats, as with other domestic animals, should always be fed, but not overfed, on a daily basis. A dog’s diet or a cat’s diet should consist of healthy dog or cat food, not of scraps left over from people’s meals. Many foods that are safe for human consumption are not healthy for pets and can be gradually or quickly lethal to animals. Chocolate is one primary example. Dogs and cats should never be given any cookies or candy or ice cream or anything else that contains chocolate.”

The Lord paused for a moment, then She continued, “In today’s world, there are too many streets and too many vehicles. People need to be extremely careful with potential hazards for their beloved family pets. Dogs should be kept in the house or allotted a fenced yard or a fenced pen when they are outdoors. For people who live in apartments without yards, they should always walk their dogs, regularly, with proper collars and leashes.”

“Should pet owners ever spank their dogs or cats?”

“As with children, dogs or cats should not sustain any physical scars or marks or bear any long-term emotional scars as a result of their being disciplined or mishandled. Again, any human being who, with intent, inflicts serious injury to any domestic animal—dog, cat, or other helpless pet—that individual will *not* likely be welcome in his or her God’s heaven!”

“Jessica—I mean—Lord, is there anything else that I should be aware of with respect to animal abuse?”

“Yes, Wantsalittle, here is one other most important precaution that pet owners should take with regard to their dogs’ or cats’ safety and wellbeing: Many animals, especially dogs, love to ride in vehicles. Unfortunately, too many human beings are naïve or downright ignorant when it comes to leaving their pets in otherwise unoccupied vehicles. *It is imperative that a dog or dogs never be left in a vehicle unless the windows are down far enough to allow for ample fresh air and ventilation.* On a sunny day, even when the outside temperature may be as cold as ten degrees, the sun will magnify through closed windows in a vehicle and cause the temperature inside the vehicle to quickly rise upwards of a hundred degrees or more. Animals simply cannot withstand the hot air temperatures resulting from being left in unventilated vehicles, even for short periods of time. Severe brain damage or death may occur under such circumstances. *People should either leave their pets at home or they should always adequately ventilate their vehicles while their pets are left in unattended vehicles.* More animal abuse occurs from this type of circumstance than from all other types of animal abuse combined!”

“God, those are some great tips and reminders that all pet owners should abide by. Beginning now, I will be extremely careful and cautious where both children and animals are concerned.”

“Wantsalittle, as I said earlier, you are doing all right. You are becoming more and more enlightened with each passing day during your journey into time. Many times, people are reluctant or refuse to give themselves due credit for their more worthwhile accomplishments. Some achievers are perfectionists at heart. They’re really never satisfied with their efforts, regardless of the recognition and compliments that they may receive from others.”

“I understand, but sometimes I wonder if I’ll ever ‘see the light’!”

“You’re on the right track. Give yourself some credit for just how far you’ve come so far. Try to be patient. One of these days, you’ll be pleasantly surprised at yourself.”

The Lord paused, momentarily, and looked out over the park. I think that She just wanted to be sure that the kid and the dog and the woman didn’t need any immediate assistance.

Then God said, “If you want to be a perfectionist, that’s fine. For many people, that’s probably the driving force that enables them to be so masterful at their work in the first place. Nevertheless, you may be able to live a happier and more self-fulfilling life if you remember this: Nobody is perfect. *It’s what you do that truly inspires greatness in others that counts most.* Therefore, try not to be overly self-critical. Allow yourself some slack in the rope of perfection. Think about what you’ve done that has resulted in other people being: thoroughly pleased, entertained, amused, educated, recognized, better prepared, more self-confident, or more successful.”

The Lord paused to think. Then She concluded, “One word of caution: Don’t go overboard with self-praise. Give yourself credit when you think that you deserve it, but retain your fine reputation of modesty. As you think with occasional thoughts of self-praise, you will recognize your contributions to humanity and feel better about those times that you may have inspired greatness in others.”

“Thanks, God! I’ll try to focus on what I can do next—some positive action that might deserve my self-praise.”

After the Lord vanished, I exclaimed to myself, “DAMN IT! I’m NOT going to give up on myself! I’ll do whatever it takes to feel *and act* like a king! In fact, it looks as though there’s something that I can do, right now!”

First, I rescued Tramp from roaming around in the traffic. Then, I put Toby in his playpen. Finally, I picked up my war club and ax and headed toward the woman who was being robbed. The thief turned in my direction. As I approached him, he saw the rage in my eyes. He suddenly let loose of his grip on the lady’s purse straps and ran in the other direction.

“Stop, you scoundrel!” I hollered. “I’ve awakened to my neglectful nature. Now, I’m going to correct the error in your evil ways!” Handicapped by my clumsy, cumbersome suit of armor, I couldn’t catch the unidentified man. He easily escaped. I guess that nobody else in the vicinity realized what was happening. Anyway, not a soul offered to help me in the chase.

The woman in jeopardy turned out to be country singer and actress Dolly Parton. I didn’t know who she was until my conversation with her later. She wasn’t injured in her battle to save

her bag, but she was a little upset, naturally, over the frightening experience.

A couple of minutes elapsed before I returned to the spot where Dolly had nearly been held up. During that time, she had picked up some of her personal belongings off the grass—items that had been shaken out of her purse as a result of the skirmish. And she had collected herself as quickly as she could in the aftermath of her fight with the thief.

As I trotted up to Dolly, she was tucking her white blouse back into her tight-fitting blue jeans and rearranging her long, thick, light-blond hair. Then Dolly took a couple of deep breaths; her lungs expanded as she inhaled some fresh, clean, Tennessee air. After the trying experience, she made an effort to calm herself down.

Before I spoke to Dolly, I stood face to face with her. I puffed and I panted, like a dog in heat. I puffed and I panted from my recently smoking too many Tomarlburies and from my gasping for air, not because I was overly ‘heated’ about being in the presence of the breath-taking and busty Dolly Parton. At least that’s why I *thought* that I had puffed and panted. Suddenly, the entire affair had turned into a “trying experience” for me, too!

“Praise the Lord!” Dolly exclaimed. “Thank ya for comin’ to my rescue. Ya should give yerself a big pat on the back. Before ya do, though, ya might want to put down that club with the long sharp spikes and that long-handled ax! What’s yer name, mister?”

“You’re welcome, my fair lady. My name is Wantsalittle.”

“What did you just say, young man?” Dolly asked, with a surprised look on her face.

Just as Dolly started to raise her open right hand, probably about to slap me, I exclaimed, “Hold on there a second! Please allow me the chance to tell you my *full* name. It’s Sir Wantsalittle *Morefromlife*.”

Dolly quickly lowered her hand and said, “Well, okay. That explains it. For a minute, there, I thought that I was gonna have to smack you for what I thought to be a most insulting remark on your part.”

I said, “Thank God that I came to my senses in the nick of time. Say, you look very familiar. Do you sing country songs?”

“Yes, I do. My name’s Dolly Parton. Would ya like a couple of tickets to my next performance at the Grand Ole Opry here in Nashville?”

“Wow! Thanks very much!”

“It’s the least that I can do after what you’ve just done for me. I’ll be forever grateful to ya, Mr.—I mean—*Sir Wantsalittle*.” Dolly giggled, briefly, and concluded, “I’d better be goin’ now. I’ve got a busy schedule. Thanks again!”

“Nice to meet you, Lady Dolly,” I said. When the lively, well-endowed, blonde beauty rapidly walked away, I couldn’t help noticing that she had a considerable “bounce” in her step!

(The moral of this episode: What you do that truly inspires greatness in others counts the most. And when you think that you deserve it, give yourself a good pat on the back!)

Episode Thirty-two:

Three Charming Knight Angels Who Helped Me “See the Light”

Lesson in Living:
Sensitivity

Still in Nashville, Tennessee; August 25, 1998

AFTER I SAVED DOLLY PARTON from her assailant, I took Toby and Tramp back to their family. I came to the conclusion that baby-sitting wasn't really my cup of tea. The rest of that day, I stretched out on my king-size bed in my motel room in Nashville. I just wanted to take it easy for a few hours and rest up before continuing my journey.

My eyes were focused on the “tube” most of the afternoon. Oprah Winfrey conducted a sensational, heart-warming interview with Christopher Reeve. (Author's note: The late Christopher Reeve played Clark Kent and Superman in the first four *Superman* movies, from 1978-1987.) Then I enjoyed a couple of reruns—hilarious episodes of *Coach* and *Cheers*. After dinner, I watched *Prime Time Live* and a special edition of *20/20*.

New York City; February 13, 1999

The next day, I felt like taking my first ride on a subway. I programmed the time-travel module in the Corvette to New York City on February 13, 1999. I hit the *Go* button and energized in a parking space along 52nd Street, somewhere in the middle of the Big Apple.

A sign posted on the curb read “Subway Entrance.” I rambled down the steps and waited, along with a large group of others, for the next train.

At five o’clock on that Friday afternoon, the subway made its scheduled stop. Several passengers departed the crowded car. I stepped aboard and briefly stopped to look around. I shouldn’t have hesitated. I got mauled and nearly trampled by some people behind me, who had rushed to get on the train. A few of them rudely shoved and pushed me out of their way; others darted past me. Everybody scrambled to find vacant seats.

I dashed down the aisle and plunked myself down, full suit of armor and all, on an open bench seat. The bench, which was wide enough for two people, was the last available sitting space in the car. I placed my war club and ax on the unoccupied spot beside me and sat back and closed my eyes.

Within five minutes, I had relaxed to the point that I dozed off. Then I had the following strange, vivid, and life-enhancing *dream*:

I dreamt that, at the next stop, a couple of stately, dignified-looking women boarded the train. Both of them had their hands full of packages. One of the attractive ladies had fairly short, curly, dark hair and appeared to be in her late thirties to early forties. She struggled to hold on to her stack of eight or nine various-size boxes and bags. When the subway resumed and swiftly accelerated, the dark-skinned lady tried her best to keep the unmanageable packages balanced. Somehow, much like an acrobat, she succeeded, juggling the parcels with both hands.

A good-looking woman with short, sassy, blonde hair had been sitting across the aisle from me. Her cardinal-red and white pinstripe dress shirt, solid-red double-breasted blazer, matching skirt, and two-toned pumps flattered her fabulous figure.

Immediately, the blonde recognized the two women who had just got on the train. She hollered out, “Oprah! Barbara! Over here!” The female passengers waved and rushed right over. When they both approached, the blonde asked, “Oprah, what brings you to New York?”

Oprah replied, “I’m visiting here for a few days. I needed to get away from Chicago—you know, the ‘show’ and everything. I’m staying with Barbara. We’ve been out on a wild shopping spree all

afternoon. Look at all of these packages. You'd think that we were doing some last-minute Christmas shopping!"

"I just love that dark-gray pantsuit, Oprah. Is that the new tuxedo style?" the blonde asked.

"Yes, thanks! I think that it really brings out the best in me!"

"And, Barbara, how are you?" the blonde inquired.

"Terrific! But we've had a long, exhausting day. It'll be good to get home. I just want to kick off my shoes and relax for the rest of the evening. Oprah promised to fix our dinner. I'm really looking forward to it. I'm starved!"

The blonde tried to get my attention. She leaned toward me. In a raised but tactful tone of voice, she said, "Excuse me! I'm Diane Sawyer, co-anchor of *Prime Time Live*. Those women standing there in front of you, carrying those heavy packages, are Oprah Winfrey and Barbara Walters. Wouldn't it be polite for you to offer them your double-wide seat?"

"Yes, I'm sorry! Why didn't I think of that? Please give me a minute to gather up my weapons and to collect my thoughts."

Then I turned away from all three ladies and whispered, "My guardian angel, am I that insensitive?"

When Aphrodite appeared, she stood in the aisle, right between Lady Diane and me. The goddess of love winked at me and reached out with her right hand, softly patting me on my left shoulder. She said, "Wantsalittle, today's your lucky day. Here are three charming knight angels who are going to help you 'see the light'! Would you look at that lady dressed in the ivory blouse and dark-brown pleated pants?"

I turned my head toward Barbara. "You mean the lady with the tan cardigan?"

"Yes, Barbara and her friends have always been among my favorite television personalities. If everyone on the planet behaved more like these three admirable women, it would be a more peaceful and wonderful world."

"I'm a little ashamed of myself right now."

"I know that you are. That's why I'm here. I want to speak with you about 'sensitivity.' You must remember that it's never too late to learn!"

Aphrodite hesitated for a moment and then she said, “Wantsalittle, *sensitivity reflects common courtesy*. Try to keep your eyes wide open to those around you. John Cowper Powys wrote, ‘It is incredible what a difference it makes to one’s feelings toward the whole human race when one is treated with politeness and kindness in buses, trains, subways, ferries, stores, shops, and streets.’ *Carefully listen to what people have to say. Become more aware of others in your midst. Respond to their needs and interests, accordingly.*”

“Sometimes my ‘light’ is on, but nobody’s home. I’ve got to start caring more about others’ feelings.”

“That’s a good idea. Go out of your way to give people their due notice and attention. Also, give them their due respect and accolades when they have earned various forms of personal recognition. You’ll always be in the wrong if you’re rude or discourteous. Make it a habit to be polite, mannerly, and kind to people. Above all, learn to be tactful at all times. Put into practice the wise words of Lord Chesterfield, who said, ‘Polished brass will pass upon more people than rough gold.’”

“I try to be polite and courteous, at least most of the time.”

“People are seldom as sensitive as they might think or as they ought to be. As you think with feelings of sensitivity, you will find it easier to earn others’ respect. You will also improve your ability to deal with people. Wantsalittle, please think about how you can become more conscious and responsive to other people’s needs.”

“Venus, I’ll try my best to be more sensitive of others’ feelings and needs. Thanks again!”

“You’re most welcome! I’ll see you later.”

After picking up my war club and ax, I got up and acknowledged Oprah and Barbara. “Would you fair ladies like to sit down?”

“Yes, thank you so much!” Oprah graciously replied. “I didn’t catch your name.”

“Wantsalittle—*Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife*. I’m just vacationing in New York. I’m from the Land of Camelot. I arrived here by way of a borrowed time machine.”

All three women reacted as if they were totally surprised and caught off guard. Immediately, Oprah and Barbara threw up their

hands. Cartons and sacks sailed in all directions. One of Oprah's larger parcels—a gift-wrapped package with royal-blue paper, a yellow silk ribbon, and a big shiny white bow—landed on my right steel toe.

With a bewildered look in her wide-open, dark-brown eyes, Oprah shouted, "You're *who*—from *where*?"

Meanwhile, Barbara had pulled out her cell phone. After a few seconds, she spoke to the man who answered, "Hugh (Hugh Downs), I think that I found a rare and up-beat story of significant public interest!"

Diane made a call, as well. She said, "Sam (Sam Donaldson)! You're *not* going to believe this!"

As the train came to a quick stop, I woke up and realized that I had just been dreaming. After I thought about it for a minute, some of my dream didn't make good common sense. I doubted that media personalities would have to take the subway to get around, even in busy, downtown New York City. At any rate, I got off at that stop and caught another subway train back to where I'd parked the car.

(The moral of this episode: Go out of your way to give people their due notice and attention. Always be sensitive to others' personal interests and needs!)

Episode Thirty-three:

“Sometimes, It’s Fun Being Me!”

Lesson in Living:
Enthusiasm

Miami, Florida; June 10, 1996

I JOURNEYED TO MIAMI, FLORIDA in June of 1996. I loved hockey, and I wanted to be in attendance for the fourth game of the Stanley Cup finals, as the Florida Panthers hosted the Colorado Avalanche at Miami Arena.

Thus far, it had been an exciting series. The slightly favored Colorado team was ahead three games to none in the best-of-seven finals competition, but the final scores had been close. Both youthful hockey teams aspired to win their first Stanley Cup, and they matched up well with each other. However, Marc Crawford, the head coach of the Avalanche, was apprehensive about the fourth game because his back-up goaltender Craig Billington was not suited up. He was at home in bed. He had a bad case of the flu.

Crawford hoped that Patrick Roy (pronounced W-a-h), the team’s veteran All-star goalie, could finish the series without injury. Up to that point, Roy had been fabulous in both the regular season and the playoffs.

I had a front-row seat, right behind the Colorado bench. I really enjoyed the hard checking and the great defensive play, by both teams, as they skated to a scoreless tie after three periods of regulation time and two periods of overtime.

Patrick Roy, my favorite player, had been spectacular in goal. He turned back over sixty of Florida’s shots on goal during the game. It was as if the Panthers’ players had tried to shoot into a net

the size of a hockey puck. Roy routinely blocked one hard slap shot after another.

The contest was still scoreless with less than a minute played in the third overtime. Then the unthinkable happened to Marc Crawford and his hopeful Avalanche team. Roy bumped his left skate against the right post on the net as he was making yet another great save. The stalwart goaltender stubbed the big toe on his left foot.

In field sports, such an injury is called “turf toe.” In hockey, it must be called “ice toe.” Whatever it’s called, Roy couldn’t walk, let alone continue to dance in front of the net. He was finished for the evening.

Without an experienced backup goaltender, it appeared as though the “Avs” were destined to surrender a goal and lose the fourth game. Crawford was frantic. He turned to the crowd and saw me watching the action from behind the Colorado bench. I heard him say to a couple of his players, “Anybody who has the nerve to attend a sporting event dressed in a suit of armor—either that individual isn’t playing with a full deck or he’s got to be one-hell-of-a tough competitor.”

The desperate coach had few options. “Hey there, Sir—whoever you are! We’ve got an extra jersey, #13. Do you think that you could stand out there in front of our net and knock down that little puck every time it comes your way?”

“No problem! I’m on my way,” I said.

I put the colorful burgundy-and-white-and-blue Avalanche road uniform on over my full-armored suit. Then I pulled down the visor on my helmet and borrowed a hockey stick. The team didn’t have an extra pair of skates, so I slid out on the ice in my steel boots. The game continued in front of some 16,000 restless and wondering Panthers’ fans.

About fifteen seconds later, following a pace-off in the Colorado zone, Florida’s right-winger Ray Sheppard broke free from defenders and took the puck straight in on me from the far right side of the rink. I calmly and strategically scooted out a few feet from the net, shrewdly shrinking the angle on his pending shot.

Sheppard faked a shot and skated a little to his left. He wanted to position himself directly in front of the net. But I didn’t bite on

Sheppard's fake. Instead I slid to my right and patiently waited for the skater's next move.

The Panthers' star player ran out of space to maneuver. Sheppard elected to wind up and uncoil his best slap shot. When he did, the coal-black hockey puck flew directly toward my head and at a speed in excess of a hundred miles per hour.

The rock-hard puck smacked me on the side of my metal visor and deflected off the right-side post of the net. Colorado's All-star puck handler Peter Forsberg tapped the puck out from in front of the open net and slapped it out of the Avalanche's zone. Forsberg's defensive savvy saved me from giving up the winning goal.

The blow had flattened me. It took me a minute to gather my senses. Then I said, "What treachery befalls me and makes me momentarily depressed. How can I get excited and enthusiastically defend our goal?"

Instantly, Aphrodite energized. She was suited up in a Colorado Avalanche jersey, #2. Almost immediately, she slipped on the slick ice and crash-landed, hard, on her hindquarters. I reached down and helped her to get back up and on her feet. Aphrodite grimaced in pain and said, "Thank you, Wantsalittle! If you can give someone only one gift, let it be *enthusiasm*. You can do more to persuade others and lead by example by the depth of your convictions and enthusiasm than by any other means. As Emerson wrote, 'Every great and commanding moment in the annals of the world is the triumph of some enthusiasm.'"

My guardian angel stopped talking for a moment. Once again, her face reflected pain and she frowned in disgust. With her right hand, Aphrodite reached around and rubbed a sore spot on her right rump. Then she yelled out, a shrill tone in her voice, "God dammit! I'm hurting. I likely bruised my butt when I fell on that *damn*, rock-hard, fu—e-r-r—*freaking* ice!"

I exclaimed, "Venus, I can't believe my ears! You, God's personal assistant, used the Lord's name in vein! And the 'dammit' and the 'damn' and nearly the 'f' word! My God, my goddess, what have you got to say for yourself?"

"I'm terribly sorry! It's a good thing that I'm invisible and that nobody else in the building could see me or hear me. I don't know what, exactly, possessed me to use foul language like that. My

assuming a human form, a clone of Carmen Electra—well, I think that *you people—you fallible human beings* are beginning to rub off on me. And please excuse my next expression: At times, you humanoids become a pain in my *ass!* Still, I'm thoroughly ashamed of myself! Wantsalittle, from now on, try to do as I *do*, not always as I *say*, okay? That didn't come out right, did it? Never mind! You know what I mean."

"Yeah, I get the drift. This is another perfect example of 'claiming your right to be wrong' and 'granting that right to others.' Venus, I grant you the right to be wrong! Just make sure it doesn't happen again, alright?"

"Don't get carried away with yourself! But, yes, you're absolutely right about the 'your right to be wrong and granting that right to others' philosophy." Suddenly Aphrodite spun around, her backside to me, and pulled her hockey bottoms down, about halfway to her knees. She wasn't wearing any underwear! "Wantsalittle, it still hurts back there. Would you check to see if I have a big bruise?"

Happily, I complied with my guardian angel's request. I wanted to take off my right steel glove and investigate the area—*every square inch* of the smooth, well-rounded, enticing surface, *first hand*. But I remembered Aphrodite's earlier threat of appearing before me as "Medusa," so I quickly changed my mind! After I got an eye-full of Carmen's—I mean—Aphrodite's delightful bare buttocks, I said, "No, you just have a small reddish spot on your right cheek from where you made hard contact with the ice. Say, you've got a great caboo—"

Aphrodite interrupted me. "Stop right there, Wantsalittle! As of late, you've really cleaned up your act with respect to your sexist attitude and your unnecessary sexist remarks. Please don't regress in that important character area!"

"You're right. I apologize!"

I *really* hated to see her do it, but the goddess of love pulled up her hockey pants. Then she turned back around and said, "Okay, Wantsalittle, where were we? Oh, yeah—*get full of enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is contagious. It is the spirit that spreads!* As you think with feelings of enthusiasm, you will enjoy life and positively influence others by your bursts of excitement. What will you do to lift your spirits and reflect your enthusiastic nature?"

“Venus, it would be hard for me to get any more *enthusiastic* than I was just moments ago! Anyway, I’m going to make a big play and help the Colorado Avalanche to victory.”

“That’s the spirit, Wantsalittle. Good luck!” Then Aphrodite slid across the ice and disappeared from my sight.

The Panthers were intent on spoiling the Avalanche’s chance to win the Stanley Cup in a four-game “sweep.” With a little more than two minutes into the third-overtime period, Ray Sheppard stole the puck near center-ice. He dashed, uncontested, toward me. Heavily armored, I tried my best to fulfill my role as Colorado’s fill-in goalie. Sheppard stopped just short of the net, wheeled completely around, and tapped the puck toward an open area on the left side of the net.

Sheppard had tricked me. I had gotten caught off balance and had leaned too far to my left, just before Sheppard had triggered his shot. Out of position and with almost no chance to make the save, I instantly shifted my weight and dived to my right. I stretched out as far as I could in front of the net. I was spread out, belly first, on the ice. Then I lifted my head and saw the puck latched between the palm and folded fingers in my right iron glove. I had made the “save” on the play.

My teammates gathered all around me. Excited and happy, they took turns patting me on the back. I said to myself, “*Sometimes, it’s fun being me!*”

Enthusiasm radiated throughout the Colorado bench and warmed the ice-chilled, Miami Arena air. My heroic defensive effort ignited a spark among all of the Avalanche’s players. They were inspired by my tenacious “rookie” defensive efforts; collectively, my enthusiastic teammates picked up the pace.

Assisted by Joe Sakic, the Colorado Avalanche’s Uwe Krupp gathered the puck about thirty feet out from the Florida Panthers’ goal. After 104-plus minutes into the hotly contested game, Krupp wound up and sent a “one-timer” into the upper-right corner of the Panthers’ net. The puck whizzed just over the left shoulder of Florida’s goal-stingy net-minder John Van Biesbrouck. Krupp’s fast, hard, slap shot promptly ended the game.

Hundreds of fans from Colorado, also in attendance, clapped and cheered with their approval. To a person, the Avalanche’s

players all stood tall and applauded in the aftermath of their multiple-overtime victory. In a hard fought battle by both sides, the Colorado Avalanche defeated the Florida Panthers 1-0 to win hockey's most coveted award—the prestigious Stanley Cup Trophy.

After the game, several of the jubilant Avalanche players hoisted me up and carried me off the ice. Then our entire team proudly raised our well-deserved, magnificent trophy high over our heads. The appreciative crowd roared and the celebration began.

(The moral of this episode: If you can give someone only one gift, let it be “enthusiasm”!)

Episode Thirty-four:

A Knight to Forgive and a Night to Forget

Lesson in Living:
Forgiveness

Atlanta, Georgia; June 11, 1996

AFTER I EXPERIENCED SOME SUCCESS with hockey, I thought that I should try my hand at professional wrestling. The next day, I left Florida and moved on to Atlanta, Georgia, still in the year of 1996. I entered an event called “Saturday ‘Knight’ Massacre,” which was partially renamed in my honor.

I had the audacity to challenge Hulk Hogan. “The Hulkster” was considered by most wrestling fans to be the toughest, meanest man alive. He was considerably bigger than me. In fact, Hogan was a mountain of a man, standing nearly 6’ 8” and weighing in close to 300 pounds. I, on the other hand, stood only 5’ 8”; even with my heavy metal wardrobe, I weighed less than 200 pounds.

The wrestling match began. We met face to face at the center of the ring. “Hollywood Hogan,” as Hulk was also called, stared into my eyes and said with a gruff, threatening tone in his voice, “If you’re nice to me and don’t try to bite my ear or gouge my eyes out, I might let you live to regret this night!”

I knew that I had to use every trick in the book to stand a fighting chance against my awesome opponent. I looked away from Hollywood for an instant; at the same time, I stomped my right steel boot down on Hogan’s left tennis shoe. I crushed his foot into the

mat as if I were rubbing out a discarded cigarette butt. The Hulkster showed a distorted look on his face. He writhed in pain for a few moments, and then he warned me. "Okay, little man, if you want to play dirty . . ."

Hogan grabbed my right steel glove and swung me around and around, counter-clockwise, for several loops. Then he let go. I was dizzy as I flew back-first into the ropes. The ropes recoiled me out to the center of the ring. Then the Hulkster "clothes-lined" me at the neck with a stiff forearm shiver. That violent action dazed me and sent me right to the canvass; I was sprawled out flat on my back. My whole body hurt. I wasn't sure that I could get back up.

Hulk wanted to pin me and finish the match before he worked up a sweat. I was still down on the mat, face up, when Hollywood flung himself on top of me. He bent my shoulders squarely back against the canvass. The referee got down on his knees and pounded his right palm on the mat. He hollered out, "ONE—TWO—THR—" Just as the ref started to hit his hand on the floor for the third and final time, I suddenly "kicked out" of the hold. I had barely escaped Hogan's early pin attempt.

I was a much lighter, less-experienced wrestler. The Hulkster knew that it was just a matter of time before he wore me down.

Hogan was so confident that he paused to wave at his loyal, cheering fans. While he was gloating, though, I got back up and slyly worked my way behind him. I wrapped Hulk up in a "full nelson." Then I dragged Hollywood across the mat and rammed his forehead flush into the slightly padded turnbuckle at the far corner of the ring.

Hulk shook his head, trying to regain his senses. A few seconds later, he got his mind and his act back together. Then Hogan began to taunt me. Hollywood sneered and asked, "Was that your best shot? I got game! Are you ready to meet your maker, Sir *Whimpy*?"

In a display of brute strength, the Hulkster reached through my legs with his right arm and slid his left arm under my right armpit and around my back. Then Hogan picked me up, and he held me high over his head. Everyone in the arena thought that the mad wrestler would either slam me to the canvass with a "pile-driver" motion or perform a "power bomb" maneuver. He didn't do either one. Instead, the Hulkster tossed me clear out of the ring!

Helpless, I crashed into the cement floor. My tarnished suit of armor was crumpled from head to toe; a trickle of blood oozed from my broken nose. A couple of minutes went by before I regained most of my mental faculties.

Finally, I got back on my feet. Then I picked up my big fat war club and crawled back into the ring. When Hollywood saw the long sharp spikes, which were protruding from numerous and various spots on the weapon, he immediately changed his temperament toward me. He could see that I was now considerably more dangerous to him.

Hulk got down on his hands and knees and pleaded his case. “Wantsalittle, I lost my head. Please forgive me for treating you so rudely and dishing out that punishing blow. I apologize for the cheap shot.”

With blood still dripping from my nose, I stood over the “sorry” Hogan. I was ready and anxious to whack Hollywood with my giant, sharp-spiked club. But I paused for a moment and stepped back away from him. I lifted my head and asked, “Venus, how can I find it in my heart to forgive Sir Hulkster for such a dastardly deed?”

My guardian angel climbed into the ring. She wore a referee’s uniform—a white-and-gray, vertically striped shirt and black slacks. Aphrodite said, “Wantsalittle, the noblest vengeance is to forgive. Jesus said, ‘Love your enemies . . . bless them . . . pray for them’ (Mathew 5:44). This is easier said than done. Nonetheless, if you can do it, you can rid yourself of much of your dark side. *Nobody is that perfect that he or she should be judgmental of others.*”

“I’m a knight who is willing to forgive and forget.”

“Good for you! Remember the words of Guatama Buddha, ‘Shame on him who strikes, greater shame on him who, stricken, strikes back.’ When you’ve been severely wronged, it’s hard not to strike back. But forgiveness projects enormous healing power toward any ill-founded vindictive thoughts that you may be harboring in your mind.”

“I must admit that I feel like striking back at Hulk Hogan, right now.”

“Jesus stated, ‘Vengeance is mine; I will repay . . .’ He also told people, ‘Forgive your enemies not once, not seven times, but

seventy times seven.’ A good starting point in forgiving people is to first forgive yourself for any wrong doings or mistakes. Then cast aside troublesome ill will toward others. Grant a pardon, and cease to bear resentment against anyone who has triggered your emotional state of frustration, anger, or hatred. Try to live by this wise old axiom: *To sin is human; to forgive is divine.* Or pay heed to this insightful Jewish proverb: *Those who want to be forgiven must learn to forgive.*”

Before Aphrodite left the ring, she said, “As you think with forgiveness in your heart, you will discover the true meaning of loving others. Have the courage to forgive people rather than to resent them.”

I laid down my war club, snapped the elastic band on the white trunks that I had on over my shiny suit of armor, and tapped my right boot three times on the dark-gray wrestling mat. A few moments passed before I looked straight into Hollywood Hogan’s wide-open eyes and concluded, “As it’s rightly said, ‘He without sin shall cast the first stone.’ I forgive you, my new ‘hulk’ of a friend!”

(The moral to this episode: The noblest vengeance is to “forgive”!)

Episode Thirty-five:

**While Working on this “Planet,”
I Saw Lots of “Stars”!**

Lesson in Living:
Practicing the “Golden Rule”

Metropolis, America; November 10, 1995

I THEN VISITED METROPOLIS IN THE YEAR OF 1995. I needed another part-time job, so I went to work for the *Daily Planet* newspaper as a “maintenance engineer.” I intended to do my best in my janitorial duties.

Lois Lane (Teri Hatcher from the *Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman* TV series) sat at her desk in the newsroom. The pretty newspaper reporter was working on a story. I began sweeping around Lois’s swivel chair and desk. She was dressed in a black pleated skirt and an emerald-green turtleneck sweater. As I picked up some wads of paper and the rest of the trash around her desk, I glanced over in Lois’s direction, from time to time. She was a real doll. I couldn’t help myself from being attracted to the curvy, shorthair brunette.

I asked, “Lady Lois, would you like me to sweep the mat under your chair?”

“Sure! I haven’t seen you around here until now. What’s your name? And how did you know my name?”

“My name is Wantsalittle—Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife. I saw your name on that little plastic nametag, which is pinned to the front of your sweater.”

Lois was a little embarrassed. Her face turned beet red for several moments. Then she said, "I put on this little nametag every morning before I go to work. You'd think that I could remember that my name is well advertised to anyone who walks close by. It's nice to meet you, Sir Wantsalittle. Let me scoot back, out of your way, so that you can clean under my desk."

The swivel chair had casters. As Ms. Lane rolled her desk chair back, her skirt hiked up to just above her knees. Then the lovely reporter propped the sole of her jet-black, left, high-heel shoe against the bottom drawer of the desk and shoved herself backward, clear across the gray vinyl floor mat. I only saw a respectable portion of Ms. Lane's slender lower legs and shapely thighs. Still, the sight was spectacular, and it sent a swift, sharp shiver up my spine!

"My Lady Lois, you are so gorgeous. Would you allow me to be your champion?"

Clark Kent (Dean Cain), who had been sitting at his desk across from Lois, overheard my distasteful and sexually suggesting remarks. He leaped out of his seat and rushed right over in her defense. Clark was so mad that he was speechless. Then he suddenly struck out at me. Clark popped me square on the jaw with a stiff left jab. I flew five feet straight backward and landed right on my noggin.

"We don't tolerate sexual harassment in this workplace!" Clark shouted. "Wantsalittle, I think that you owe Ms. Lane an apology!"

I immediately responded, "I'm most sincerely sorry, Ms. Lane! I don't know what got into me."

"At least you're man enough to admit it when you've made a mistake," Clark said as he walked back to his desk. "Just don't let it happen again!"

When I got up, I felt an excruciating pain in my jaw. Once again, I turned toward Lois. I said, with a slight groan in my voice, "I'm *curious* about Sir Clark? He packs a surprisingly SUPER punch!"

"Would you like for me to call you an ambulance?" Lois asked.

As my knees buckled and I fell back on the floor, I replied, "Yes! That might be a good idea!"

"Wantsalittle, have you ever heard of the 'Golden Rule'?"

"No, I haven't."

“What if the shoe were on the other foot? I mean, if you were *me*, would you want to be treated this way?”

“No, Ms. Lane, I suppose not!” Then I turned my head away from Lois and whispered, “Venus, what does Ms. Lane mean by the ‘Golden Rule’?”

Aphrodite flew through the big, wide-open, office window in a Superman costume. The skin-tight outfit showcased the goddess of love’s every splendid curve *and then some*. But I wasn’t quite sure, at that moment, why she was dressed as Superman. And I didn’t bother to ask. The sky-blue costume accentuated all of Aphrodite’s natural physical assets and gave me a whole new perspective on Metropolis’s red-cape crusader.

“Well, Wantsalittle, it looks like you’ve fallen head over heels, literally, for Lois Lane. Or in your case, maybe I should say ‘heels over head.’ Either way, are you all right?”

“Not really! I think that Clark Kent may have broken my jaw. Other than that, I think that I’ll live. Lois called for an ambulance. I guess I’ll take a ride to the Metropolis Hospital and have the doctors check me out.”

“That’s a good idea. Wantsalittle, I suppose that your constantly reverting back to your sexist-minded ways is partially my fault. But I have, for the most part, enjoyed teasing you with my ‘Carmen Electra’ persona. Oftentimes your immediate reactions really amuse me. You know, I’m not sure that you should have changed your last name when you were a youngster. Wantsalittle *Morenooky* better suits your great sense of humor, if not also your general personality. Obviously, you’re a pretty horny dude. Somehow, we have got to get you *hooked up* before you go stark-raving mad!”

“Venus, your supposedly keen sense of humor is sometimes misguided. You can see that I’m hurting and feeling bad enough, right now, as it is. Why are you dishing out those cheap shots about my dormant and dismal sex life?”

Aphrodite snickered and said, “Yeah, I guess that I should be more sensitive to your immediate needs, particularly after we recently discussed the subject of ‘sensitivity.’ To be perfectly honest with you, I think that I get a little jealous about your intermittent contact with other attractive women. For example: Your close, face-

to-*bust* engagement with Dolly Parton really made me envious of the naturally endowed country singer and actress. On that particular occasion, you had called on *me* to help you, but God wasn't busy at that time, so She came to your rescue. Then, after the Lord left and when you were speaking with the otherwise sensuous Ms. Parton, I nearly opted to make an uninvited guest appearance before you in my '*birthday suit*'! I thought that if someone was going to leave you 'breathless,' that special someone should have been *me*! My cloned humanoid form is creating all sorts of havoc with my normally divine mind. Human nature is heavily influencing my thinking and my behavior as of late. And I'm beginning to have biased judgment in your favor, if not also growing personal feelings for you, as well."

"Damn! I'm very disappointed that you didn't make that spontaneous guest appearance in your '*birthday suit*.' I'm trying to picture that scenario in my mind, with every fine and colorful and marvelous detail, right now!"

"Well, Wantsalittle, your dreamy and imaginary and naughty little mental sketch of me almost became a fascinating and carnal component of your more recent reality!"

"I don't completely understand all of what you just said, but I think that it'll take longer for my lovesick heart to mend than it will to heal my broken jaw! Anyway, right now, and for as long as my journey lasts, you are my primary divine source of love and wellbeing. Isn't it just natural for you to be a little jealous in my regard? And isn't it simply a matter of common sense that you would want to be my protecting angel?"

Aphrodite replied, "Yeah, you're probably right. Anyway, Wantsalittle, if I were you, I'd forget about your amorous feelings for Lois Lane. In case you're not aware of it, as yet, Clark Kent is *Superman* in disguise."

"I had a feeling that was the case. When Sir Clark isn't playing Superman, he doesn't realize his own strength. He damn near turned my lights out, permanently!"

"I know! I have half a notion to ask God to sit down and have a little chat with Superman. He was right about the '*sexual harassment*' circumstance. But if the '*man of steel*' wants to use his *super strength* on somebody, maybe he should try to pick a fight with someone who is his *own size*!"

“My guardian angel, now you’re talking *my* kind of language! When do I get to see the Lord’s grudge match against Superman. I need to know in advance. I could sell umpteen jillion tickets to that ‘world *heavyweight* championship’ bout!”

Aphrodite laughed, hysterically, and said, “Today, I’m going to let your well-intended reference to ‘aggressive behavior’ slide. Instead, let’s discuss the Golden Rule.” Aphrodite handed me a sheet of paper and said, “Wantsalittle, here are various ways that people throughout the world have referred to what is commonly called the Golden Rule.”

I read the following quotes:

“All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”

- Jesus (Christianity)

“No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.” -Sunni (Islam)

“This is the sum of duty: Do naught unto others which would cause you pain if done unto you.” -Mahabharata (Brahmanism)

“Surely it is the maxim of loving kindness: Do not unto others what you would not have them do unto you.”

- Analects: 15:23 (Confucianism)

“Regard your neighbor’s gain as your own gain, and your neighbor’s loss as your own loss.”

-T’ai Shang Kan Ying P’ien (Taoism)

“Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find harmful.” - Udana-Varga (Buddhism)

“We have committed the Golden Rule to memory; let us now commit it to life.” - Edwin Markham

When I finished reading, Aphrodite said, “All religions seem to concur: *What goes around, later comes around.* Or as Norman Vincent Peale phrased it, “The universe is like a great echo chamber;

sooner or later what you send out comes back.’ As you think about living by the Golden Rule, you will learn to treat others as you would want to be treated yourself.”

“Thanks! From now on, I will try to live by this coveted rule. By the way, Venus, you had better keep your day job. You wouldn’t make a very good ‘Superman,’ or ‘Superwoman,’ for that matter. Doesn’t Superman always come to the rescue of somebody *before* the innocent victim actually gets hurt?”

Aphrodite chuckled and said, “Well, Wantsalittle, it’s like you just said—an ‘*innocent*’ victim!” We both giggled for a few moments. Then the goddess of love “flew” out the window of the upstairs office at the *Daily Planet* and disappeared into thin air, somewhere high above the city of Metropolis.

A few minutes later, I was taken to the hospital and kept there for observation. Doctors wired my broken jaw, and they wrapped my swollen head in a bandage.

I didn’t know it, but George Costanza (Jason Alexander from *Seinfeld*) was in the next room—actually the same room, separated into two smaller ones by a cloth partition. George was lying in bed; he had a white cast on the middle finger of his right hand. He had been in some kind of an altercation that ended with him getting roughed up a little and sustaining the unusual injury.

George’s close friends—Jerry, Kramer, and Elaine—stopped by to visit him. The guests each brought gifts. Jerry (Jerry Seinfeld) handed George a plastic liter-size bottle of Pepsi, which was George’s favorite drink. Kramer (Michael Richards) gave George a fat, foot-long, Black Owl cigar; George promptly stoked up the big stogie. Elaine (Julia Louis-Dreyfus) furnished the flowers, a dozen black roses.

Kramer, who was puffing on one of the Black Owl cigars, himself, got curious as to who might be on the other side of the blue curtain that divided the two hospital rooms. He peeled back the drape and saw me lying in bed.

I was playing solitaire on a coffee table of sorts, which was folded out and straddled across my armor chest. A cup of coffee sat on one end of the miniature coffee table, and a *Knight Times* newspaper, folded up, lay on the other side of the little table. A few

words printed boldly across the surface of the table read “*The Coffee Table Book About Coffee Tables*” by Cosmo Kramer.

I recognized Kramer. With my jaw wired shut, I couldn’t speak. But I wrote Kramer a little note, and I handed it to him. The note said, “Sir Cosmo, this is a GREAT BOOK that also unfolds into a COFFEE TABLE! Can I get you to autograph it?”

Kramer turned around, facing his friends, and said, “Hey, guys, remember the ‘Ass Man’ and the ‘Pig Man’? Well, this time I think that I’ve found a real, authentic ‘*KNIGHT MAN*!’”

(The moral of this episode: What goes around, later comes around. Treat people as you would want to be treated yourself!)

Episode Thirty-six:

“Book ‘em, Danno!”

Lesson in Living:
Going by the Heart

Honolulu, Hawaii; July 16, 1980

(Author’s note: From 1968-1980, Hollywood’s longest running cop show was *Hawaii Five-O*, starring the late Jack Lord as Steve McGarrett, the Chief of Police, and co-starring James MacArthur as Detective Danny Williams. At the conclusion of each episode, when the “bad guy” was about to be arrested, McGarrett would turn to Williams and emphatically say, “Book ‘em, Danno!”)

SUPERMAN DIDN’T HAVE A MONOPOLY on flying. Shortly after my jaw healed, I hopped in the Corvette and “flew off” to Hawaii. The year was 1980.

My various part-time jobs thus far on my journey had given me enough work experience to qualify for a better, higher-paying job. Honolulu, the scenic capital of Hawaii, needed a temporary police chief. Steve McGarrett, the former Chief of Police, quit his job and pursued other ventures after he got tired of chasing down his archrival Wo Fat. I accepted the job, attended Police Academy for two weeks, and became the head of “Five-O,” Hawaii’s homicide division.

My first and last day on the job was a memorable one. I wore a navy-blue sports jacket and a light-blue tie over my suit of armor. I sat at my desk and admired a picture that had just been hung on the wall—a profile of ME in a heart-shaped frame with a caption under my portrait that read “We just LOVE our new Chief of Police.”

Then my highest-ranking detective on the force, Danny Williams, brought three suspicious-looking characters into Five-O headquarters. One of the men who Williams dragged into the office closely resembled McGarrett.

Thumbing through my black “State of Hawaii / Law Statutes” manual, I asked Detective Williams, “What are the charges?”

“Chief Wantsalittle, I picked these guys up on three counts: unlawful assemblage, loitering, and disturbing the peace,” Williams confidently stated. “They were standing on the sidewalk out front here at Five-O. They were gossiping about the weather!”

“*Book ‘em, Danno!*” I exclaimed.

The three accused men were booked and put in three adjacent jail cells. I went to visit them later that day. When I arrived, one of the men looked fighting mad. The red-faced prisoner reached out and put both of his hands and arms through the bars. Then he violently shook his fists at me.

“Do you have any idea who I am?” he screamed. “My name is Steve McGarrett. I’m going to have your—I mean—*my* job!” Then McGarrett calmed down a bit and said, “Well, *whoever’s* job it is, I’m going to have it! Will you call the warden or the governor to verify my story?”

I knew that I had made a big mistake. I turned away from McGarrett and said to myself, “They taught me at the Police Academy to follow the letter of the law. Sometimes, though, I feel a little guilty. Should I ALWAYS go by the book?”

Aphrodite appeared in purple slacks and a bright, multi-colored, floral blouse. And she had a burnt-orange Hawaiian lei draped around her neck. She brought a large, jail-cell, master key with her. She promptly opened Steve McGarrett’s cell door and let him out of jail.

Then my guardian angel took me aside and said, “Wantsalittle, Emmanuel Kant brilliantly reflected, ‘The feeling of the heart is a safer guide than the logic of the head.’ Chivalry might not be dead, but sometimes you should stand by your hunches and not play by the rules.”

“How do I know when to go by the book? When should I make individual exceptions?”

“Henry Ford once said, ‘If there is any great secret to success in life, it lies in the ability to put yourself in the other person’s place and to see things from his (or her) point of view, as well as your own.’ The single most important thing to remember with respect to human relations is this: *Nations are made up of and they are dependent first on individuals; the focus should be on human beings, not on so many systems or machines.* You will win more friends and influence more people if they feel that you are taking a genuine interest in them.”

“What other advice can you give me on this subject?”

“Buddha stated, ‘Believe nothing . . . merely because you have been told it . . . or because it is traditional . . . But whatsoever, after due examination and analysis, you find to be conducive to the good, the benefit, the welfare of all beings—that doctrine believe and cling to, and take as your guide.’ *You must learn to go by the heart, not always by the book!* As you think with feelings of going by the heart, you will more positively influence others and make wiser decisions, overall. Wantsalittle, constantly try to enlarge the size of your heart!”

Somewhere in the middle of Kansas; June, 1939

After Aphrodite left, I needed to get away from it all and think about my heart-felt conversation with her. I programmed the time-travel module in the Vette to take me to an isolated spot in Kansas in June of 1939. Then I pressed the green *Go* button. As soon as I energized, I parked the Vette and got out of the car. Then I turned around and saw a big black funnel-shaped cloud rapidly approaching. All that I had time to say to myself was “Yikes!” The powerful tornado or cyclone picked me up, along with the Vette, and softly deposited both the car and me on some-far-away, yellow-brick road near the Land of Oz.

Immediately, I noticed a scarecrow out in the center of a cornfield. It appeared that the scarecrow had waved at me. Then I remembered that scarecrows were “dummies” outfitted in bright-colored rags, set up by farmers to frighten various birds away from their crops.

Suddenly, a young lady and two strange-looking figures and a little dog came running toward me. As they excitedly approached

me, the attractive female introduced herself and the others. She said, “My name is Dorothy. Please meet my good friends, Tin Man and Cowardly Lion. And this is my dog Toto. Our other good friend is out in the cornfield. His name is Scarecrow. You startled us when we saw you suddenly appear in that out-of-this-world automobile of yours. We thought you might be the Wicked Witch of the West. So we decided to put Scarecrow out in the cornfield to scare you away.”

Dorothy looked toward Scarecrow and gestured for him to join us. When he arrived, Dorothy said, “This is our friend Scarecrow. We’re following the yellow-brick road on our way to Emerald City in the mystical Land of Oz. Who are you—all dressed up in that shiny suit of armor?”

“I’m Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife—from the Land of Camelot. Why are you headed for the Land of Oz?” I inquired.

Dorothy said, “In Emerald City, we believe a magical wizard exists—the Wizard of Oz. Tin Man wants a heart. Cowardly Lion needs courage. Scarecrow wants a brain. And Toto and I are hopeful that the Wizard of Oz can help us to get back to my farm in Kansas, where we were carried off by a violent cyclone. Wantsalittle, would you like to stroll and dance along with us to visit the wonderful Wizard of Oz?”

“Sure!” I exclaimed. Dorothy, Tin Man, Scarecrow, and I put our arms around one another’s shoulders. With Toto by our side, we marched confidently down the yellow-brick road, our heads up high. Cowardly Lion, crouched down in fear and shame, brought up the rear; he meandered along, a few steps behind.

Coincidentally, Tin Man and I were wearing *almost* identical white T-shirts with an outline of a big red heart on the front of each shirt. Over the heart, in big bold blue letters, Tin Man’s T-shirt read “I Want HEART!” My T-shirt read “I Have HEART!”

As we strolled and danced down the yellow-brick road, at one point I turned toward Tin Man and said, “In the event that we don’t find the Wizard of Oz, I know someone—really *two* ‘someones’—with *divine* powers who should be able to help all of you to get what you individually want.”

(The moral of this episode: Learn to go by the *heart*, not always by the book!)

(Author's note: The original *Wizard of Oz* movie premiered in 1939. The blockbuster film starred the late Judy Garland as Dorothy, the late Jack Haley as the Tin Man, the late Bert Lahr as the Cowardly Lion, the late Ray Bolger as the Scarecrow, the late Margaret Hamilton as the Wicked Witch of the West, and the late Frank Morgan as the Wizard of Oz.)

Episode Thirty-seven:

To Love and “Bee” Loved

Lesson in Living:
To Love and Be Loved

Beijing, China; July 19, 1998

I THEN JOURNEYED, by way of a cruise ship, to the Far East in July of 1998. The Corvette and all of my weapons were part of my personal baggage. When we docked at a small port in Eastern China, I hopped in the Vette and went on a personal countryside tour of the vast region. As I drove down a dusty dirt road, I saw a sign that read “Beijing / 200 Kilometers.” Just up ahead I noticed another sign that read “Rest Stop / Next Exit.”

I said to myself, “It has been a long haul after being stuck on that slow boat to China. I’m tired of the ocean, and I’m tired of traveling. I’m in the mood for *love*.”

I pulled over at the rest stop. The surrounding area was very scenic; elm and oak trees stood tall as far as one could see. The country setting made me curious about my horse. I wondered how Spirit was getting along. I decided to transport the palomino stallion to my location so that he could visit with me.

After I energized Spirit, I mounted up and took a ride through the woods, near the rest stop. As we galloped along, a beehive, nestled in a deep fissure on an old half-dead elm tree, caught my interest.

I jerked back on Spirit’s reins, which brought the light-gold-and-tan-colored stallion to an abrupt stop. I dismounted. Immediately, Spirit began grazing on some tall crabgrass. My horse was very content. I reached into my coal-black backpack and pulled

out a jar of vinegar, a small bowl, and a ball of cotton. I soaked the cotton with vinegar and tied it to the end of my eight-foot-long lance. Then I filled the bowl with vinegar and sat it on the ground, right beside me. I poured the rest of the vinegar all over myself. It made me smell to high heaven. Spirit caught a good whiff of the foul odor. He quickly backed off in disgust.

I held out my lance near the base of the hive. Honeybees swarmed all around the hive and landed in droves on nearby flowers. Thousands of bees pestered the poor horse, dive-bombing him in waves. However, none of the fussy bees landed on the point of the lance or came within several feet of *me*. I was very disappointed with the finicky bees.

“Master, these darn bees are driving me crazy,” Spirit said, speaking with a badly swollen tongue. “Can’t you do something to draw them *your way*?”

“Spirit, I just love honeybees,” I replied, “and I want them to love me, too. I just don’t understand why these bees won’t have anything to do with *me*.”

Spirit said, “I don’t know, either, master. But I wish that you would discover the secret, *sooner*, rather than later!”

I strolled a few feet through the dense, foot-high crabgrass, just in front of where Spirit had been feeding, and said, “I fear that my indifference for others, in general, is keeping the bees away. Venus, what potion can I use to attract more loving attention?”

Once again, the Lord, appearing in the human form of Jessica Simpson, filled in for my guardian angel. She was wearing a bee net over Her head. “Wantsalittle, I’m not a stupid God. I’m wearing this net so that I won’t get stung!”

“I can’t believe that *You* would be afraid of these little bees.”

The Lord just laughed and said, “The great Chinese philosopher, Lao Tzu, the widely recognized father of Taoism, said, ‘Through love, one will be courageous . . . for love is victorious in attack and invulnerable in defense. Heaven arms with love those it would not see destroyed.’ Love is absent from all aspects of your dark side. Just as you cannot focus on more than one thought at a time, you cannot express fear and love at the same time. The same holds true with doubt, anger, hatred, and all other negative thoughts and emotions.”

God stopped speaking just long enough to swat at a couple of honeybees, which were annoying Her. Then She continued, “As you begin to come to terms with your angels in black—your dark-side personal demons—by eliminating harmful thoughts and emotions, more and more love will find its way into your heart. Also, *to the degree that you first love yourself, you will have the capacity to love your fellow man.* Wantsalittle, try to allow the love in your heart to reflect from you to *others!*”

“Lord, I will do the best that I can with respect to ‘loving others’! Now, can You give me some more advice on how I can ‘be loved’?”

“Being loved is a basic human need. If you want to discover the path to love and happiness, simply follow the words of Jesus who said, ‘A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another . . .’ (John 13:34). If you abide by that principle, you will fulfill your deepest desires to love and be loved.”

Just before God removed Her bee net and disappeared, She concluded, “As you think with feelings of love, you will be able to love and be loved. Hold loving thoughts in your heart, both for yourself and for others!”

I tried another approach in getting the bees to love me. With my lance, I drew a big heart on the ground and wrote “Will you ‘bee’ my valentine?” in the middle of it. Then I reached into my backpack and retrieved a jar that had a white and blue label marked “Honey.”

I was a wanting-to-be-loved knight, so I poured honey all over myself. As I dripped in honey from head to toe, I put the Lord’s bee net over my helmet to protect my eyes.

Within seconds the honeybees swarmed all over me and all around me. I extended my arms straight out and clasped my steel gloves together. Then I hugged what looked like a brown and yellow cloud of the adorable little insects. I loved every minute of my time with the charming, delightful honeybees. I said to myself, “How great it feels in my heart to love and to ‘bee’ so loved!”

(The moral of this episode: Hold loving thoughts in your heart, both for yourself and for others!)

Episode Thirty-eight:

Hollering in a Knight's Ear Can Make Him Go Deaf!

Lesson in Living:
Listening Attentively

The Land of Camelot; near the end of the sixth century

I TRANSPORTED SPIRIT BACK TO CAMELOT. The Vette and I went along with him. I wanted to get a little “R & R.” As usual, I went to my favorite spot on the hill and sat under the big red oak tree, just above the mystical lake. Again, the Lady of the Lake held Excalibur high out of the water. And, once more, she challenged me to try my luck at drawing the magic sword from her stinging hand.

I shook my head from side to side and said to the keeper of the sword, “I’ve learned a lot, and I believe that I’ve made major strides toward strengthening my character. But I sense that some ugly devils still continue to haunt my mind and soul. I’m not yet worthy of wielding the splendid sword.”

With all of this more philosophical “mumbo jumbo” running through my head, I failed to recognize, or to hear, some pretty important things that were taking place and being said all around me. For instance, the giant dragon had returned. He was sneaking up behind me.

Plenty of friendly characters were also on hand. And they all tried to warn me about the looming dragon. Most of them arrived by way of “Looney Tunes Time-travel Express,” which was parked alongside the Corvette and next to “Louie’s Time-travel Limo.”

Bugs Bunny turned to Elmer Fudd and asked, “E-h-h, what’s up and about to cook, Doc?”

Porky Pig, Daffy Duck, Sylvester, and Tweety Pie all had megaphones and tried their best to get my attention. In fact, Tweety Pie hovered over my left ear. The comical but concerned canary was holding a huge black megaphone. Tweety Pie loudly chirped, “Hey, ya idiot! Can anyone in there hear me? Do ya have wads of cotton stuffed in yer ears? If dat dragon gets any closer, you can reach out and grab his long, forked tongue! Even that dumb pudgy tat isn’t dis hard of hearing!”

Louie and Frankie, the Budweiser lizards, got a kick out of their seeing me win the World Jousting Championship, not long ago. They continued to keep their watchful eyes on me. The lizards blew into bugle-horns until they ran out of wind. Louie and Frankie tried to sound the call for pending danger. But I was simply preoccupied. I didn’t hear them.

When they got tired of screaming at me, Louie said with a hoarse voice, “Well, Frankie, I guess that every deaf knight is another hungry dragon’s barbecued lunch. Say, aren’t we supposed to root for the *dragon* here?”

Still, I didn’t listen to all of those who were yelling out warning signals. I was wrapped up in my own thick blanket of thoughts, self-analyzing some of my remaining character flaws. My next couple of sentences unconsciously, but appropriately, hit the mark, “Sometimes, I’m so ‘tuned out’ that I can’t hear anything others have to say. Venus, how can I slay this personal dragon and learn to listen more attentively?”

After Aphrodite responded to my plea for help, she immediately reached down and handed Bugs Bunny a carrot.

The happy rabbit asked, “E-h-h, where did this delicious carrot come from, Doc?”

My guardian angel and I laughed. Then God’s assistant said, “Herman Hesse (Siddartha) stated, ‘But he learned more from the river than Vasudeva could teach him. Above all, he learned from it how to listen with a still heart, with a waiting, open soul, without passion, without desire, without judgment, without opinions.’”

“Venus, will you help me to become a better listener?”

“Yes, Wantsalittle, I will. *Effective person-to-person communication requires that you develop the ability to listen attentively.* Former U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk once advised, ‘One of the best ways to persuade others is with your ears—by listening to them.’ Silence is a great educator. Try to hold your tongue, open your mind, and tune in to the potentially insightful words and messages of others.”

Aphrodite took time out to hand Bugs Bunny another carrot; then she continued, “Allow people who are talking to you your full and undivided attention. Keep in mind how good it feels to be recognized and respected when others are really listening to you. Likewise, allow others to stand on stage and take their turns under the spotlight. When conversation is exchanged with mutual respect and attention, all parties concerned may clearly express themselves and mutually benefit from the experience. Wantsalittle, as you think by listening attentively, you will grow as an individual and become more persuasive, as a result. Strive to further develop your capacity for listening.” Aphrodite then immediately vanished.

At the last moment, with the dragon closing in on me, I came to my senses. I wheeled and dodged as the beast raked at me with his hooked, sharp claws. Then I saw my opportunity.

I caught the dragon off guard. It seemed that the greedy dragon, who had already measured me, momentarily looked past me; the distracted dragon’s eyes turned to Bugs Bunny, Elmer Fudd, Porky Pig, Daffy Duck, Sylvester, Tweety Pie, and the Budweiser lizards. The hungry monster licked his chops as he thought about having a ‘Porky’ pig roast and devouring Tweety Pie and Louie and Frankie, at least, for dessert.

I wanted to capitalize on the dragon’s preoccupation. I gave the giant reptile a bit of a warning by shuffling my boots, briefly, in some fallen leaves. The distracted dragon didn’t hear me. *He wasn’t listening attentively.*

I picked up my long-handled ax and hurled the deadly weapon at the threatening creature. The sharp broad blade on the ax sank deep into the center of the dragon’s chest. The monstrous reptile collapsed in a heap. The dying dragon rolled over with his big, blood-soaked, light-blue belly up.

I walked over to the fallen beast and tapped my right steel boot against the dragon's upper torso. The dragon exhaled a little puff of white smoke as he took his last breath. Tweety Pie flew away with the tip of the dragon's tongue clamped tightly in his beak.

I was trying to practice my "listening," so I was speechless. But I clearly heard Frankie get in the last word, "Come on, Louie. Once again, the show's over!"

(The moral of this episode: Effective person-to-person communication requires that you develop the ability to listen attentively!)

Episode Thirty-nine:

How I Got It Off My Chest—and *Hers!*

Lesson in Living:
Getting It Off Your Chest

Santa Monica State Beach; Southern California; July 23, 1997

WITH A LOT ON MY MIND, I hopped in the Vette and journeyed to sunny, Southern California. I energized on the beach near Santa Monica, a few miles west of downtown Los Angeles.

“Lately, I’m full of hostility,” I said to myself. “I realize that I just took some of my pent-up anger out on that evil-minded dragon. Now, though, I want to sit down here in this beautiful area near the ocean and sort out the rest of my lingering personal problems, complaints, and grievances.”

I sat down in the sand near a sign that read “Baywatch Patrol Area / Lifeguards on Duty.” A friendly game of volleyball was being played, just a few yards off to one side of where I tried to kick back and relax.

Baywatch lifeguard girls were playing against their male co-workers. I simply enjoyed the “scenery.” Then I decided to build a huge castle in the sand. Just after I completed the hand-made structure, a volleyball landed right in the middle of my massive, monumental, sand castle. I was incensed! I ranted and I raved, and I threw a ridiculous, child-like, temper tantrum.

Baywatch character C.J. Parker (played by Pamela Anderson) came over to retrieve the ball. She was half afraid to reach down and scoop the volleyball out of the battered and flattened sand castle. C.J. looked confounded by my frantic rage and antics. She didn’t

know what to say, so she didn't say anything. The voluptuous blonde hurriedly snatched up the ball and ran back to her friends, who were also perplexed by my hostile reaction to the obviously unintentional mishap.

As C.J. streaked across the sand, toward her friends, in her revealing, bright-red, one-piece swimsuit, I picked up my war club, which had been lying next to me in the sand. I raised the weapon over my head and hollered out, "Who dares to betray me and destroy my fun? Someone is going to pay dearly for this curse!"

Then I lowered my head and asked, "Venus, how else can I release all of the personal disappointment, anguish, and rage that has gradually grown inside of me?"

When Aphrodite appeared on the sandy, sunny, California beach, she also wore a bright-red, one-piece, *Baywatch* swimsuit. She glared at me for several seconds through her dark-tinted Foster Grant sunglasses. "Wantsalittle, you keep reverting back to the same old problem—your aggressive nature and sometimes hostile ways!"

"I know, but I just can't seem to help myself. I was so mad at them or at whoever destroyed my sand castle—well, I simply had to blow my top! Besides, other feelings of utter frustration have been festering in my mind and feasting on my soul, recently."

"Allowing your problems to build up and get stirred to the boiling point is not a healthy practice. When you are really mad at someone, you won't likely find any good in that person. You may say something or several things that you don't really mean and that you will probably later regret. In addition, throwing a temper tantrum can cause severe personal and social repercussions. Wantsalittle, *you need more satisfactory, socially acceptable, emotional-release outlets! If something is bothering you, talk to someone or to others who you can confide in. Get your troubles off of your chest in a dignified manner. And try to do this on a daily basis, before your personal anguish and anger cause you to go off of the deep end, which will only compound your troubles.*"

I nodded my head, affirmatively, as I replied, "Venus, I think that I see what you mean. I should get into the habit of verbally communicating some of my thoughts—whatever is bothering me at the time—with others who I trust. If I do, my frustration or anger won't have a chance to build up inside of me, at least not to the

point that I should lose my temper. From now on, I'll try to confide in someone and talk with that person about some of my more pressing personal problems."

"That would be a good start. Here is something else that you might try to prevent your emotions from getting the best of you: Why don't you use your good sense of humor whenever you can? Tell someone the latest joke that you've heard. Even sarcastic remarks, properly and tastefully directed, may serve as a viable means for venting pent-up anxiety or anger."

"I never thought of the idea that 'joking around' could be cleansing for the soul!"

"That's about what it amounts to. Another thing that you could do—that is, if you eventually decide to settle down here in California—is to hang a punching bag in your recreation room or garage and smack it a few times whenever your harmful emotions are becoming inflamed. And you might go bowling or hit a few golf balls to relieve your tension. Wantsalittle, do whatever it takes, short of throwing a useless temper tantrum or taking any other unsuitable course of action, to release any demons within you. Try to do something constructive before your anger develops into troublesome, perhaps unlawful, fits of verbal aggression or overt hostile actions."

"Thanks, Venus, for all of the great suggestions! Is there anything else that you'd like for me to do in this respect?"

"Yes! I want you to remember: When unfavorable conditions or circumstances are bothering you, intermittently, throughout life, you can make those trying times more tolerable, for both yourself and for those around you, if you stay calm and think and act rationally!" Aphrodite trotted across the beach, headed straight for the water, in her alluring *Baywatch* swimsuit. Then she disappeared into the depths of the deep, blue Pacific Ocean.

I had calmed down enough to go over and apologize to C.J. Parker and the others for my earlier, improper self-conduct. I walked up to C.J. and said, "I'm sorry for the way that I behaved! I shouldn't have taken my longtime personal animosity and poor-spirited attitude out on you and your friends. Please forgive me for my inexcusable, ill behavior."

“That’s all right!” C.J. exclaimed, adjusting the right shoulder strap on her scanty lifeguard outfit as she spoke.

Then C.J. asked, “See that pier over there? Would you like to go for a stroll with me? Maybe we could sit down, together, for a few minutes. I’d like someone new to chat with for a change.”

“Yes—I’d like to do that!” I replied.

“My name is C.J. Parker. Just call me ‘C.J.’! And what’s your name?”

“C.J., I already knew your name. I’ve watched you on *Baywatch*. I thought that those TV episodes were fictitious in nature, but here we are, standing side by side, in real life! Anyhow, my name is Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife. You can call me *Wantsalittle*.”

“That’s an interesting name. It’s nice to meet you. I’m not sure, though, that I want to address you as ‘Wantsalittle.’” C.J. giggled for a few seconds and said, “Okay, Sir Wantsalittle *Morefromlife*, please follow me.”

We walked out on a wooden pier, which jutted out about fifty yards into the ocean. We sat and watched and listened as the gentle waves rolled up against the slightly wobbly, waterlogged landing. C.J. dangled her bare feet, and she wiggled her pretty little toes in the cool, high tide.

I sloshed my feet around in the water, too. But I didn’t take off my heavy, clumsy footwear. Clumps and cakes of wet sand, which had clung to the metal edges and straps of my steel boots as I had strolled across the beach, now washed away. Thousands of sand pebbles swirled in the water and settled their way to the bottom of the clear-blue sea.

All of a sudden, C.J. clasped both of her hands behind her head. Then the blonde bombshell tilted back a little and inhaled an enormous gulp of the humid, salt-dampened, Southern California air.

“I can relate with your wanting to release the built-up anger within you,” C.J. said after she exhaled. “Everyone has problems that he or she should disclose and discuss with people who they can trust. At times, I’d like to get some things off of *my* chest, too! Wantsalittle, do you have any suggestions on how I can release my growing feelings of indignation and my incidental moments of fury or wrath in more socially acceptable ways?”

As if she were posing for a pin-up poster, C.J. still assumed that same, grandeur, leaning-back-with-hands-behind-her-head posture. With my tongue in cheek and not knowing exactly what to say, I simply replied, “H-u-m-m . . .?”

(The moral of this episode: “Get it off your chest” by looking for satisfactory, socially acceptable, emotional-release outlets!)

Episode Forty:

Super Knight

Lesson in Living:
Teamwork

San Diego, California; Qualcomm Stadium; January 25, 1998

SUPER BOWL XXXII, pro football's biggest game of the year, featured the NFC (National Football Conference) defending world champion Green Bay Packers against the AFC (American Football Conference) representative, the Denver Broncos.

The Broncos, losers of all four of their previous Super Bowl appearances (Super Bowl XII, XXI, XXII, and XXIV) by wide margins, dating back to 1978, were two-touchdown underdogs to the highly favored Packers. And the NFC tried to run its Super Bowl winning streak over the hapless AFC to fourteen games in a row.

Although just a few of the so-called media experts gave Denver much of a chance, the Broncos were heavy sentimental favorites, primarily due to John Elway, their aging superstar quarterback. This was the fourth time that Elway had led the Broncos to the Super Bowl in his fabulous, fifteen-season, storybook career. With a victory over the Packers, Elway would forever put to rest the notion that some sportswriters had labeled him with—the idea that, despite his doing almost everything else through all of the years, he couldn't win the “Big One.”

I was pulling for Elway and the Broncos as much as anyone else on the planet. As I stood on the sidelines next to Denver's Head Coach Mike Shanahan, I *daydreamed* that I was John Elway throughout the final few minutes of the back-and-forth, evenly

matched game. Here was my account of the action, late in the 4th quarter:

Denver's fullback Howard Griffith had just caught a 23-yard pass for a first down that had taken the Broncos down to the Packers' 8-yard line. But a holding call on the next play set the ball back to the 18-yard line, still 1st down and goal.

I played quarterback and wore a predominately dark-blue Broncos' home jersey, #13, over my full suit of armor. I looked up at the scoreboard, which read "'WE' Packers 24—'I' Broncos 24; 4th quarter; 01:55 (time remaining)."

Immediately, I called for a time out. I walked over to the sideline, glanced skyward and said, "For years, others have said that this is *my* team and that *I'm* the warrior who got us to where we are today. Venus, what will it require from *me* for the Denver Broncos to finally win the Super Bowl?"

My guardian angel appeared during the time out, and she was suited up in a Broncos' uniform, her favorite #2 boldly printed on both the back and front of the predominately blue, orange-highlighted jersey. While Aphrodite stood next to me on the sideline, she said, "I want to talk with you about 'teamwork.' John Elway was an exceptional athlete, and *he was the epitome of a team player!* Wantsalittle, you may be a real good athlete, as well, but you're not the best *team* player. In team sports, you should not try to go it alone. Getting the job accomplished or winning requires *teamwork!*"

Still daydreaming about my being the Broncos' quarterback, I said, "Yeah, but *I'm* used to carrying my teammates on *my* back. Many football experts keep saying that the Broncos wouldn't be that competitive if it weren't for *my* skills and *my* ability to make the big play."

"It may be trite, but it's also true, that no 'I' appears in the word 'team.' True teamwork means mutual understanding, mutual respect, and mutual problem solving. Wantsalittle, I'd like for you to try something: Apply the 'WE' technique. Form the good habit, as hall-of-famer John Elway did throughout his magnificent career, of using powerful 'WE' and 'OUR' words, instead of 'I' and 'MY' in your conversations. When people begin to think and act like a

team, they will establish *esprit de corps*—people united, practicing total team concepts in their pursuit of collective team goals.”

“Okay, I’ll give it a whirl.”

“Good! Remember that as you think and act with teamwork in mind, you will more likely accomplish your lofty individual and group goals. I’ve got to leave now.”

“Goodbye, Venus, and thanks! I can’t think of a better time than right now to try the ‘*WE*’ approach!”

The scoreboard read “01:55 (time remaining) and 1st Down.” In *our* huddle, at the 18-yard line, I asked, “Okay, what can *we* do as a team to get the pigskin across the goal line?”

Our tight end Shannon Sharpe, who had never come up short for words, said, “Wantsalittle, Terrell Davis has already rushed for two touchdowns in the game, and he has had an exceptional day, especially by running with the ball. Let’s give ‘T.D.’ a shot at taking it in.”

“Does anybody else have a better plan?” I asked. Nobody responded, so *we* called on #30, *our* dependable workhorse, to carry the ball. Davis ran a sweep to the left. He zigged and zagged his way down to the Packers’ 1-yard line. With 01:47 left in the game and second-down-and-goal, I called another time out.

When we gathered in the huddle, I said, “Terrell, *we’ve* got one long yard to go to score the likely winning touchdown. Everybody believes in your ability to get the job done. *Let’s* have some fun here. *We’ll* fly home tonight as world champs!”

On the next play, I again handed the ball to Terrell Davis. He followed his blockers and darted through a gaping hole on the right side of the line. Davis had just scored what proved to be the winning touchdown. Terrell lifted the ball high over his head in his left hand; he gave the “Mile High Salute” to teammates Rod Smith and Gary Zimmerman with his right hand. All of the other players rallied around me. *We* all jumped up and down; *we* were thrilled and joyous in *our* totally exhilarating anticipated moment of triumph.

As the final minute or so ticked off the clock, Green Bay made a valiant effort to tie the score and send the fiercely contested game into overtime. The Packers’ All-pro quarterback Brett Favre threw three incomplete passes before his final, desperate, fourth-down, pass attempt was successfully defended by speedy Broncos’

linebacker John Mobley, who had played a very good game, himself.

The scoreboard revealed the final tally as “‘*WE*’ Packers 24—‘*WE*’ Broncos 31.” As several of the players carried me and *our* happy coach Mike Shanahan off the field, *we* noticed a blue “Teamwork Exam Book.” The exam book, lying near the back of the end zone, had a big “A+” boldly written across the front of it. Terrell Davis, who had rushed for 157 yards and scored three touchdowns, was the game’s M.V.P. But *everyone* had contributed their fair share, individually, to the Broncos’ ultimate victory.

After *we* sent the whining “cheese-heads” packing for their long flight back to Green Bay, *we* proudly held up the cherished Lombardi Trophy for practically the whole world to see. Broncos’ fans all across the state of Colorado and throughout the world went crazy. *We* all celebrated *our* 31-years-overdo world championship.

Just before I woke up from my daydream—playing the part of John Elway—with a sparkle in my eyes, I exuberantly proclaimed, “This one’s not just for me. This victory belongs to *all* of my hard-working teammates, to the Broncos’ owner Pat Bowlen, to the *entire* Broncos’ organization, and to my close friend and coach Mike Shanahan. Especially, this great victory belongs to *all* of the loyal and deserving Denver Broncos’ football fans. *Teamwork* allowed *us* to bring home this prestigious trophy and earn Super Bowl rings. It’s been a long haul, but it’s also an unforgettable, sweet victory!”

(The moral of this episode: With respect to “teamwork,” adapt powerful “WE” and “OUR” words into your vocabulary. If you think and act with *teamwork* in mind, you will more likely accomplish individual and collective goals!)

Episode Forty-one:

This “Knight-time” Tale Makes a Lot of Horse Sense!

Lesson in Living:
Giving Effective Instructions

On the outskirts of Liverpool, England; September 6, 1965

I DECIDED TO GO TO A BEATLES CONCERT in England in September of 1965. On a country road, a few miles outside of Liverpool, I parked the Corvette. I didn't want anyone in town to see the car, because I didn't feel like explaining my time-travel story again, at least on this special occasion. But I needed a ride into downtown Liverpool. So I used the time machine to transport my faithful horse Spirit to that location.

When Spirit energized, he said, “Hi master! Do you want to go for another ride?”

“Yes! I thought that you might need some exercise. Would you like to accompany me to a Beatles concert?”

“Yeah, I guess. How far do we have to go?”

“We've got to venture about six miles down this scenic, seldom-traveled, dirt road. Let's get going. We don't want to miss the beginning of the concert.”

Spirit galloped along for several blocks before he suddenly came upon a black wooden fence that was blocking the dusty road. My normally adventurous palomino stallion saw the three-foot-high, double-boarded obstacle and put on the breaks. He dug his rear horseshoes into the soft dirt; we abruptly skidded about five feet before we came to a complete stop. Although Spirit could have

easily leaped the short fence, he just sat down at the base of the structure and looked dumbfounded.

“Spirit, we’re running late. I demand that you jump the fence. Must I turn you into dog food?”

“No, my master. I just refuse to jump!”

I raised my big war club and dug the sharp silver spurs on my boots into Spirit’s ribs. “JUMP NOW!” I screamed, but to no avail. “My words are as hard as steel. My guardian angel, why does this stubborn animal pay me no heed?”

As I dismounted my horse, I noticed Aphrodite. She was leaning against the fence. “Wantsalittle, it looks as though you could use a lesson in ‘giving effective instructions.’ Almost daily you will need to give some form of instructions. Choose your words carefully. Learn to be more tactful. *Remember that others would rather be asked, not told what to do.*”

“I just assumed that Spirit knew that he should jump the fence.”

“Never assume that others understand what it is that you want done. If you are to understand others and have them understand you, know the big words, but use the small ones. *Keep your instructions simple.* In World War II, American Civil Defense personnel had signs printed that read ‘Illumination must be extinguished when premises are vacated.’ After seeing these signs, President Franklin D. Roosevelt exclaimed, ‘Damn, why can’t they simply say, “Put out the lights when you leave.”’ Here’s the point: *Issue simple instructions whenever possible.*”

“What else can I do to give better instructions?”

“Demonstrate and dramatize your instructions. Offer positive instructions that help affirm other people’s self-concepts. Point out ‘what’s in it for them.’ If you can reassure people’s self-worth by demonstrating that their efforts and achievements will be recognized and rewarded, you will have little trouble getting others to do what you want done. If you make a mistake and offend someone when issuing instructions, apologize and start over. Winston Churchill once said, ‘Eating words has never given me indigestion.’ It never hurts to swallow your pride, and use a more virtuous approach.”

“All right, Venus. Do you have any final suggestions?”

“As you think and act by issuing clear and tactful instructions, your directives will be completely understood and carried out by people who *want* to do what it is that you expect to be accomplished. *Choose words that will enable you to give more tactful, meaningful, and effective instructions.*” Suddenly, Aphrodite took several steps backward. Then she ran toward the fence, jumped the three-foot-tall barrier, and evaporated into the thick, evening, Liverpool fog.

I took off my spurs and tossed the war club on the ground. I remounted Spirit and petted the horse on the back of the head. “Spirit, you have been very loyal through the years. Would you please jump the fence for me?” I politely asked. My appreciative stallion readily responded.

“Thank you, Spirit, for being so obedient and faithful!” I exclaimed. Then I unfastened the straps on my backpack and handed my cooperative horse a carrot, a reward for his good behavior. We continued on our way to the Beatles concert without further delay.

(The moral of this episode: Choose words that will enable you to issue more tactful, meaningful, and effective instructions!)

Episode Forty-two:

**If He Was Such a Nice Guy,
Why Did They Call Him “the Man in Black”?**

Lesson in Living:
Exercising Your Power of Persuasion

Las Vegas, Nevada; June 10, 1990

AFTER SPIRIT AND I ENJOYED the Beatles concert—the incredible music of (the late) John Lennon, Paul McCartney, (the late) George Harrison, and Ringo Starr, I transported Spirit back to Camelot. Then I returned to America. The year was 1990. I got a temporary job as a test pilot for the U.S. Air Force. I was stationed at Nellis Air Force base in Las Vegas, Nevada.

I endured six grueling days of flight-simulator training before I was qualified to solo in America’s newest war plane—the F-117A Nighthawk stealth fighter. After I completed flight school, I wanted to see for myself just what this sophisticated plane could do. So I climbed aboard the giant, manmade, black bird and flew, solo, to San Francisco. Two huge missiles were mounted under each wing of the fast-flying F-117A combat jet.

When I saw the Golden Gate Bridge for the first time, I got a little carried away. “Finally, I have the *power* to persuade people!” I said to myself, as I dove down toward the monumental reddish-colored structure. The long, massive bridge was loaded with vehicles; drivers had slowed down to a crawl during the bumper-to-bumper, afternoon, rush hour.

I regained my composure and took my right index finger off of the button that would have fired a missile at the tempting target.

Then I flew the \$44 million aircraft under the bridge and asked, “Venus, what frustration lurks within me that I would contemplate such a vile deed? Can you steer me toward a better approach in my quest of persuading people to come around to my way of thinking?”

Aphrodite crowded in right beside me in the cockpit. She said, “I can’t believe that you had any notion about blowing up the Golden Gate Bridge! Were you serious about your evil-minded plan?”

“No! Sometimes I’m a bad dude, but *not* that bad! The thought had only crossed my mind. But I wasn’t serious about it!”

“I really didn’t think that you were serious. Wantsalittle, few people are persuaded by rational argument unless they are first persuaded *emotionally*. You can better relate with others if your words are loaded with *emotional appeal*.”

“What do you mean by ‘emotional appeal’?”

“Roy Garn, author of *The Magic Power of Emotional Appeal*, wrote, ‘People are always preoccupied in one or more of these four general “emotional” areas: self-preservation, money, new experiences, and recognition. Successful communication depends on your choice of the *right* emotional appeal.’”

“Do you mean that I should determine which *one* of these four areas *preoccupies* another’s emotional framework?”

“Yes! Listen and watch for emotional indicators. Anyone will listen to you and may be persuaded by you if you make heavy emotional impact. Experiment with emotionally appealing questions and comments. More often than not, you can discover the emotional appeal area that will break a person’s self-preoccupation. When you find it, you will generally receive the response from another that you so desire. As you think and act by using more emotional appeal, you will be more persuasive. Wantsalittle, employ the ‘Emotional Appeal Technique’ to dramatically improve your power of persuasion.”

“Thank you, Venus. I’ll be looking forward to seeing you again.”

Of course, I lost my job as a test pilot when I returned to Nellis Air Force Base. I had borrowed the plane without permission. But while I was in the Las Vegas area, I drove to Sam’s Town Hotel &

Casino. I had quit gambling. I just wanted to see Johnny Cash, one of country music's living legends, who was performing at Sam's Town.

On the morning after I had attended Johnny's show, I ran into the famous "man in black" in a park, just down the street from the popular hotel. Johnny was sitting in the middle of a "ring of fire." The country music superstar was strumming his guitar.

I wanted to practice the Emotional Appeal Technique. I thought that I could positively persuade Johnny Cash.

"Sir Johnny, my name is Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife. I'm a great fan of yours. And I'd like to know what would really 'light your fire.'"

Cash started singing, "Love is a burning thing, and it makes a fiery ring. Bound by wild desire, I fell into a ring of fire . . ."

I handed Johnny a photograph. "I want to show you a picture of June Carter, one of my favorite country-music and spiritual entertainers. I'll bet that *she* could light *your* fire!" I exclaimed, as I exhibited a wide, ear-to-ear grin.

Cash smiled and promptly replied, "Thanks for the great advice. You're right, friend. She's been 'lighting my fire' for more than twenty years now! Didn't you know that she was my *wife*?"

"No, but I'm not surprised. I thought that the two of you would make a perfect couple. Oh well, can I at least *persuade* you to give me your autograph?"

"Yes, Sir Wantsalittle, I'd like to do that. Thanks for asking. It's been nice chatting with you, partner!"

(The moral of this episode: You can better relate with people, and you can be more persuasive, if your words are loaded with emotional appeal!)

(Author's note: This episode was written, in part, as a respectful, loving tribute to the late Johnny Cash and to the late June Carter-Cash—both of whom provided their millions of country/gospel music fans with many, many years of top-quality and highly inspirational entertainment.)

Episode Forty-three:

“Harry, this Bud’s for YOU!”

Lesson in Living:
Motivating Others

Chicago, Illinois; July 20, 1997

I JOURNEYED TO CHICAGO’S WRIGLEY FIELD in the summer of 1997. I responded to a personal invitation from Harry Caray, the Chicago Cubs’ famous radio and TV broadcaster. Upon my arrival, I visited the Cubs’ broadcast booth. As I strolled into the booth, I saw a banner hanging on the wall that read “W.G.N. SPORTS / CHICAGO CUBS BASEBALL / WITH HARRY CARAY & STEVE STONE.”

“I’ve heard some interesting things about you, son,” Harry said, as I sat down between the two popular baseball broadcasters. “I just wanted to meet you. My name is Harry Caray. This is my partner, Steve Stone. Isn’t your name ‘Wantsalot Moretail’ or something of that nature?”

“Well, my father’s name was Sir Wantsalot Morenooky. But that’s another story. My name is Sir Wantsalittle *Morefromlife*. I’m glad to meet you, Sir Harry. I’ve heard a lot about you, too!”

Harry said, “I’ll bet you’re thirsty, considering the heat here in Chicago today. Besides, you’re all bundled up in that heavy suit of armor. Here you go, young man.” Harry handed me a chilled mug of Budweiser, his favorite brand of beer.

Naturally, a large, frosty mug of “Bud” sat in front of Harry, as well. Harry’s mug read “I’m a BUD MAN and a CUBS’ FAN!” Furthermore, Harry was wearing a big white bib with “#1 Cubs’ Fan” printed boldly in blue across the front of it.

The baseball game was in progress. The Cubs were playing the St. Louis Cardinals, and the Cubs were batting in the bottom of the sixth inning. Chicago's All-star right-fielder Sammy "say it ain't" Sosa was at the plate. As Harry relaxed, sat back, and sipped on his suds, he did his usual play-by-play broadcasting.

With his microphone in hand, Harry called the action, "Here's the next pitch to Sammy. . . ." Then we heard a loud "*C-R-A-C-K.*" Harry quickly reacted, "There's a long drive!—It's way back!—It might be!—It could be!—It IS!—A HOME RUN!—*HOLY COW!*"

A few moments later, Harry gave me the microphone and headset. He said, "Okay, rookie, it's your turn to call the shots. Let's see if you can motivate these loyal and dedicated Cubbies' fans."

Mark Grace, the Cubs' first baseman and clean-up hitter, stepped to the plate. Grace, another perennial All-star player, ran the pitcher's count up to two balls and two strikes. On the next pitch, he took a mighty swing. Again, we heard a thunderous "*C-R-A-C-K.*"

I described the action, "Another ball is hit in the air!—It's somewhere!—I can't see it!—There it is!—A FOUL BALL!"

Fans who were sitting around the broadcast booth began booing and hissing and chanting, "We want H-A-R-R-Y—We want H-A-R-R-Y . . ."

"Sir Harry, what's your secret?" I inquired, a sad expression on my face. "How have you turned these fans 'on' over all the years?"

"I really don't know, but I've loved every minute of it!" Harry replied, slobbering all over himself and his bib as he downed the last gulp of his beer.

"Harry, I'll be back in a minute. I've got to go to the restroom." Really, all I wanted to do was to leave the broadcast booth, just long enough to speak with my guardian angel. When I stepped out of the broadcast booth, I asked, "How can I motivate others and become anywhere near as inspirational as the great Harry Caray?"

God, rather than Her most qualified assistant, suddenly joined me, just outside of the booth. Appropriate for the occasion, the Lord, again in the human form of Jessica Simpson, dressed in a Cubs' baseball uniform, #1, and a catcher's mask. And She was tightly gripping a 33-ounce Louisville Slugger in both hands. I asked, "God, why are You wearing that silly catcher's mask and carrying around that big baseball bat?"

“While I’m visiting the ‘friendly confines’ of Wrigley Field, I thought I’d get in a few swings. Maybe, I’ll even fill in for the Cubs’ catcher for an inning or two.”

“Lord, did You forget that nobody else can see or hear You when You stop by to give me Your heavenly food-for-thought messages?”

“Oh, yeah! I guess that My invisibility *did* slip My mind. In that case, Wantsalittle, let Me just offer you some advice on ‘how to motivate people.’ Humans are motivated or driven to action either because they fear something or because they want something. *Realize that others will perform better and produce better results if they are motivated from an ‘I want to,’ rather than an ‘I have to’ approach.*”

“Can You elaborate on that?”

“You have powerful motivational tools close at hand. Why not praise people when they deserve it? Sincerely compliment them for their efforts and accomplishments. Try to be sensitive to other people’s feelings, desires, and personal interests. Offer them your mental support. Take a genuine interest in people’s individual needs. Be more like the late and great Harry Caray, who constantly encouraged others to pursue their personal goals and dreams.”

“All right, God, I’ll do my best.”

“Wantsalittle, as you think and act by motivating others, you will play a meaningful part in their ultimate success. Think of what you can say that will motivate others to do that which they already choose to do.”

Suddenly, and before I could thank Her, the Lord leaped from the broadcast booth down to the home-plate area in a single bound. She ran across the infield, toward second base, and continued on, in a trot, into center field. Then God vaporized as She strolled into the dense green ivy, a traditional and distinctive feature of Wrigley Field’s outfield wall.

As the game reached the “seventh-inning stretch,” Chicago fans were cheering for their team. Most among the boisterous crowd hollered out expressions such as “Yeah!” and “Go Cubbies!”

Thousands of spectators had worn their red-white-and-blue Cubs’ baseball caps to the game. Steve Stone tossed me a sack of peanuts and a box of Cracker Jack. He knew what was coming next.

Harry and I leaned out of the broadcast booth. Then Harry yelled into the microphone, “ALL RIGHT EVERYBODY!—ALL TOGETHER NOW!—Take me out to the ball game. (I sang along.) Buy me some peanuts and Cracker Jack. (The crowd sang along with us.) For it’s one, two, three strikes you’re out at the ole ball game.” Everybody was motivated to root the Cubs on to victory.

When I left the Cubs’ broadcast booth, a beer vendor walked up to me. I bought Harry a brewski—one for the road. When I handed it to him, I said, “Harry, this Bud’s for YOU!”

(The moral of this episode: People will perform better and produce better results if they are motivated from an “I want to,” rather than an “I have to” approach!)

Episode Forty-four:

“Stop! You’re Killing Me!”

Lesson in Living:
Leadership

Baghdad, Iraq; March 1, 1998

I WANTED TO TEST MY LEADERSHIP SKILLS, so I traveled to Baghdad, Iraq in the spring of 1998. I met an Iraqi citizen in front of one of the many presidential palaces. The young man was wearing a T-shirt that read “Liberation, Not Control.”

Draped over my suit of armor, I wore a shoulder holster with a big black revolver stuck in it. The Corvette was parked nearby; two big black tomahawk cruise missiles were strapped to the roof of the car.

“I have come to Baghdad to assume leadership and set things right with the Iraqi people,” I told the curious citizen. “My guns are bigger and more powerful than those aimed at you by my predecessors. Therefore, I order you to trust me and show me absolute respect!”

“*Stop! You’re killing me!*” the Iraqi citizen shouted. “And you can blow it out your nose! We’re tired of being subjected to authoritarian tactics of intimidation and fear.”

I was perplexed by the man’s negative response. I turned my back on the Iraqi citizen, pulled out my pistol, and closely inspected the gun. I said to myself, “Wielding my authority and holding such weapons over people’s heads once got me their immediate attention and respect. Times are changing faster than the hourglass of my

backward thinking. What am I afraid of? Lord, is my lack of self-confidence preventing me from having confidence in others?"

In an instant, God appeared. I was a little surprised to see Her again so soon. "Wantsalittle, you directed your question about 'leadership' to Me, instead of your guardian angel."

"Sorry about that, Lord. But as long as I'm not interrupting You from more important matters, I'm glad to see You again. While You're here, can You help me to become a good leader of people?"

"Yes, and I'm happy that you asked. Wantsalittle, a good leader inspires people to have confidence in him or her; a great leader inspires others to have confidence in *themselves*. As a dynamic leader, you must be an integral member of the group whose goals you share and the realization of which you help to facilitate. Effective leadership involves changing a group from what it is into what it ought to be. You must stimulate people to do what they already wish to do."

"Lord, although I realize that I sometimes use authoritarian methods, as I just did with the Iraqi citizen, I despise authoritarian leadership! How can I lead more democratically?"

"As a democratic leader, you're not concerned with power, control, and discipline. You realize that people's trust and respect must be earned, not commanded, by your having self-confidence and showing confidence in those around you. Wantsalittle, A. Marshall Jones stated, 'The formula for (leadership) success is putting the right people in the right jobs and then sitting back on the sidelines being a rousing good cheerleader.'"

God took the gun out of my hand. Then She said, "Confucius, one among many truly great leaders, knew that tough laws weren't necessary and that character was at the heart of civilization. 'If the ruler is virtuous,' Confucius taught, 'the people will also be virtuous.' People will follow you, not so much because of your position and authority, but because you're honest, fair, and set a positive example. Others must approve of your ideas and endorse your behavior. *You must appeal to the interests and needs of the group. Regardless of your charm and personal leadership qualities, you will not be perceived by people as an effective leader unless you can satisfy others' individual and collective needs.*"

“Lord, aren’t some people simply born with natural leadership ability?”

“While a few men or women may inherit genes that may result in their appearing more stately than others, or while one person’s natural voice and articulation ability may be genetically rooted, dynamic leaders are *made*, not born. Wantsalittle, as you learn to think and act with a mindset of sincerely wanting to help others, and if you learn to say things and do things that are a reflection of your being a good example-setter, you will gain the trust, the respect, and the confidence of the group as a whole, accordingly. Finally, Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife, try to fashion a more ‘democratic’ leadership style.”

After God left, I took off my gun belt and disarmed the missiles. Then I put a white peace medallion around my neck, took off my stainless-steel gloves, and shook the Iraqi citizen’s hand.

“I’m here to listen and to discuss the topics of love and peace,” I told the now attentive Iraqi man. “What do you think that nations and people should do to get along, love one another, and build a lasting peace on earth?”

The Iraqi gentleman eagerly replied, “Hallelujah! At last a facilitator who really cares what we have to say, instead of a dictator who threatens and curtails us. Let’s sit down, my new and objective friend, and exchange some life-changing ideas.”

(The moral of this episode: Leaders are made, not born. A good leader inspires people to have confidence in him or her; a great leader inspires others to have confidence in *themselves!*)

Episode Forty-five:

Bobbing for Apples— Coming Up with Egg on My Face

Lesson in Living:
Dealing with People

Long Beach, California; October 31, 2002

I WAS CORDIALLY INVITED and attended my first Halloween party at an *unidentified* celebrity's mansion in Long Beach, California. A couple of hours or so after I arrived at the party, four masqueraders, including me, were "bobbing for apples." With our hands behind our backs, we had just lowered our heads deep down into a big tub of water. Each of our objectives was to "grab" one of a dozen or so apples with our mouths or teeth.

Moments later, I gave up in my effort to extract an apple out of the tub. I lifted my head and whispered to myself, "I've been at this party for more than two hours. Nobody notices me. Does everybody think that I'm some Hollywood luminary all dressed up for Halloween in a full suit of armor? Don't they know that I am *Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife*, from *Camelot*, and that I came here in a time machine? What must it take to be recognized? I guess that I'll just have to tell all of these party-goers who I am."

All at once, the three other 'bobbers' lifted their heads out of the tub. One bobber had an apple stuck in his or her mouth. As the trio, who were in full costumes, raised up, they quickly pulled off their masks. One of the three other bobbing participants was Elvira, "Mistress of the Dark." Elvira (Cassandra Peterson) was wearing a shiny black silk evening gown. The low, plunging neckline on her

dress boldly revealed both of her biggest physical assets. Another bobber turned out to be Regis Philbin. He was dressed up as Donald Trump. Regis wore a black tuxedo and a black top hat, a costume befitting of someone who “wanted to be a millionaire.” The other bobber was Kelly Ripa, Regis Philbin’s co-host on *Live with Regis and Kelly*. She came to the party in the guise of Kathie Lee Gifford, who was Philbin’s former co-host on *Live with Regis and Kathie*.

“What did you say your name was?” Regis asked.

“You’re from *where*?” Elvira inquired.

“You got here *how*?” Kelly questioned, with an expression of total amazement.

Several minutes later, almost all of the fifty-some guests at the party mobbed me. They hounded me for my autograph and took dozens of pictures.

Within a half an hour, the TV in the room, tuned in to the Fox News Channel, showed a caption running across the bottom of the screen that read “News flash—authentic knight from Camelot discovered.” On the radio, the people at the party heard “. . . and he’s here by way of a borrowed time machine. . . .”

Suddenly, I was very popular. I heard motorcycles pull up outside. I went to the window, and I saw a handful of paparazzi photographers running up the walkway; one of the photographers got knocked down by a couple of the others. He dropped his camera as he fell to the sidewalk.

With a frightful frown on my face, I closed the drapes on the living room window. Then I said, “First nobody would recognize me. Now I can’t get any privacy! Venus, how can I learn to deal with people?”

Although nobody could see her but me, my guardian angel came to the party, dressed as Merlin, my favorite magician. When Aphrodite walked up to me, her black sorcerer’s hat fell off her head. She picked up the cone-shaped wizard’s hat and said, “Wantsalittle, this is some party. You looked pretty silly, though, when you were futilely bobbing for apples.”

The goddess of love brushed off some Halloween-orange strips of confetti, which had clung to the front of her black blouse. Then she continued, “John D. Rockefeller once stated, ‘The ability to deal with people is as purchasable a commodity as sugar or coffee. And I

will pay more for that ability than for any other under the sun.’ If you really want to relate, *you must learn to work with and through people*. Listen to others attentively. When it’s your turn to speak, talk WITH people and to others’ points of view. Be sincere, upfront, and honest. Be fair and objective. Be open-minded, approachable, and put people at ease in your conversations. Build self-confidence and show confidence in others.”

“Venus, that sounds like a review of many of the earlier conversations that I’ve had with you and with the Lord.”

“In a way, it is. You see, my strong-willed but-sometimes-slow-to-learn protégé, dealing with people encompasses everything that we’ve talked about up to now. Use your good sense of humor when you relate with people. Become a team player. Use the words ‘we’ and ‘our’ more often in your vocabulary. Get full of enthusiasm. Be a rousing good cheerleader. Incorporate a more democratic leadership style, and lead by your good example. Become quick to sincerely praise and compliment; be slower with your constructive, private criticism.”

Suddenly, Regis Philbin, made up as Donald Trump, walked by, right between my heavenly sent mentor and me. Merlin—e-r-r—Aphrodite, temporarily distracted and a bit amused with Philbin’s formal, wanting-to-be-a-millionaire costume, hesitated and briefly chuckled before she added, “Wantsalittle, everybody has a right to be wrong. Claim this right, and grant it to others. Take a sincere interest in people. Go by the heart, not always by the book. As you think and act with others’ interests foremost in mind, you will improve your ability to deal with people. Strive to improve the quality of your person-to-person communications.” Then Aphrodite vanished into thin air, as if Elvira had just made her disappear, magically, after a single wave of the mysterious mistress’s black-magic wand.

William Shatner and Leonard Nimoy also attended the festive Halloween party; they dressed as their respective characters, Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock, in *Star Trek*. In fact, I found out that *they* had extended me the unidentified invitation to the party.

After the party, Captain Kirk asked me, “Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife, would you like to go on a tour of the *U.S.S. Enterprise?*”

“Yes, I’d love to explore the huge spaceship,” I replied, anxiously.

When we boarded the expansive, majestic starship, I asked Captain Kirk, “Do you have autograph hounds and paparazzi photographers on board the *U.S.S. Enterprise*?”

“No, no! People nowadays, here on the *Enterprise*, don’t feel the need to find their own recognition through identity with others. So, Wantsalittle, just relax. And welcome aboard!”

Mr. Spock turned to Captain Kirk. Spock said, “Something about this just isn’t logical.”

(The moral of this episode: As John D. Rockefeller said, “The ability to deal with people is as purchasable a commodity as sugar or coffee. And I will pay more for that ability than for any other under the sun!”)

Episode Forty-six:

A Little “Gift”—to Help You Get Through Your Days and “Knights”

Lesson in Living:
Artistic Expression

Kokomo, Indiana; January 16, 1980

MY NEXT VENTURE LANDED ME in a little honky-tonk bar in Central Indiana, a couple of hundred miles southeast from the Illinois State Prison in Joliet. The year was 1980.

I met up with “Joliet Jake” (the late John Belushi) and “Elwood Blues” (Dan Akroyd), the Blues Brothers, in Kokomo, Indiana. Their rhythm-and-blues band had a one-night gig at Bob’s Country Bunker, a rowdy country-western dance club.

Jake and Elwood, who had recently brought their show band back together, were on a “mission from God.” They were trying to raise \$5,000 to save their Catholic church’s orphanage in Chicago.

When the band started to play, people’s behavior in the smoke-filled, redneck bar turned from ugly to downright violent. The drunken, angry crowd hissed and booed and threw bottles and ashtrays up against the chicken-wire fence, which protected band members from serious harm.

Beer-slinging patrons loudly protested the band’s ill-advised selection of songs. Besides the theme song to *Rawhide*, an old TV series, and Tammy Wynette’s popular “Stand by Your Man,” the Blues Brothers didn’t know the lyrics to any other country tunes. The partying cowboys and cowgirls wanted to dance to music that

featured the “Texas two-step.” They were getting more and more restless with each passing rhythm-and-blues song played.

I sat at the bar. I was thoroughly enjoying a bottle of Zapmeister and a Tomarlbury cigarette when Jake walked up to me, during the band’s first break. He tapped me on the shoulder and said, “Pal, it appears that you’ve chosen the appropriate *armor suit* for this occasion. Would you like to come up and sing a song with us?”

“Sure, why not? It looks as though you guys could use some help.”

After the break, Elwood handed me a microphone. I had a small *hammer* and a *chisel* tucked in my front metal pocket; the sharp end of the chisel scraped against my armored pants with every movement that I made onstage. The abrasive, steel-on-steel contact sent a loud screeching sound through the microphone and throughout the entire room. Still, I tried to sing along as the band played “Sweet Home Chicago.”

People in the dance hall started booing even louder. The belligerent customers threw more and more beer bottles up against the already badly battered chicken-wire screen.

“I can’t sing or play a musical instrument,” I said to myself, as I left the stage, soaked with beer from head to toe.

The next morning, I enrolled at the “Shakespeare School for Beginning Writers” in downtown Chicago. I picked up a fountain pen and scribbled a few words, unreadable, on a piece of paper. I said, “And I can’t write.”

Then I went to the “Dick Weber Lanes” to try my hand at a game of bowling. Throughout the game’s ten frames, I rolled my Brunswick “Black Beauty” bowling ball in the gutter twenty times. With a distinct frown on my face, I said, “I can’t sing. I can’t write. I can’t bowl. I hate public speaking, and I can’t act. Nonetheless, I want to leave a legacy—some form of artistic expression. Venus, what new thing can I try? How can I see the obvious?”

Just before I left the bowling establishment, Aphrodite answered my call. “Wantsalittle, people express themselves in their own unique ways. But only a few individuals inspire others with their expressions. *Your thinking can be most productive. Thoughts are behind all things produced. Thoughts put into written words,*

spoken words, or products can be meaningful symbols for all of those who want to interpret them. Nothing more self-satisfying can occur than your saying or creating something that serves to inspire and help others."

"This is going to require some creativity on my part."

"Indeed, it will! A thinking man visualizes his thoughts and knows that his product will be a novel creation before he actually starts the project. As you think and act with artistic expression, you may create something that truly inspires others. Apply the knowledge stored within you. Wantsalittle, what is it deep down inside of you that can be manifested into something most worthwhile?"

"Thanks, Venus. I think that I have a good idea!"

The next day, while I walked through a nearby city park, I found a huge slab of white marble. I used my little *hammer* and *chisel* to carve out a ten-foot-high stone monument—a prolific, magnificent statue of *myself!* Then, in big black letters, I engraved "HERE'S MY 'GIFT' TO THE WORLD" boldly across the base of the marvelous statue!

(The moral of this episode: Nothing more self-satisfying can occur than your saying or creating something that serves to inspire or help others!)

Episode Forty-seven:

Down and Almost Out Until I Took My First Ride on a Harley

Lesson in Living:
Friendship

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; July 10, 1991

I FELT A LITTLE DOWN ABOUT MYSELF over my less-than-truly-inspirational attempt at artistic expression. I was also despondent with the idea that I didn't have any close friends. I just wanted to drown my sorrows in a beer glass. So I headed for the White Horse Saloon in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The year was 1991.

I walked into the saloon and sat down at the bar, right between two pretty rough-looking gents. Then I ordered a large mug of Zapmeister. I wore a Mexican-style cowboy hat, instead of my helmet, which I had left in the Vette. The broad-brimmed cowboy hat was tied around my chin with an elastic drawstring. In addition, I had a black bandanna wrapped around my neck. My suit of armor was dirty and scuffed. All in all, I was trying my best to fit in with the bar's country clientele.

A half-drunk, loud-mouthed dude on my left began to harass me. "It looks like this hombre has been living on the road," the stranger said, speaking to a friend who was sitting on the other side of me.

"Yeah, and his breath is as hard as kerosene!" the drunk to my right said, with a distinct cackle in his voice. "I wonder if his horse is as fast as polished steel."

I didn't reply to their intended-to-be-laughed-at, sarcastic comments. I just lowered my head and stared into my frosty glass of beer.

Although I didn't recognize them, Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard were sitting side by side, a few seats down from me at the bar. Willie overheard both cowboys' rude remarks—comments made in reference to his and Merle's hit song "Poncho and Lefty." I think that Willie sympathized with me, but he kept quiet because he didn't want to start any trouble.

"I'm depressed, and I'm growing old," I softly muttered to myself. "I can't seem to make new friends, even in a bar. My guardian angel, how will my story end? Would you help me find a new friend?"

Aphrodite came up from behind me. She tapped me on my right shoulder. When I turned around, she said, "Wantsalittle, the secret to friendship—making friends and keeping them—is as follows: *First, you must sincerely like yourself and become your own best friend. Once you do, others will be attracted to you, as well. Next, you must understand that people want to be recognized and appreciated for who they already are, individually.*"

"What is your definition of 'friendship,' Venus?"

"A true friend is someone who knows all about you and who still likes and respects you. Emerson said, 'Our chief want in life is someone who shall make us do what we can.' A real friend is that person who stands by your side, through both thick and thin. He or she always mentally supports you and encourages you to become the very best that you can be. Before I leave, let me add: As you think and act out of genuine concern for others, you will likely have that number of good friends. Wantsalittle, try to offer others your support and encouragement."

When Aphrodite disappeared, I wandered out of the bar and sat on the hood of the Corvette. I felt so dejected about my being friendless that my head nearly drooped into my lap.

Meanwhile, Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard had also left the bar. Merle had already taken off. Willie walked up to his Harley, which was parked in front of the Vette. When Willie got on his bike, he turned to me. "Hey, *Poncho*, what's your name?"

“My name’s Wantsalittle—*Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife.*”

“Sir Wantsalittle, it looks as though you could use a friend. Do you want to go for a ride on my mean machine?” I perked up a bit, nodded my head in an affirmative motion, and climbed on the back end of the Harley.

“My name is Willie Nelson. Some of my friends call me ‘*Lefty.*’” We sped away on his bike. I wrapped both of my hands around the front of Lefty’s dark-blue vest and hung on for dear life. Then my ivory-white cowboy hat flew off my head, but it was still tied around my neck. Harmlessly, the hat flopped to and fro in the steady wind.

With a wide smile, I said, “It’s really nice to meet you, Sir Lefty!”

Willie “Lefty” Nelson sang, “On the road again . . .”

(The moral of this episode: As you think and act out of genuine concern for others, you will likely have that number of good friends!)

Episode Forty-eight:

**Leave It to Me to Start
with the Only Exception to this “Rule”**

Lesson in Living:
Looking for the Good in Others

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; July 10, 1991

NOW THAT I HAD ONE GOOD FRIEND, I wanted to see if I could find another. Still in Oklahoma City, I met an interesting character that evening in the lobby of my hotel. The aloof, quiet man acted as though he could use a new friend, too.

Within moments, however, something about this guy bothered me. I wasn't sure what it was, but I wanted to get a closer look. For one thing, the man was dressed in a full suit of armor, almost identical to mine. The man's visor was pulled down over his helmet. I couldn't really tell what the fellow looked like. I thought that this guy might be trying to play a prank on me.

A medical lab was located across the street from the hotel. I coaxed the man into the lab. The unidentified fellow climbed up on a long examination table. As he was lying down, face up, I checked the man's pulse with a stethoscope. But I couldn't detect a heartbeat. Then I conducted X-rays on the guy's chest to see if the stranger had a big heart. The X-rays showed *no* trace of *any* heart at all!

As I became more and more curious, I looked the suspicious stranger over from head to foot with a giant black-handled magnifying glass. All I found was the word “LUCIFER” printed in microscopic-size red letters on the man's left steel sleeve.

I gave up and said, “I just can’t seem to find any redeeming qualities about this guy. What demons possess my thoughts? Venus, can you show me the error in my ways? How can I look for and find the good in others?”

When my guardian angel appeared, she had a perplexed expression on her face. “I just can’t believe the position that you’re in right now. Of all of the people in the world, did you have to settle on *this guy* to try to strike up another friendship?”

“What do you mean by that, Venus?”

“Wantsalittle, if there is one exception to the rule of ‘looking for the good in others,’ this would be the person. You are trying to look for the good in the *Devil!* Oh well, because you asked me to help you out, let me say this: Far too often, people are preoccupied with looking for what is wrong with others instead of what is *right*. Try to break free from the prevalent magnetic forces of negativity and limitation. Shift your attention to love—loving yourself and loving others. Shri Ramakrishna said, ‘If you keep your heart immersed always in the ocean of divine love, your heart is sure to remain ever full to overflowing with the water of divine love.’”

“If I have love in my heart, will I be more apt to find ‘good’ in others?”

“Yes! Jesus said, ‘You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and First Commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.’ When you acknowledge infinite love, it will be easy for you to perceive the divine essence of goodness in others. *As you think and act by looking for the good in people, you will find it.* Wantsalittle, in this case, *good luck to you!*”

After Carmen Electra’s look-alike high-tailed it out of the medical lab, Lucifer and I climbed into the Corvette. I asked the Devil, “How come you were dressed in a knight’s outfit?”

Lucifer replied, “I saw you, recently, when you were riding down the street with Willie Nelson, on the back of his Harley. I knew you wanted another friend. So I dressed up in knight’s garb, hoping that you would notice me and identify with me. If it weren’t for your close relationships with the Lord and your heavenly sent

guardian angel, I would've taken possession of your mental faculties and captured your friendship!"

The Devil continued talking to me. I guess that he was still trying his best to win my friendship. I didn't pay much attention to what the Devil had to say. And I didn't say anything else to Lucifer, not so much as one more word! Bravely, I simply escorted the Devil out of town. Several miles down the road, I pulled over. We both got out of the Corvette. Lucifer, standing in a dark shadow, right beside the car, just turned and walked away, thankfully! As he did, the outline of his body faded into black. I turned around and looked up in the other direction. I saw a bright-white star on the horizon in the darkening sky.

I said to myself, "Well, Lucifer did tell me, at one point, that if I wanted to associate goodness in his presence, I should look the *other way!*"

(The moral of this episode: If you look for the good in others, you will likely find it!)

Episode Forty-nine:

From “Knight Rider” to Knight Writer

Lesson in Living:
Sharing and Giving

Los Angeles, California; May 15, 2010; 5:30 P.M.

I WAS SCHEDULED TO MAKE a guest appearance on CNN’s *Larry King Live*. By now, Sir Larry and most media people across America had heard about me, from one source or another. After all, how many times had a knight from the sixth century found his way into early twenty-first-century America?

I arrived at the television studio thirty minutes before airtime. I decided to call Willie to inform him that I was nearing the end of my venture into time. When I spoke with Willie on the phone, backstage, I quickly summarized the highlights of my journey. In particular, I mentioned that God and Aphrodite had given me a lot of help, directly, throughout my travels, by way of private, face-to-face meetings and conversations. In addition, I told Willie that my journey was just about completed and that I would be returning to his place in Hollywood on May 27, 2010. Also, I inquired about Marilotta. I asked Willie how she was doing, and I told him to tell Marilotta “hello” for me. Finally, I mentioned that I was looking forward to visiting with both of them right after my last trip to Camelot, which would be the final stop on my long journey into time.

As soon as I got off the phone, Larry King walked up to me and introduced himself, “Hello, young man. My name is Larry King. You can call me ‘Larry.’ I’d like to extend you a warm welcome to CNN’s *Larry King Live*.”

“Thanks a lot, Larry. As you know, my name is Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife. Please excuse me if I seem a bit nervous. This is my first TV appearance, and I have a slight case of the jitters.”

“That’s quite understandable. Just relax, and we’ll have some fun during this interview. Can I get you a cup of coffee or a glass of water to drink while we’re on the air?”

“A glass of ice water would be fine, thank you.” I was dressed in a black blazer, which I wore over my full suit of just-polished armor. I carried my helmet with me as I walked in front of the television cameras. Nervously, I sat down at the table across from the host.

Larry wore a long-sleeve yellow dress shirt, a wide maroon-and-white polka-dot tie, and turquoise suspenders. It was show time.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I have a most unusual guest tonight, who will be with us for the entire hour of our worldwide broadcast. On many occasions, you have heard me say, ‘If it looks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it’s probably a duck!’ Well, this young man looks like a knight and speaks like a knight. And he *is* a genuine medieval knight from the Land of Camelot. Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure, this evening, to introduce you to *Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife!*”

After a few more introductory remarks, Larry quickly adjusted the position of his dark-brown-framed spectacles and asked, “Wantsalittle, can you give our viewers some of the highlights of your journey into time?”

I summarized my travels during the first half of the interview. Later in the show, I responded to a handful of curious callers. Larry generally encouraged viewers to call in with their questions as part of the program’s format.

Near the end of the interview, Larry exclaimed, “This is an incredible story! Young man, you are on the verge of becoming a true American hero!” Then the planet’s most highly regarded and globally respected talk-show host snapped the strap on his right suspender and asked, “Shouldn’t you write a book and share these inspirational experiences with the entire world?”

“I gave a few bucks recently to the United Way Foundation. Why should I share of myself or give others more than that?”

“Pardon me, Wantsalittle, we’ve got to pause and get in a couple of messages from our sponsors. Sit tight, everyone. We’ll be back with some concluding remarks right after this . . .”

Larry got up and momentarily went backstage during the commercial break. I sat there and asked, “God or Venus, either one, I could really use some help, right now, on the subjects of ‘sharing’ and ‘giving.’”

The Lord answered the call and sat down in Larry’s temporarily empty chair. Because Jessica Simpson’s clone knew that She wouldn’t be seen by anybody but me, God was attired rather informally. She wore a beige, deep-V-neck, short-sleeve, pullover, knit shirt. And She fashioned a pair of light-gray, pleated slacks. For footwear, She had on a pair of beige flats. The Lord said, “Wantsalittle, I know that we don’t have much time, but—”

I interrupted God. “Too often, I’m a little on the *selfish* side. Isn’t that what You were about to say?”

“Yes, I’m afraid so. You’ve improved your character in numerous ways since the beginning of your journey. And I’m very proud of you for all of your accomplishments. But you’ll never fulfill your quest ‘to feel *and act* like a king’—you’ll never be considered virtuous—until you understand, fully appreciate, and personally practice the divine principles of ‘sharing’ and ‘giving’! I want you to read what a few truly noble and most generous people have said on the subjects of *sharing* and *giving*. Hopefully, you’ll have a dramatic change of heart and clearly ‘see the light’ with respect to these two aforementioned, all-important, universal laws!”

The Lord handed me a sheet of paper that contained the following thought-provoking quotes:

No person has ever been honored for what he received; honor has been the reward for what he gave. - Calvin Coolidge

Things of the spirit differ from things material in that the more you give the more you have. - Christopher Morley

What is bought is always cheaper than the gift.
-Portuguese Proverb

If you have much, give of your wealth. If you have little, give of your heart. -Arab Proverb

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give. -Winston Churchill

The more we give to others, the more we are increased. -Lao Tze

A man's giving in alms one piece of silver in his lifetime is better for him than giving one hundred when about to die. -Mohammed

Give, and it shall be given unto you. . . . It is more blessed to give than to receive.-Jesus

Bring ye the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house, and prove me now herewith . . . if I will not open the window of heaven. -Milachi 3:10

Just before God left, She said, “Wantsalittle, as you think and act by forming the heavenly habits of sharing and giving, you will experience true happiness and true prosperity! With whom will you share your loving and giving heart today?”

After the commercials, I said, “Larry, I’d like to apologize to you and to our millions of viewers around the world! I don’t know what came over me when I made that wisecrack about ‘my only wanting to give to the United Way.’ I’ve completely changed my mind. I’m going to write the book that you suggested. Thank you, Larry, for the terrific idea.”

I paused, momentarily, to take a drink of water. Then I said, “*I hope and pray that my life-changing adventures will reach out and touch countless people throughout the world in more meaningful ways. Perhaps my upcoming book will enable readers of all ages to learn more about themselves and will result in their feeling better about themselves. Those are the reasons that I want to tell my unusual and encouraging story!*”

Larry exclaimed, “That’s the spirit, Wantsalittle! That’s what we wanted to hear! When you finish the book, I’d like to have an autographed copy. Keep us informed. We might have you back on the show just before the publication date and discuss your new book, okay?”

“Larry, that sounds good to me!”

“Well, folks, we’re out of time. Thanks for joining us. See you all tomorrow night—nine o’clock Eastern Time for another edition of *Larry King Live!*”

The very next day, on May 16, 2010, I rented a furnished condominium in the Hollywood area. I needed a place to call my own for the time it would take me to write my book.

Before I started writing, though, I wanted to take several days (from May 16th through May 26th and part of May 27th) to think things over and complete my journey. I still wanted to make some major changes in my life—important self-improvements that could help me to fulfill my quest.

On May 26th, the last day of the extra time that I had taken to be by myself in my condo, I engaged in battle with my darkest remaining angels in black—my enemies within. Then, on May 27th, I briefly returned to Camelot to conclude my journey into time. The details of the wacky series of events that transpired at my condo in Hollywood and then in Camelot are included in the *next* and *final chapter* or *episode*.

Hollywood, California; May 27 through August 10, 2010

After I had completed my journey, I was anxious and ready to begin writing my book. But first, I wanted to return Willie’s Corvette at the exact time that I had borrowed it to begin my trip. And I wanted to ask him if he’d be willing to give me a “cram” course in writing.

At the conclusion of my journey, which ended in the Land of Camelot, I hit the big white *Return* button on the Vette’s time-travel module. Suddenly, the car energized in Willie’s garage. Willie heard the car and came right out to greet me.

“How are you doing, Wantsalittle?” Willie asked.

Before I had time to respond, Willie saw Marilotta get out of the car. He said, “Hi, honey! I see that you caught up with Wantsalittle in Camelot.”

Willie then looked at me and said, “After you called me, right before your TV interview with Larry King, I told Marilotta that you said your journey would end up in Camelot. She couldn’t believe that you were getting periodic, face-to-face messages from God and from Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love. She thought that if she used one of my time-travel remotes to visit Camelot, and if she got lucky, that she might have the chance to meet one of them, personally. Of course, Marilotta was also anxious and biting at the bit to see you, too! Anyway, I’m glad that she found you. I was a little concerned for her safety and wellbeing.”

Willie paused, looked at Marilotta, and said, “I sure am glad to see you back home, safe and sound. Did you enjoy your trip?”

“Yes, dad. I’ll tell you all about it, later.”

Willie turned back toward me and asked, “Wantsalittle, have you completed your travels?”

“Well, yes and no—I mean that I’ve finished my journey and achieved my quest. But now I need to take some time to write a book about my amazing journey into time.”

We all went into the house, and we sat down in the living room. “Say, Willie, do you think that you could give me some tips on how to ‘write’?” I asked.

“Certainly! Do you want to stay here while you’re writing your book?”

“Thank you, Willie, for your generous offer. But that won’t be necessary. I’ve got my own place now—a condo in Hollywood—it’s only a few miles from here.”

Willie asked, “What kind of a typewriter are you going to use to write the book? Did you buy a computer or a word processor of some kind?”

“I haven’t really thought about that,” I replied. “What do you recommend?”

Willie turned his head toward his daughter and said, “Honey, Wantsalittle needs a word processor. Do we still have that extra Sony computer system stored somewhere here in the house?”

“Yes, dad, it’s down in the study. Say! I have quite a bit of writing experience, myself. I’ve written several short stories over

the past few years. Maybe I could help Wantsalittle with his book. I've been looking for something to keep me busy for the next few weeks."

"That's a great idea," Willie said. "Wantsalittle, Marilotta can teach you everything that you need to know. She can help you to prepare your manuscript. Marilotta could do the actual typing. You can just tell her your story, and she can do the rest."

"Wow! This is going to be easier than I thought," I said. "I was afraid that I would have to learn how to 'type.' Marilotta, when can we get started?"

"Let's get the computer. I'll take you home. We can begin today!"

Working every day, from twelve to sixteen hours per day, for just over two months, Marilotta and I finished my book. She had driven from her home to my condominium each day. During the time it took to write the book, we got to know each other extremely well. We grew even fonder of each other. And I just couldn't get over how Marilotta Light both looked and sounded so much like Kirsten Dunst.

Before I began my journey, Willie told me that Marilotta was twenty-three years old. She had never been married. As I got to know her better, I noticed that she was very intelligent and incredibly charming.

After a couple of weeks, Marilotta and I couldn't stand being apart from each other for any length of time. We had become madly in love with each other. I wanted to ask her to marry me. But I wasn't sure whether or not that I wanted to live in Camelot or stay in Hollywood for the rest of my life.

I didn't have the nerve to ask Marilotta to spend most or all of the rest of her life in Camelot. I think that she was too accustomed to modern-day conveniences—things like: indoor plumbing, electricity, radios, stereos, televisions, movie theaters, cars, shopping malls, etc. Even though we, or she, could have used Willie's time-travel remote to visit Willie and her friends here in Hollywood, from time to time, I wasn't sure that she would have gone for the idea.

Anyway, we had worked together on my book, and we finally completed it on August 10, 2010. My autobiography was titled *The Wacky Adventures of Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife*.

It took me nearly a year, though, to find a publisher. Then the publishing house was so anxious to get the book out to readers around the world that they put the book ahead of other projects; they published the timely, socially important manuscript almost immediately.

Waldenbooks; Burbank, California; August 1, 2011

A few weeks after the book was published, I had a book-signing engagement at Waldenbooks in Burbank, California. I sat at a huge table near the back of the bookstore.

Dozens of hardcover copies of *The Wacky Adventures of Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife* were stacked in several piles across the top of the six-foot-long table. Hundreds of people showed up to purchase autographed copies. Many celebrities were among those standing in the block-long line outside the bookstore. Everybody patiently waited his or her turn at the table.

Larry King happened to be the first person in line. I signed my signature on the inside cover of Larry's copy of my autobiography. When I handed Larry the book, I proudly said, "Sir Larry, thanks again for having me on your show. As you can see, I followed your advice. Perhaps my story will inspire millions of readers throughout the world."

Larry replied, "You're quite welcome, young man. I'm sure that the book *will* inspire a countless number of people, worldwide!"

In line behind Larry King were: Glenn Close, who wore a black T-shirt and teased us by holding up a butcher knife, as she had done in *Fatal Attraction*; Jack Nicholson, also dressed in a black T-shirt, which showed a portrait of him as the "Joker" in *Batman*; Darth Vader, in his black *Star Wars* outfit; Gene Hackman, whose black T-shirt read "I Love Lex Luther," from his role in the *Superman* movies; Susan Lucci, who fashioned a black ankle-sweeper dress that reminded people of her "bad girl" parts in various day-time soaps; and Clint Eastwood, who wore a prison uniform with the name "Frank Morris" printed on the shirt pocket, as Eastwood had worn in *Escape from Alcatraz*.

Other popular figures included the late Lee Van Cleef, who appeared in spirit and wore a head band that read “Angel Eyes,” bringing back memories of his “bad guy” character in *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly* (starring Clint Eastwood); Eli Wallach, with “Tucó” written across his hat band, which reminded people of his “ugly guy” role in that same Clint Eastwood film; and Debra Winger, who wore a white T-shirt with a big “*Black Widow*” illustrated on the front of it.

I was too busy signing autographed copies of my book to say anything about it when it happened, but Eli Wallach noticed Clint Eastwood standing a few spots ahead of him in the line. “Tucó” hollered, in reference to Wallach’s remark at the end of their movie, *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*, “Hey BLONDIE, what are you doing here? Do you know what you are? You’re just a dirty rotten SON OF A BI—!”

(The moral of this episode: An old Hindu proverb relates to “sharing and giving”: They who give have all things; they who withhold have nothing!)

Episode Fifty:

The “Knight” that Was Darkest Right Before the Dawn

Lesson in Living:
Illuminating Your Dark Side

Hollywood, California; May 26, 2010; 6:00 P.M.

ELEVEN DAYS AFTER I APPEARED on *Larry King Live*, I entered the walk-in bedroom closet in my condo and closed the door. There, I confronted my most haunting angels in black—my dark-side demons within. As much as I wanted anything in my life, I wanted to win that final battle. I knew that it wouldn’t be easy.

Before I went into the closet, I hung three signs on the door, which read “Private Closet / Keep Out,” “Den of Iniquity,” and “Personal Torture Chamber.” Then I walked in and sat on a little stool in the pitch-black room, and I contemplated how I intended to clean up the rest of my act.

I dressed in a black T-shirt, which I had put on over my full suit of armor. The printed T-shirt showed an outline of a skull and crossbones and read “Bad to the Bone.” I turned on a flashlight, popped the tab on an ice-cold can of Zapmeister, and lit up a Tomarlbury.

Then I shined the flashlight around the spacious closet. Here are some of the things that I saw: My lance, ax, and war club were leaned up against the rear wall. A small square table was placed just off to my right. An ashtray on the table was overfilled with Tomarlbury butts. A crushed, empty can of Zapmeister sat next to

the filthy ashtray. A couple of empty wine bottles, along with dozens of cigarette and cigar butts, were scattered across the floor.

To my left, a shelf on the wall contained several dusty books. Some of the books' titles read "*Bonnie & Clyde, The Godfather,* and *History of the World Wrestling Federation.*" Four other books were stacked in the corner. These titles read "*A Winner's Guide to Casino Gambling, Beat the Dealer, How to Hit the Jackpot at Slots,* and *Winning Lotto Strategies.*"

Finally, a big cedar chest in another corner of the closet was filled with items such as: a black ball and chain, a horse whip, a .22-caliber revolver, a miniature replica of a Tomahawk Cruise Missile, and a bottle of tranquilizers.

"I realize that nobody under my Lord is perfect," I said to myself, "but I'm tired of holding myself hostage in my shadow of personal guilt!"

After a brief pause to swallow a couple of gulps of beer and to take another drag on my Tomarlbury, I continued, "I hate myself for smoking and drinking too damn much! I'm hooked and depressed by these bad habits because I still haven't come to terms with my foremost enemy within—my aggressive and sometimes hostile nature!"

I took another swig of Zapmeister and concluded, "I still don't feel good about myself. *I think that my self-contempt and shame about my seemingly uncontrollable aggressive behavior are causing me to dishonor myself and hold myself in disgrace.* I'm constantly focused on and continue to display negative thoughts, bad personal habits, and harmful emotions. God or Venus, whichever of you can help me, how can I shed light on my shadiest side and conquer my darkest angels in black?"

Aphrodite energized and stood right in front of me in the closet. Immediately, she began coughing and choking. "Good God, Wantsalittle, you're going to suffocate from this thick gray cloud of smoke in the room. Why don't you put out that Tomarlbury and open the door?"

I reached for the ashtray and rubbed out the rest of my cigarette. Then I said, "Sorry about that! But I'm so depressed at the moment—well, I just don't care that much, right now, whether or not that I live or die!"

My guardian angel opened the closet door and waited for several seconds for most of the smoke to clear. Then she said, “Wantsalittle, don’t give up now! You’re almost ‘home-free’! As it says in the Bible, ‘The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light’ (Romans 13:12).”

Aphrodite coughed again and continued, “Indeed, it’s time for you to come out of the closet and come face to face with your darkest thoughts. All human beings, even great statesmen and presidents, carry with them some form of their shadows. Do not fear what is still left of your dark side, and fear not that others will discover your present or future angels in black.”

“But, Venus, how can I defeat these ugly demons? I constantly think about my bad habits and my aggressive ways, but I just can’t seem to divorce myself from these personal problems! What can I do?”

“Wantsalittle, your aggressive tendencies are at the root of the problem, as I think that you already know. *When people don’t see any hope for their foremost personal problem or problems, they generally say and/or do things that they wouldn’t normally say and/or do.* You hit it square on the nose with your previous comment about ‘not feeling good about yourself.’ *When people don’t feel good inside, oftentimes they will take out their bad feelings on others. This is the major reason why humanity suffers through acts of socially unacceptable or criminal behavior!* This is also the principal reason why there are such abhorrent, human actions such as: temper tantrums, spouse abuse, child neglect and/or abuse, cruelty to animals, theft, assault, rape, murder, war, road rage, and so forth. And people not feeling good about themselves can cause them to engage in such harmful personal habits like: smoking, illegal-drug usage, and alcohol consumption.”

Aphrodite stopped to think for a moment. Then she said, “You cannot live with faith in yourself and have self-confidence if your mind and body are being held captive by your innermost negative thoughts and emotions. Everything within you is forgivable through your God’s infinite love. Acknowledge your God’s presence and your God’s divine goodness. Shed your God’s light, through your prayers, on all of your true feelings. Love your God, love yourself,

and love all others, unconditionally. When you do, all worthwhile things will become possible!”

“I feel so close, but yet so very far away from realizing my dream. Lately, I’ve felt, at times, that I could simply reach out and grasp that kinglike *feeling!* Then, at other times, I—”

Aphrodite interrupted, “The wise Guatama Buddha said, ‘When you shall have fulfilled this great promise and after endless epochs shall have finished this work of salvation, then will you truly have shown yourself . . . in the most widely different worlds . . . to be the possessor of the tenderest heart and the highest wisdom.’”

“Oh, Venus! I’m seeing a whole lot of ‘light,’ right now!”

“Wantsalittle, what about your sexist attitude? The remarks that you’ve made to me, at times, and some of the offensive comments that you’ve thought or said about Raquel Welch, Roseanne Barr, Dolly Parton, Pamela Anderson, and Teri Hatcher won’t win you any popularity contests, at least with these or other women.”

“Venus, my sometimes sexist attitude has all but vanished. Now that I have respect for *myself*, I have respect for *everyone else!*”

Aphrodite smiled and exclaimed, “Wantsalittle, I just wanted to hear you say that!”

“What other good, last-minute advice can you give me?”

“As you think and act by facing your problems and by shedding light on your shadow, you will discover the answers to your problems and possess the power to defeat your darkest angels in black. Yes, Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife, *you’re seeing about as much ‘light’ as any mortal human being can expect of himself or herself to see.*”

I realized that I wouldn’t likely see my guardian angel again, in person, or God, either, for that matter. Carmen—e-r-r—Aphrodite and I stood face to face, momentarily looking into each other’s eyes. Sad expressions loomed across both our faces. I took off my helmet and removed my “Bad to the Bone” T-shirt. The goddess of love and I were reading each other’s minds; we both had a pretty good idea of what was going to happen next.

At that point, we reached out to hug each other. She had dressed in a deep-red, tight-fitting, tank top and a snow-white, knee-high skirt. I had just slipped on a white T-shirt with “I Love Carmen Electra” printed in bold red letters across the front of it. A colorful,

full-length, bikini-clad image of the steamy, shapely actress appeared on the backside of the shirt.

Fortunately, I had the foresight to shed my upper armor before I put on the T-shirt. As we warmly and snugly hugged, I joyfully and absorbingly felt the heavy impressions of Aphrodite's full, firm breasts against my chest. The vivid, pressing contact instantly excited me. My now seductive thoughts and rising body temperature triggered my wildest imagination. I wondered if she would boldly offer me *more!*

I stepped back after our tight, nearly heart-stopping embrace. Then I took one step forward, leaned down, and lightly kissed the considerably shorter beauty queen on her soft, tear-dampened, right cheek. With a romantic look in her wide, gleaming, blue eyes, the voluptuous, dark-blond goddess of love swatted at a pestering fly and whispered, "Wantsalittle, this could be your big opportunity. Can you do a little better than *that?*"

Somebody should have told me that 'Venus' could be a '*man trap*'! Aphrodite quickly moved toward me; then she slowly and methodically closed her arms around me. I then responded in kind. The hug that followed was even tighter than before. As we engulfed each other in mutually wanting arms and hands, I answered her question—my eager lips quivered, anxiously, as they met hers, directly. A minute or so of repetitive, mouth-to-mouth association ensued. After our final bear-like hug and our juicy, delightful, loving kisses, I exclaimed, "Venus, I've just tasted a little bit of heaven!"

With a look of almost complete satisfaction etched on her pretty face, Aphrodite exclaimed, "You're quite a guy—and a darn good kisser, too! Carmen Electra doesn't know what she's missing! As you are beginning to see, I've grown very fond of you during the course of your quest. Wantsalittle, would you *really* like to feel *and act* like a king?"

I couldn't believe my eyes and ears. It appeared to me that my guardian angel, posing as Carmen Electra, had been swept off her feet and, nearly, out of her shiny red high-heels and mind over me! I quickly responded, "Sure! But, Carmen, you're several years older than I am. Do you have a 'thing' for younger men?"

“Wantsalittle, try to remember that my name is *Aphrodite* or *Venus*, as you obviously prefer. And, in truth, I’m more than 2,000 years older than you! But what does *age* have to do with it?”

“Well, I guess that you’re right. Besides, who am I to question God’s carefully chosen assistant. And, Venus, I’ve grown very fond of you, too! What exactly do you have in mind?”

“As I’ve been visiting Earth in human form since you started your journey, I’ve been staying in a penthouse suite at the Hilton Hotel, here in Hollywood, just a few blocks from your condo. Sir Wantsalittle, if you *want*, we could jump into Willie’s Corvette and drive over to the Hilton. I can’t believe what I’m about to propose. It must be the Carmen Electra—the *humanized being*—in me. Whatever it is, *Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife*, you are welcome to spend *one* almost unimaginable evening—a night with me in my luxurious hotel suite—all the amenities supplied, including your choice of vintage wine or your favorite brand of champagne. And you can select my evening gown and/or lingerie—anything that you would like to see me wear, from my packed-to-the-rafters master-bedroom wardrobe!”

My now wide-open, bright-blue, seductive eyes all but popped out of their sockets! I wasn’t sure whether or not that Carmen—I mean—*Aphrodite* was serious. She *was*!

*The Hilton Hotel; Hollywood, California;
my guardian angel’s penthouse suite; May 26, 2010; 6:30 P.M.*

As it turned out, Aphrodite selected the tunes—lots of foreplay—then—*yada, yada, yada*—while listening to the soft music, under the light of the full moon, as it shined brightly through the skylight; our picturesque bodies silhouetted beneath the top, sheer, satin sheet, then—more *yada, yada, yada* . . .

All of the words in anybody’s dictionary wouldn’t do justice in describing that heated, sweat-dripping, mind-blowing, amorous adventure. Of course, all of the gods and goddesses on Mount Olympus and every supporter or enthusiast of Greek Mythology already knew that the gorgeous Aphrodite, *goddess of love*, wasn’t a virgin!

I can sum up my recollection of the lustful and passionate but mostly confidential details that transpired on that ultra-special

evening—an evening that enthusiastically and steadfastly kept up into the early morning hours—in two little words: *euphoric bliss!*

For those less fortunate humans who don't completely comprehend the meaning of "euphoric bliss," here are eleven alternative words that also accurately describe my memories of that once-in-a-lifetime, more-than-spiritual happening: *The exhilarating experience left me in a state of pure ecstasy!* For anyone who still doesn't see the "Big Picture," here are eight final words that closely depict my remembrance of the wild, exhausting affair: *I felt like I was in seventh heaven!*

Immediately afterward—right after I saw "fireworks exploding" and "rocket ships blasting off" and "bright stars"—I asked, "What is *heaven* coming to? By the way, Carmen—e-r-r—Aphrodite—e-r-r—Venus, whatever name I might call you, did you slip an *aphrodisiac* into my glass of Dom Perion?" The goddess of love just winked at me and smiled.

Then it dawned on me that my appointed guardian angel was simply thanking me, *sincerely*, for my finally "seeing the light" and for my becoming a better man. I believed that Aphrodite was just trying her best to build my self-confidence and leave me on a "high" note. I took a deep breath and inhaled a big gulp of *reality*.

"Venus, I am *truly* in love with only one woman in the universe—Marilotta Light!"

"Marilotta is a fine young woman. If you and Marilotta should eventually decide to get married, she will be a great wife and mother for your children. Wantsalittle, I sincerely wish the best of luck and happiness to both you and Marilotta Light!"

I knew that my time with Aphrodite, at least in this life, was running short. I started to get misty around the eyes. I wanted to thank her with all of my heart. I wiped off the tears, which had started to run down my cheeks, and said, "Venus, I just want to thank—"

"You already have! *Just pass on what you've learned so that you might help others to become the very best that they can be!* Now that you've become so enlightened, God and I won't have to make any more 'physical' appearances. But the Lord, at least, will still be there for you, particularly when you pray and ask for 'Her'—or *His*—guidance in any way."

“Please tell God that I said ‘goodbye’ and tell ‘Her’—or *Him*—that I thank Him from the bottom of my heart for everything that He has done for me!”

“I’m sure that the Lord hears your words as you speak. Still, I’ll pass along your sincere praise. Wantsalittle, before I leave, I would like for you to wake up each and every morning and think about what positive thoughts and images you will form in your mind for that day. Please strive to continue in your personal growth. So long, Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife! It has been a real pleasure to converse with you on these numerous occasions—and *otherwise* eventful and shared circumstances! Yes, indeed, Sir Wantsalittle! You are a *real* trip! Who knows? We may see each other again one day. So long!”

“Goodbye, Venus!” I said, standing face to face with her for the last time, tears streaming from my eyes. Then my lovely, caring, guardian angel simply vanished.

My long, adventurous, and prosperous journey was rapidly coming to a self-satisfying, happy conclusion. I drove the Vette back to my condo. When I went inside, I grabbed a tall garbage basket, from out of the kitchen, and headed to the walk-in bedroom closet. I emptied everything that was in the spacious closet, except for my clothes, into the trash container—dozens of empty and some full cans and bottles of Zapmeister, a few opened and a few unopened wine bottles, a bottle of tranquilizers, a new carton of cigarettes, my lance, my ax, my war club, my .22-caliber revolver, and my miniature Blackhawk Cruise Missile.

Quitting smoking and drinking excessively and eliminating my aggressive behavior were now easy character adjustments. For the first time in my life, I felt really good about myself! No poison was left in my system. I wanted to live the rest of my life to the fullest, free from my former bad habits, negative thoughts, and harmful emotions.

The Land of Camelot; near the end of the sixth century

The next day, I traveled back to my favorite country setting, near Camelot. As I stood at the base of the big red oak tree, up on the hill and just above the legendary lake, I looked to see if the Lady

of the Lake had perceived my presence. She had, and she immediately waved at me. Then, as she held Excalibur high in her right hand, she pointed her left-hand index finger in the direction of the old canoe.

Slowly but confidently, I walked down the hill, boarded the canoe, and rowed out to the middle of the lake. When I approached, the stingy keeper of the majestic sword once again dared me to try my hand on Excalibur. Without hesitation, I obliged her gracious and timely offer. *This time, though, with ease, I extracted the treasured instrument from her now permissive, weakened grip.*

Then I climbed back up the hill and leaned up against the trunk of the big red oak tree. I wasn't alone. Two squirrels, which were sitting right next to me, cracked open a couple of acorns. Directly overhead, a bald eagle flew across the mostly clear, blue sky. And a sparrow, a dove, and a swan, perhaps symbolizing Aphrodite, were perched side by side on a long fallen log, just a few feet in front of me.

I stepped out from under the oak tree. Suddenly, a little fluffy white cloud blocked the late-afternoon sun. But light rays penetrated the cloud, fully illuminating my lustrous, bright suit of armor. With a quick, hard flick of my right wrist, I tossed Excalibur in the direction of the lake. At the same time, sporting a broad smile, I shouted, "No longer do I need the mighty sword—for now I TRULY FEEL AND ACT LIKE A KING!" The mystical sword spun high into the air and back into the waiting hand of the Lady of the Lake.

Then the Lady of the Lake finally spoke to me, her voice just loud enough for me to hear from a distance. "*Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife, you have earned the right to be the new King of England and of the Land of Camelot!*"

I strolled back down the hill to talk with the Lady of the Lake. From the water's edge, I said, "Respectfully, I must decline your most generous offer. Or maybe you'll give me a 'rain check'? As you might know, I've been time traveling. One of the places that I've visited is known as Hollywood, California. It's located in the United States of America—several thousand miles from here and approximately 1,400 years into the future."

"I know!" the Lady of the Lake said. "Your guardian angel came to visit just before you got here. She told me all about you.

You met a young girl by the name of Marilotta Light. You would like to make this fine lady your wife or perhaps your Queen, whichever she would prefer.”

“Yes! But Marilotta isn’t aware of that just yet. As soon as I leave here, though, I have a hunch that I’m going to be spending a lot of time with her. I don’t know why I feel that way, but I do! By the way, has anybody ever mentioned, considering your long, straight, blonde hair and your hazel eyes and your facial features, that you look a lot like Helen Hunt, a famous American actress?”

“No, but in terms of chronological order of historical occurrences, it is Lady Helen who looks like *me!* Wantsalittle, I am looking into your immediate future, right now! I can see that your assessment of the situation with respect to Marilotta is correct! I fully appreciate your unique position. I will grant you a rain check. But don’t take too long in making your decision. England really needs a noble and virtuous king. Whatever happens, I’m sure it will work out for the best—both for you and for your lovely lady and for the people of England. And, Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife, if you *do* elect to become King, we could change your name to King *Hasalot Morefromlife!* And, if Marilotta Light becomes your Queen, maybe you’d prefer to use the last part of your birth name. We could call you King *Hasalot Morenooky!*”

I laughed, loudly, before the Lady of the Lake added, “If none of the above occurs, perhaps you and Aphrodite will get together again, someday, in the Kingdom of Heaven. Then all of those people ‘above’ could call you *Sir Getsalittle Morefromgoddess!* In the meantime, while you remain on Earth, you might want to keep tabs on the *real* Carmen Electra. If she should become unattached and available, maybe you and Carmen might develop a close, tender, and romantic relationship—allowing you a ‘replay,’ of sorts—you know, more ‘horizontal’ practice before you might eventually reconnect with the goddess of love inside ‘the Pearly Gates.’ Of course, one hell-of-a love-triangle problem might occur, down the road, provided that you and Carmen Electra are both fortunate enough, after death, to receive God’s special invitation to the ‘big dance in the sky!’”

I laughed even harder and said, “Thank you, my fair Lady of the Lake, for your divine understanding and for your serious and your more comical suggestions!”

The Corvette was parked, almost directly behind me, about a hundred yards from the lake. When I turned around to head for the Vette, *Marilotta Light energized right in front of me!*

Willie had told me that he had a couple of other time-travel remotes, including one for emergency use, in the event that he needed to get in touch with me for some reason. Immediately, I thought that Marilotta must have borrowed one of her father's portable time machines. Then she probably hit the red *Emergency* button, which would have transported her through time to my exact location. Still, I was very surprised to see Marilotta. I asked, "Marilotta, what brings you to Camelot?"

"Wantsalittle, I just wanted to see you again. I hope that I'm not intruding on your privacy."

"No, not at all! I'm very happy to see you, too! How did you know that I was here?"

"I really didn't know, for sure, exactly where you were—your current location or time. But right before your appearance on *Larry King Live*, dad told me that you were having personal conversations with both God and Aphrodite and that you would be ending your journey in Camelot. Dad also said something about your wanting to try to draw Excalibur from the hand of the Lady of the Lake. All of these exciting circumstances and adventurous events aroused my curiosity. And I thought that I might get the chance to see or to meet God or your guardian angel, Aphrodite, personally."

Marilotta paused for a couple of seconds, then she continued, "It was just a common-sense conclusion that you'd likely be speaking with the Lord or with Aphrodite sometime during the last few hours of your quest. As I look out over the water, I can see the Lady of the Lake. She is holding Excalibur high over her head. Wantsalittle, I must've pressed the *Emergency* button on dad's spare time-travel-remote device, intuitively. It appears that I've arrived at just about the *perfect* time. Are you still going to try to claim ownership to the cherished weapon?"

I laughed and replied, "Marilotta, my dear, actually, you're just a *little late* in getting here. I've already dealt with the Excalibur issue. The magnificent sword was mine for the taking. I determined, though, that I no longer needed the coveted weapon, and I tossed the splendid sword back into the hand of the Lady of the Lake."

Marilotta inquired, “What about God and Aphrodite? Did I also miss your meeting with either one or both of them?”

“I’m afraid so, my dear. But God and Venus, as I preferred to call the goddess of love, made their appearances before me, invisibly—nobody but me could see or hear them.”

“Yeah, I guess that I should’ve known that that would be the case. Darn, it looks as though I missed all of the excitement for the day. But I’m still glad that I’m here. Really, I just couldn’t wait to see you again! Wantsalittle, tell me, what did God and Aphrodite *look like*?”

“Thanks, Marilotta! Your coming here to see me means an awful lot to me! I’ll tell you a little about my journey—and about God—and *everything* in a few minutes.”

While I was at Willie’s for the first time, for nearly eight days, preparing for my journey into time, Marilotta Light and I had established the foundation for a meaningful long-term relationship. Nevertheless, neither of us, at that early stage, had made any serious commitment to each other. Still, Marilotta’s sudden and unexpected appearance in the Land of Camelot took me by surprise, and I felt a little awkward in her presence.

If Marilotta and I were to have any chance at a mutually rewarding, everlasting, loving relationship, I knew that such a relationship would have to be based, above all else, on *mutual trust*, *mutual respect*, and *mutual honesty*. So I knew that I had to come clean with Marilotta about my romantic fling with Aphrodite.

Although my guardian angel and I had become very fond of each other, and part of that fondness manifested into an unforgettable, one-night, romantic affair, it wasn’t like Aphrodite and I were going to start dating or get married or anything. I only hoped that, after I confessed to Marilotta about my unusual intimate relationship with Aphrodite, she would forgive me for *sort of* cheating on her. I really believed, considering the circumstances, that she *would* forgive me. After all, how many guys get the heavenly opportunity to “do it” with the Greek or the Roman *goddess of love*, albeit in the appearance of Carmen Electra?

“Marilotta, you look terrific, all decked out in that alluring—what would you call it? Is that some kind of a fancy one-piece swimsuit?” I asked.

Marilotta laughed, momentarily, and said, “No—no! This is just a new pullover dress. The dress looks a little like a swimsuit because it’s sleeveless and it’s very low cut on both the front and the back. Wantsalittle, do you think it gives me a *sexier* appearance?”

“Yeah! I love the dress, even the teal color. That shade of green really accentuates your slightly curled light-red hair. But those pencil-thin shoulder straps and the ultra-short-length design are what gave me the impression that the dress was some sort of a swimsuit. Don’t you feel a bit uncomfortable walking around, especially here in Camelot, with so much of your thighs exposed?”

“Well, I must admit that I didn’t give that much forethought. Will we be seeing any of your friends?”

“No, not on this occasion. And it’s probably for the best. If the God-fearing citizens of Camelot saw you in that seductive and charming get-up, they would either think that you were an angel, without wings, or that they had just died and went to heaven!”

“Wantsalittle, I’m very pleased that you like my dress. I wore it especially for *you!*”

Figuring out what was on Marilotta’s mind was easy. I said to *myself*, “Damn the bad timing! Just my luck!” She was in the mood for *lust* or *love!* Either way, my hopes weren’t set too high! Now, more than before, it was apparent that I was facing a big hill to climb—namely that of trying to explain my “one ‘knight’ stand” with my guardian angel.

Marilotta knew that Aphrodite had helped me, regularly, throughout my travels. But she had absolutely *no* idea that she had appeared before me as *Carmen Electra!* I looked directly into Marilotta’s eyes and said, “I think that you and I should go for a little stroll. But those ankle-strapped, high-heeled sandals of yours are going to make it rather difficult for you to walk with me, around the lake, with all of the protruding rocks, fallen timber, tall grass, and stuff. One good thing about it, though: You don’t have to worry about me getting too far ahead of you as we walk. It’s not easy for me to get around, either, with all of my armor, particularly in these clumsy steel boots! Before we get back to the car, our mile or so stroll, together, might turn into more of a crawl for both of us!”

“If we’re going for a walk, let’s get moving,” Marilotta said, a sound of urgency in her voice. “It’s pretty cool this evening; the

steady breeze off the lake is giving me the chills. A brisk walk might warm me up a little. Just look at that beautiful bright-orange-and-crimson sunset. The evening clouds over the Atlantic Ocean offer the same kind of warm and brilliantly colored sunsets as we so often see in Beverly Hills. Nature's more scenic sights always put me in a romantic mood. Wantsalittle, let's be on our way."

Marilotta Light extended her soft, delicate, right hand to my left steel glove. We began our stroll, hand in glove, around the legendary lake.

I hated to spoil Marilotta's romantic frame of mind. But as we started to walk, our eyes mutually focused on the colorful, spectacular, England sunset, I said, "Marilotta, my love, something did happen last night that I should try to explain. . . ."

Later that evening, after Marilotta and I finished our stroll around the lake, we got into the Corvette. Then I hit the big white *Return* button on the time-travel module. Instantly, we arrived back at Willie's estate in Beverly Hills on May 27, 2010 at 4:30 P.M., the exact same time that I left on my wacky journey into time. Soon after we returned the car to Willie, Marilotta and I went to my condo, not far from Willie's place. We started to write my autobiography, which I discussed in the previous chapter (*Episode Forty-nine*). My trip was complete. My journey into time had been an overwhelming success!

(The moral of this episode: Shed light on all of your true feelings. Love yourself and love all others, unconditionally. When you do, all worthwhile things will become possible!)

Epilogue

*Barnes & Noble Bookstore; Caresville, California;
November 15, 2011*

(Author's note: From the "Prologue," you may remember that Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife addressed some 200 people at a Barnes & Noble bookstore during a book-reading and a book-signing engagement. Sir Wantsalittle, after reading *The Wacky Adventures of Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife* aloud for the audience, concluded his presentation with the following comments:)

“**M**ANY OF YOU MAY WANT TO ASK: ‘Did you take the Lady of the Lake up on her offer to you to become the new King of England?’ My true quest or dream was to feel *and act* like a king, rather than to become the King of the Land of Camelot. Besides, if any of you were given a choice between sitting on the ‘Royal Seat’ in Camelot or sitting on your personal ‘Royal Throne’ in the privacy of your own home here in the twenty-first century—really a choice of wiping with a corncob or wiping with soft 2-ply Charmin—what would any of you prefer to do? If my friends or knightly colleagues from the Land of Camelot had access to any of Willie’s time-travel devices, and if they visited Hollywood California in the year of 2010 or 2011, I seriously doubt that any of them would want to return to live in Camelot, at least permanently!

“Now, many of you might also want to ask: ‘Wantsalittle, did you end up marrying Marilotta Light?’ Let me put it this way: Raquel Welch, although she is still beautiful, now, in her late sixties, is happily married. Ellen Degeneres, as you should remember from *Episode Thirty*, told me that she was gay. And I didn’t believe that Aphrodite, in the body and persona of the desirable Carmen Electra, would accept the idea of my being her

champion. So, my fourth-best alternative was to turn my full and undivided attention in the direction of the lovely Lady Marilotta. All kidding aside, I fell in love with Marilotta Light almost from the first moment that we met. No way was I going to let that trophy ‘fish’ get back into the sea. But as you know, I had a few kinks in my armor, so to speak, that needed to be ironed out before I could become noble enough, character-wise, to earn Marilotta’s trust and respect and unconditional love.

“Anyway, as far as my current relationship with Marilotta, you could ask her, personally. She just walked into the bookstore a few minutes ago. My *wife* is sitting in the middle of the back row, holding our newly born son. His full name is *Willie Wants Morefromlife!* By the way, after helping me with my autobiography, Marilotta is now writing *her* autobiography, which is tentatively titled *My Knight in Shining Armor*. Hopefully, she is referring to *me!*

“Finally, as you know by now, unless you are visiting from Mars, my name is Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife. You have just heard *my* story, and I am sticking to it. For all of you who also *want a little more from life*, I hope and pray that you will learn from my wacky experiences and that you will ‘stick’ by your real-life personal story, too!”

Acknowledgments

ESPECIALLY, I WANT TO THANK Tobey Maguire, who inspired the character of Sir Wantsalittle Morefromlife; Jessica Simpson, who inspired the character of God; Carmen Electra, who inspired the character of Aphrodite (aka Venus); Mel Gibson, who inspired the character of Willie C. Light; Kirsten Dunst, who inspired the character of Marilotta Light; and Helen Hunt, who inspired the character of the Lady of the Lake.

In addition, I want to thank all of the public figures (actors, singers, sports stars, talk-show hosts, entertainers, media personalities, politicians, and cartoon characters) who represent the book's star-studded supporting cast. The following people (and cartoon characters), by their positive contributions to society, inspired me to creatively set forth the background to this fictitious but heart-warming and well-intended story:

(Listed in order of their appearance:) Craig T. Nelson, Jerry Van Dyke, William "Bill" Fagerbakke, Christopher Lloyd, Cheech Marin, Thomas "Tommy" Chong, the late Christopher Reeve, Morgan Freeman, Jim Carey, Tiger Woods, LeBron James, Carmelo Anthony, Peyton Manning, Clint Eastwood, the late Clint Sampson, Whoopi Goldberg, Jay Leno, David Letterman, Bill O'Reilly, Joy Behar, Elisabeth Hasselbeck, Barbara Walters, Dr. Phil McGraw, Megyn Kelly, Bill Hemmer, Shepard Smith, Anderson Cooper, Greta Van Susteren, Eddie "the Eagle" Edwards, Raquel Welch, the late Princess Diana, the late Roy Scheider, the late George Herman "Babe" Ruth, Muhammad Ali, Angelo Dundee, George Foreman, Michael Jordan, Dick Fosbury, Jessica Lange, John Fogerty (Creedence Clearwater Revival), former President William Jefferson Clinton, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, the late Dale Earnhardt, Carl Yastrzemski, Jeff Gordon, Rusty Wallace, Richard

Petty, Neil Armstrong, Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin Jr., Michael Collins, Roseanne Barr (Thomas), James Garner, the late Jack Kelly, the late Steve McQueen, the late Robert Shaw, Kenny Rogers, the late Paul Newman, Ron Howard, Louie & Frankie (the Budweiser lizards), Tom Cruise, the late Ted Knight, Mary Tyler Moore, Walter Cronkite, the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Homer Simpson (cartoon character), Teri Hatcher, Dean Cain, Katey Sagal, Ed O’Neill, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Heather Locklear, Leonard Nimoy,

(continued) the late Burt Lancaster, the late Hank Williams Sr., Paul “Crocodile Dundee” Hogan, Wayne Gretzky, the late Elvis Presley, Nick Castle (played Michael Myers in the original *Halloween* film), Joe Cocker, Pam Cocker, Andy Griffith, the late Don Knotts, Jim Nabors, Stacey Travis, the late Robert Urich, Danny DeVito, Rhea Pearlman, Ellen Degeneres, Mac Davis, Dolly Parton, Diane Sawyer, Oprah Winfrey, Hugh Downs, Sam Donaldson, Marc Crawford, Craig Billington, Patrick Roy, Ray Sheppard, Peter Forsberg, Joe Sakic, Uwe Krupp, John Van Briesbrouck, Hulk “Hollywood” Hogan, Jason Alexander, Jerry Seinfeld, Michael Richards, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, the late Jack Lord, James MacArthur,

(continued) the late Judy Garland & the late Jack Haley & the late Bert Lahr & the late Ray Bolger & the late Frank Morgan (starring cast of the original *Wizard of Oz* film in 1939), Bugs Bunny & Elmer Fudd & Porky Pig & Daffy Duck & Sylvester & Tweety Pie (Looney Tunes cartoon characters), Pamela Anderson, John Elway, Mike Shanahan (head coach of the Denver Broncos), Howard Griffith, Shannon Sharpe, Terrell Davis, Rod Smith, Gary Zimmerman, Brett Favre, John Mobley, Pat Bowlen (majority owner of the Denver Broncos), the late John Lennon, Paul McCartney, the late George Harrison, Ringo Starr,

(continued) the late Johnny Cash, the late June Carter-Cash, the late Harry Caray (broadcaster for the Chicago Cubs), Steve Stone, Sammy Sosa, Mark Grace, Cassandra “Elvira” Peterson, Regis Philbin, Donald Trump, Kelly Ripa, Kathie Lee Gifford, William Shatner, the late John Belushi, Dan Akroyd, the late Tammy

Wynette, Willie Nelson, Merle Haggard, Larry King, Glenn Close, Jack Nicholson, Gene Hackman, Susan Lucci, the late Lee Van Cleef, Eli Wallach, and Debra Winger.

Ordering Information (softcover and ebook editions):

TO ORDER the 6x9 trade-paperback edition of *The Million Dollar Knight-time Story* or to download the Adobe, PDF-formatted, ebook edition, please visit the author's personal business website at **www.OneSuperBook.com**. The softcover edition is also available online at www.Amazon.com. Later, after publishing rights are sold to a major publisher, the softcover edition can be purchased from several online sources and ordered from most brick-and-mortar bookstores near you.

List price for the state-of-the-art softcover: \$21.95 USA

List price for the Adobe PDF-formatted ebook: \$5.00 USA

Ordering Information (hardcover editions):

The Million Dollar Knight-time Story is temporarily available in a 6x9, registered, hardcover edition with a custom dust jacket. To see a photo of the book and for more information, please visit the author's business website at **www.OneSuperBook.com**.

Only up to twenty-five *registered* hardcover books will ever be published. They will be sold on eBay, on the author's commercial website or elsewhere with the list price for each copy (book-collectors'/extravagant-gift-shoppers' edition) set firmly at \$1,000,000 USA.

The Million Dollar Knight-time Story is also available in a 6x9, standard, hardcover edition. Standard hardcover copies can only be purchased at **www.OneSuperBook.com**. (Prospective buyers will be redirected from the author's website to his storefront at Lulu.com to make standard-hardcover book purchases.)

List price for the standard hardcover: \$29.95 USA